



UNPRPD MPTF
Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



UNITED NATIONS
GHANA

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

GHANA



COUNTRY BRIEF

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November 2022

Disclaimer

This brief was prepared by the Technical Secretariat. It summarizes the key findings from the situational analysis report and does not necessarily reflect the position of the UNPRPD MPTF .

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CRPD	Convention On the Rights Of Persons With Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DACF	Disability Common Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GASB	Ghana Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment Ghana
GFD	Federation of Disability Organisations
GNAD	Ghana National Association of the Deaf
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
LGBTQ+	Lesbians, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer Plus
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies Ministry of
MoGCSP	Gender Children and Social Protection
NAP	National Action Plan
NCPD	National Council on Persons with Disabilities
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SERRP	Socio-economic Response and Recovery Plan
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPRPD	UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Unite
USAID	States Agency for International Development
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WG	Washington Group
WHO	World Health Organisations

1 BACKGROUND

The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF) is a unique partnership that brings together United Nations (UN) entities, governments, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and broader civil society to advance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the country level around the world.

The UN entities participating in UNPRPD are ILO, OHCHR, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and WHO. Other UNPRPD members include the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). The main contributors to the UNPRPD MPTF are Australia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In 2020, with the Strategic and Operational Framework 2020-2025 UNPRPD adopted a new programme design approach. The Framework moves towards proactive, results-oriented joint programming to drive implementation of the CRPD and disability-inclusive SDGs.

In the same year, the UNPRPD launched its fourth funding call and invited UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to submit proposals for joint country-level programmes with the objectives of advancing CRPD implementation and improving the implementation of disability-inclusive SDGs. The 26 selected teams (see Annex 1) were then allocated an initial budget to deliver an induction training, conduct a country situational analysis and complete a full joint programme proposal based on the findings of the situational analysis.

The 26 countries each conducted a comprehensive multistakeholder situational analysis to identify gaps and opportunities around preconditions to CRPD implementation and agree on a set of recommendations to address them.

From March to September 2022, the Ghana UNCT conducted the comprehensive situational analysis. The methodology included a desk review of relevant literature, key informant interviews and focus groups, stakeholder mapping exercises, and consultative workshops with key stakeholders.

The full situational analysis report can be found [here](#).

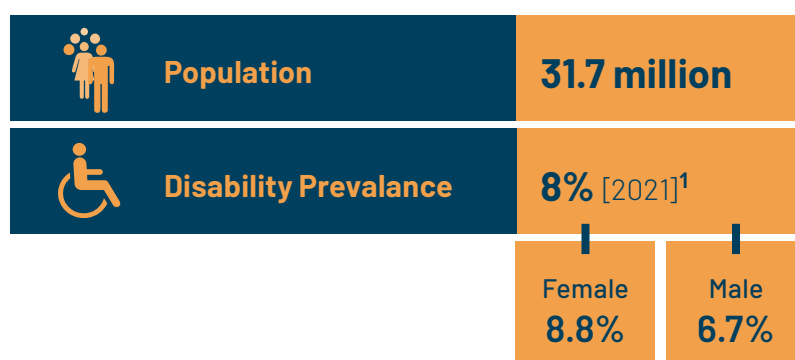
2 WHY A COUNTRY ANALYSIS?

Many countries still struggle to transform the CRPD into concrete policies, systems, programmes and services that uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. It is urgent that governments and their implementation partners deliver on their SDG commitments through CRPD-compliant interventions. To support countries in the most catalytic way requires understanding the main bottlenecks and priorities in each country in relation to the fulfilment of the CRPD. We needed to know who the key stakeholders are, how implementation/monitoring mechanisms are functioning (or not), which capacities stakeholders may need to improve, and which ongoing development processes could be leveraged to become more disability inclusive.

The situation analyses were carried out to:

- Inform the design of future PRPD-funded programmes in the country and serve as a baseline for them;
- Inform UNCTs of gaps in achieving disability inclusion in ongoing national processes and programmes and recommend further, in-depth analysis where needed;
- Build a base of mutual understanding and working relationships among UN entities, government, OPDs and other civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as the private sector and academia, as the basis for future co-design of joint programmes;
- Strengthen the capacity of those stakeholders to more effectively include and address the rights of persons with disabilities as outlined in the CRPD; and
- Serve as an advocacy tool for ODPs and other civil society partners, both national and international.

3 INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY CONTEXT IN GHANA



At the start of Ghana's independence, the government had made some commitments to pursuing inclusive policies that were aimed at integrating persons with disabilities into society through rehabilitation, skills training, and special education. This was in line with a policy to equip Ghanaians with skills and build a human resource base for the government's policy of industrialisation. This policy saw the establishment of rehabilitation centres across the country, some of which continue to operate to this day as rehabilitation and skills training facilities for people with disabilities. Subsequent governments continued to pursue disability-inclusive policies through community-based rehabilitation programmes and the expanding of capacities of inclusive schools to provide formal education and training for children with disabilities.

With the UN declaration of the 1980s as a decade for the disabled, disability issues received much attention in Ghanaian society along with activism for greater recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities. For instance, the national umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities (the GFD) was established during this period.

In the year 2000, the government developed a national disability policy, but because the policy lacked adequate legal foundation, it failed to achieve most of its objectives. In 2006, parliament – responding to the demand of Article 29 of the 1992 constitution, passed the disability Act of 2006, Act 715 which was subsequently signed into law. In the same year, Ghana become a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and parliament subsequently ratified it in 2012.

As a signatory to the CRPD and the optional protocol, Ghana submitted its first state report to the CRPD committee in 2014 after a 4-year delay. Since then, OPDs, in consultation with other stakeholders have also submitted an alternative report to the CRPD committee.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Stakeholder coordination mechanisms

The key stakeholders responsible for implementing and monitoring the CRPD are highlighted below. A complete list of stakeholders is included in the full report.

Government

- **Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP)** is responsible for policy formulation, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of gender, children and social protection issues including issues related to persons with disabilities.
- The **National Council on Persons with Disabilities (NCPD)** operates under the MOGCSP to coordinate programmes and implement policies of the government regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. It was an agency established as a result of the Disability Act (Act 715). The NCPD has been designated as the focal point for the CRPD implementation and has been involved in trying to establish its institutional structures to coordinate public policies on disabilities. Key challenges in this process include the lack of decentralised structures to influence activities at the sub-national levels, inadequate personnel, inadequate budgetary allocation, and inadequate legislative framework to enable them to enforce compliance to key provisions of the laws regarding the rights of persons with disabilities.
- The **Ministry of Education** is a key ministry that is responsible for the implementation of the national inclusive education policy. This policy was developed in 2015 with support from development partners such as UNICEF, STAR-Ghana (an NGO), and other OPDs.
- The **Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)** is an independent human rights institution in Ghana. Based on the findings of the situational analysis, CHRAJ is suggested to be the designated focal point to monitor and report on the human rights provisions of the CRPD.
- **Parliament's Select Committee on Employment, Social Welfare and State Enterprises** have oversight responsibility over the ministry (of gender, children and social protection) that oversees disability issues in the country. The committee works in collaboration with the ministry and other stakeholders. However, OPDs and some key informants who spoke about the role of this committee have said they are yet

to fully exploit the opportunities available to work with this committee in moving the state into action on the implementation of the CRPD.

- **Ghana Standards Authority** is a regulatory body which developed the Ghana Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment, often referred to as the Ghana Accessibility Standards Documents.

Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)

The local government system, with its network of district, municipal and metropolitan assemblies are a critical stakeholder group for the implementation of government policies regarding persons with disabilities. They are responsible for the management of the government support fund including the 3% common fund for persons with disabilities. They ensure that the funds are fairly distributed to persons with disabilities based on their assessed needs and monitor the utilization of the funds they disburse.

The assemblies also monitor the implementation of other national social protection policies like the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP). At each of the MMDAs, issues about disability are dealt with by the department of social welfare, which is a department that oversees the welfare of vulnerable groups in the districts. With limited authority and influence over the planning and budgeting processes, the social welfare departments are challenged and not effective in ensuring the mainstreaming of disability into the medium-term development plans and budgets of the MMDAs. Their other roles include making referrals to disability assessment centres when such cases are presented since the departments themselves lack the resources and capacity to carry out disability assessments.

Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)

Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations (GFD) is a national umbrella OPD, whose members comprise of OPDs representing different disability groups including those with hearing impairments, visually impaired persons, persons with physical disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, etc. It has operated in the country for over three decades and had several milestone achievements of disability policymaking and legislation including the passage of the Disability Act 2006 (Act 715), the ratification of the CRPD and the optional protocol, and advocacy for the mainstreaming of disability into national programmes. NCPD mentioned that they have documented about 96 organisations of and for persons with disabilities currently operating in the country.

Other partners

There are many organisations which support programmes and government initiatives to implement the CRPD and bring about changes in the disability sector. They include International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), the United Nation in Ghana, the World Bank country office, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UK Aid, Danish Development Assistance, World Vision International, local Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Ghanaian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Summary of stakeholder coordination analysis

There are many stakeholders who are working in the disability sector and responding to various aspects of the CRPD implementation. These stakeholders cut across various sectors of the country and include key departments and agencies of government, non-governmental organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, services providers, health care institutions, civil society organisations, international development partners, academia, religious organisations, philanthropic individuals/organisations, media organisations and the private sector.

Ghana does not have a unified strategy or implementation framework to ensure coordination among these stakeholders. Currently, plans for the implementation of the CRPD are spread across various development frameworks/plans and programmes.

The country operates a single focal point system for the implementation of the CRPD with the designation of the NCPD within the government for the implementation of the CRPD. Stakeholders, particularly OPDs have advocated that, given the weaknesses associated with the performance of the Council's role as a focal point for the CRPD implementation, it needs to be given sufficient authority and resources to effectively play that role. The NCPD is an agency under the MOGCSP and stakeholders have raised the point that such an agency will find it difficult to exercise power and influence over other ministries regarding the coordination and mainstreaming of disability issues outside of their parent ministry.

The role of OPDs in the CRPD implementation process is critical. Many of these organisations are funded from unsustainable sources and have become vulnerable financially. They face operational challenges that make them less effective in their work. For instance, some national OPDs do not currently operate at full capacity due to declining funds and are therefore not able to respond fully to the needs of their members or effectively represent the issues that affect them.

4.2 Preconditions for disability inclusion

In its Strategic Framework, UNPRPD has identified five preconditions as foundational elements that must be in place to address the rights of persons with disabilities across sectors. The following findings focus on these preconditions in the Ghanaian context.

- 1 **Equality and non-discrimination**
- 2 **Accessibility**
- 3 **Inclusive service delivery**
- 4 **CRPD-compliant budgeting and financial management**
- 5 **Accountability and governance**

Equality and non-discrimination

The constitution of Ghana has general and specific provisions for protecting the rights of people with disabilities. However, inequality and discrimination against persons with disabilities continue to be pervasive and experienced across the different levels of Ghanaian society.

In the 2018 state report to the CRPD committee, Ghana reported that it has enacted laws which address non-discrimination and equal treatment of persons with disabilities consistent with the provisions of the CRPD and cited the 1992 constitution (in articles 17 and 29) and the Disability Act 2006 (Act 715). Other legal provisions include section 4 of Act 715, section 14 of Ghana's labour Law (Act 651), and section 3 of the Children's Act (Act 650). Overall, the state report acknowledges that people with disabilities in Ghana face challenges of discrimination and unequal treatment before the law. For instance, information and services remain largely inaccessible and they face stigma and negative perceptions.

When assessing the Disability Act, it is evident that the provisions in the Act are not detailed enough and do not address all forms of discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities. Other studies have pointed out several weaknesses in the Disability Act such as the lack systems, structures and budgets for the implementation of these laws in practice and the lack of adequate inclusion of persons with disabilities in policy development and in monitoring and evaluation process of the policies.

Despite the significant strides made over the last two decades to promote the rights of people with disabilities through legislations, public education, and involvement of people with disabilities in public discussions, people with disabilities continue to face significant discrimination. The challenge persists on account of shortcomings in systems and structures including, inadequate enforcement of laws promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, lack of access to professional support services along with socio-cultural practices and negative attitudes which are engrained in the minds of people because of inadequate knowledge about the forms and nature of disabilities.

Finally, the situation regarding discrimination against persons with disabilities is worse for people with severe forms of disability who remain confined to their homes, the elderly, deafblind, people with severe forms of intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, and those who have no formal education.

Key findings

- The lack of implementation of the Disability Act is due to the absence of a Legislative Instrument (LI) to enable its operational effect. It has been over 15 years since the law was passed and the state is still struggling with having to pass an LI for it to be made operational. This long delay in passing the LI has been viewed as a sign of low political commitment.
- The definition of disability in the Disability Act is narrow and also lacks specific provisions that address the needs of children with disabilities, humanitarian initiatives and disaster management.
- The lack of a roadmap for a national disability strategy or framework for CRPD implementation is also a key challenge. The national disability policy of 2000 has been quoted in most official documents as a basis for some actions that have taken place in the disability sector in the past. However, the policy is old and needs to be reviewed to better inform future policy actions.
- When in place, such national disability strategies/frameworks should guide the design of disability-inclusive programmes and projects in the national development planning process.
- There is a great need for legislative and policy reforms to empower institutions of state like the NCPD and the CJRAJ to develop a more effective coordination of their actions and reporting on progress.

Inclusive service delivery

Disability assessment and referral services

The Ministry of Health (in collaboration with District Assemblies and the Ministry of Social Welfare) is in theory responsible for establishing and operating the health assessment and resource centres in each district and providing early diagnostic medical attention to determine the existence or onset of disability. Information about the number and location of these assessment centres is not available or inaccessible. Not all health facilities in Ghana have adequate resources to carry out disability assessments. The few existing centres are concentrated in the southern area of the country making them inaccessible to most persons with disabilities, their families and carers.

In a focus group discussion with a group of women with disabilities, they indicated that they have very limited knowledge and information about the existence of disability assessment centres in the country. The ministry of education is also critical because there is an assessment centre in the capital that also provides services to children with disabilities who need disability assessment to determine their appropriate education needs.

Mental health assessments are carried out by the psychiatric hospitals in Accra, Pantang, and Ankaful. They are complemented by services provided by psychiatric nurses across districts and regional health facilities which provide primary health care services. However, for major assessments, members of the public are often referred to the three psychiatric centres mentioned above. Some stakeholders have highlighted that these assessments do not meet standards.

Disability support services

Disability support services for persons with disabilities are critical in empowering them to be independent, access mainstream services and actively participate in society. In Ghana, disability support services have largely been carried out as an informal activity provided by family members, friends, and relatives. There are no state-funded schemes to formally recognize and support the provision of disability support services. Mostly such services are provided by civil society actors, often with international funding. Under such situations, the consistency and quality of care that people with disabilities receive suffers, with a consequential impact on their well-being.

The implementation of the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programme in the 1990s and the greater part of the 2000s was an important milestone development which sought to address the issue of support for persons with disabilities through the involvement of community-based stakeholders. Unfortunately, the programme could not be sustained beyond external funding support.

Mainstream services

The situational analysis report provides an overview of disability inclusion in mainstream services, including social protection, education, health, and employment. The brief highlights key gaps and further details may be found in the full report.

Social protection

Access to social protection programmes and means of livelihood is substantially challenged for persons with disabilities. Even though data is limited, interviews reveal that most persons with disabilities are struggling to meet their livelihood needs. The government's flagship disability programme is the Disability Common Fund (DACF) which is a grant administered to persons with disabilities at the various MMDAs. Although it is a bold policy initiative, its implementation is difficult due to inadequate funds disbursed per beneficiary, lack of proper disability assessment to determine the needs and capabilities of beneficiaries, and lack of transparency in the distribution.

Health

The National Health insurance scheme is a key program which was designed to make health care accessible to every Ghanaian including persons with disabilities. Under the scheme, some persons with disabilities have been exempted from paying the subscription premium. The procedures to obtain such exemptions is not clear to persons with disabilities and their families.

Persons with disabilities experience barriers in accessing necessary services from the health system. The obstacles are related to long distances, unaffordability, prejudice and discrimination by health staff and inaccessibility of premises. Also, communication barriers exist between deaf persons and health providers. However, some efforts have been reported to have been made to improve the situation. In an interview, a member of the Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GNAD) confirmed that there have been trainings organized for health service providers on the use of sign language. Also, the GNAD has been collaborating with the University of Cape Coast to train sign language

interpreters, in addition to advocating for the ministry of health to train health workers in basic sign language communication. The Association has also developed a directory of sign language interpreters which has been distributed to service providers to provide them with information about where and how to contact sign language interpreters in case of emergencies.

Education

The Ministry of Education is a crucial stakeholder in the progress toward providing educational services for persons with disabilities. Under the ministry, the Inclusive Education policy is a key policy aimed at integration rather than segregation of educational services for students with disabilities. The policy was rolled out in 2015, following its successful piloting in approximately 529 schools in 34 districts. This roll out has been slow, as there are still some implementation challenges to make it fully operational in those schools which have been selected to pilot it. These challenges relate to the inadequate training of teachers to fully handle the different forms of disabilities. A teacher observed during one of the focus group discussions that they don't get access to the assessment reports of the children who are admitted to their school. As a result, the teachers do not fully appreciate the condition or nature of their disability to adopt the appropriate teaching approach. Another challenge relates to inadequate teaching and lack of learning materials which are needed by teachers in the piloted schools. Thus, the roll out beyond the pilot schools is limited.

The existing special schools which have provided educational services for children with severe forms of disability in Ghana continue to run in parallel.

Employment

Access to employment is low compared to people without disabilities. Ghana currently does not have an affirmative policy on open employment and there are no existing inclusive employment programmes for people with disabilities. Therefore, persons with disabilities in Ghana are most at risk of unemployment, underemployment and are more likely to engage in low-wage jobs when compared to the rest of the population.

Key findings

- The absence of a functional inclusive disability assessment system to enable the linking of assessments to the accessing of support services, goods, and assistive materials or technology is key gap. The need to urgently prioritise the setting up of multidisciplinary disability assessment centres, well equipped and geographically spread to facilitate easy access has strongly been prioritised.
- There is a lack of a mechanism to coordinate state-funded (and CSO funded) support services and the supply of goods and assistive devices, which is critically needed to make life meaningful for people with disabilities.
- Inclusive education policy has some important implementation challenges including lack of training and capacity of staff and the lack of resources for teachers to carry out their role. The need to address challenges of implementation in the pilot locations need to be prioritized to improve access to formal education for children with disabilities.

- There is a need to review of ongoing government social protection programmes or flagship programmes to expand access to resources for the economic empowerment of people with disabilities who are in critical need.
- The lack of affirmative open employment policy and supported disability employment schemes was included as a priority area for urgent action.

Accessibility

During the focus group discussions and the key informants' interviews, it was consistently mentioned that a greater proportion of public places and facilities are still inaccessible to persons with disabilities after 15 years of implementing the CRPD and the Disability Act. Currently, the NCPD does not have adequate capacity to enforce the law on accessibility. Rights-holders also do not have the capacity to contest violations of the accessibility laws in courts. A comprehensive national accessibility audit of all public places/buildings and the the enforcement of the law and monitoring of compliance is needed.

Further, there is a general lack of access to information in accessible formats for of people with disabilities in Ghana. Information presented on the websites of public institutions, including ministries, media houses, and other private sector organisations in Ghana are not fully accessible. The most affected group are people with intellectual disabilities and people with visual and hearing difficulties. The web-sites lack magnifying features, published images are not described with alternative texts, and audio-visual materials lack sign language inserts and transcriptions.

A significant factor in improving access to information relates to the limited availability and high cost of services for providing accessible information. Particularly regarding persons with visual difficulties they have mentioned the high cost of acquiring assistive technologies as a key constraining factor. The government's intervention in supplying these materials has therefore been strongly suggested.

Key findings

- Lack of access to the built environment is a key priority area requiring urgent and comprehensive governmental action. Most state institutions still operate from inaccessible buildings, and this does not present a good example for others in the private sector to follow.
- Lack of access to information in accessible forms is a key challenge for the state to address. Related to this, the need to make crucial national disability strategy documents available in accessible (including easy to read) formats on government web portals has been highlighted as a priority.
- The lack of mechanism to enforce accessibility policies and laws is highlighted as a challenge.

CRPD compliant budgeting and financial management

Financial Planning and monitoring

An analysis of the government's economic and development policy statements to parliament over the past five years shows that there have been several programmes where disability inclusion has been addressed. The table below shows how the government's annual budget and economic development policy statements from 2018 to 2022 have dealt with disability inclusion.

Government Economic Development and Fiscal Policy Statement/year	Analysis of statement about disability-inclusive programmes
The 2018 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government	■ The government announced a policy to have 30% of government procurement contracts go to women and people with disabilities. ■ The government announced it was going to register PWDs across some districts. ■ The government announced it was developing a framework to mainstream disability into national development.
The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana 2019	■ The government announced it has increased the DACF by 50% (i.e from 2 % to 3% of the national budget). ■ The government announced it was going to develop IE&C materials on the Disability Act 715 and the CRPD. This is coming after over 10 years of having these laws. At the same time, the government was going to "review the disability Act 715". It is not clear if the IE&C materials were in connection with the review of Act 715. ■ The government announced a programme to "reduce disability". This is rather a public health programme which doesn't address challenges that confront persons who have a disability.
The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana 2020	■ The government announced it has empowered 100 women with disabilities to start businesses. ■ The government announced it has consulted PWDs on election processes to promote their participation in an upcoming referendum. ■ The government reported that it has trained 1000 women entrepreneurs with disabilities and given them funding to scale up their businesses. ■ Students with disabilities in tertiary institutions received assistive communication technology-enabled devices and training to promote their digital inclusion (the number of beneficiaries was not specified). ■ A repeat of the 2019 statement that the DACF has been increased by 50%. ■ The government reported it has employed PWDs as tollbooth attendants.

Government Economic Development and Fiscal Policy Statement/year	Analysis of statement about disability-inclusive programmes
Statement To Parliament on the Covid 19 Expenditure 2020/ 2021	■ No mention was made of disability or related policies.
The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2022 Financial Year	■ The government reported it would be constructing 120 sanitation facilities to benefit PWDs. ■ Government repeats the statement made in 2019 that it was going to review Act 715. ■ The government reported that it has monitored the DACF in some selected districts. ■ A repeat was made of previous statements that the government had increased the DACF by 50 %. ■ The government reported it has kept its pledge to employ PWDs as tollbooth attendants. ■ The ministry of employment has listed as an eligible expense area, programmes that support “insertion of youth and persons with disabilities”.

Key findings

- A key challenge is the lack of adequate budgetary allocations for CRPD implementation across the different levels of the development planning process. Implementation of the convention requires committed resources.
- The country needs to collaborate with development partners and the private sector to design a sustainable funding scheme for disability support systems in the country, particularly at the community level. This will require collaboration, careful planning, and political commitment from the highest level of policy decision-making.

Accountability and governance

Inclusive evidence and data gathering systems

Disaggregated, reliable disability data continues to be a challenge in Ghana. The 2010 population census data on disability has likely underestimated the number of people with disabilities in Ghana since it did not collect data on those with mild to moderate forms of disability. Despite this limitation, it was a significant step toward incorporating inclusive data collection tools into national statistics.

In 2021, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) attempted to address the problem of the previous census data on disability by using the Washington Group's short set of questions on disability. However, this has also presented some challenges. For example, there was no data collected on children with disabilities and the tool also fails to make a distinction

between people with permanent disabilities and those with temporary disabilities. The GSS has so far done a partial analysis of the data collected in the 2021 census and the highlights show that the population of PWDs is estimated to be around 8% of the total country population. The data has been disaggregated but does not include key information about access to social services like education, employment, housing, communication, healthcare, etc.

National accountability mechanisms

Ghana's coordination mechanism for the implementation of the CRPD is anchored in the role of the NCPD as the state agency responsible for disability matters. However, stakeholders have raised concerns that it is an agency under the MOGCSP and therefore lacks capacity as an authoritative body capable of influencing political and governmental decisions toward the CRPD implementation. Its promotion to the status of a commission has therefore been advocated. However, this promotion has been questioned by some stakeholders who have argued that there is already a human rights commission – the CHRAJ. In the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Commission report, a new structure has been proposed for the CHRAJ to have a commissioner responsible for disability and other vulnerable populations. Overall, as stated in the report to the CRPD committee that “despite the roles being played by the CHRAJ and the NCPD, the state is yet to designate an independent state institution to monitor and report on the implementation of the convention”²

Key findings

- Although Ghana has included some inclusive data tools into its national statistics, further disaggregated data in the other areas of social services should be collected. Data on access to mainstream services and social support by people with disabilities should be included as one of the priority areas for data disaggregation.
- There is a need to have a national database on disability which should be made accessible in appropriate formats.
- Lack of effective coordination of ongoing efforts by key institutions and organisations working in the sector or those whose constitutional mandates have explicit implications for the CRPD implementation. Some stakeholders have noted with concern that the NCPD, CHRAJ and OPDs appear to be working in silos’ without effective mechanisms in place for coordination of efforts and leveraging of strengths and resources. Coordination at the level of organisations of and for people with disabilities was also highlighted as a priority.
- There is a lack of an independent national institution for the monitoring and reporting of progress made in the CRPD implementation in line with obligations under Article 33. The CHRAJ, being an independent human rights institution should be considered for this role.

4.3 Cross-cutting approaches: Participation, gender, inequalities

The UNPRPD has adopted three cross-cutting approaches to be intrinsically applied across all of UNPRPD MPTF's work, including its structures, programmes and processes, to ensure full and meaningful participation of all persons with disabilities. Accessibility of physical spaces and accessible information were highlighted as important factors to ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision making.



Participation:

Enabling full and effective participation of persons with disabilities



Inequalities:

Ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities



Gender:

Addressing gender inequality and advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities

Participation

The situational analysis report highlights that sustainable change requires empowerment and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. In order to ensure the effective engagement and participation of people with disabilities in the planning processes, some key informants have suggested that OPDs need to develop adequate capacities and acquire skills to enable them to engage effectively at the local levels with the MMDAs in the preparation and implementation of their development plans. It is also the responsibility of the MMDAs to provide a supportive environment for consultations with OPDs. However, Ghana currently does not have an affirmative policy for increasing the participation of people with disabilities in elected and appointed political positions to ensure they are fairly represented at the critical decision-making levels.

Gender

Within Ghana's current development initiatives, there is some focus on women with disabilities. For instance, through its 2020 Budget Statement and Economic Policy, the government has empowered 100 women with disabilities to start their own business and has trained 1000 women entrepreneurs with disabilities. However, there is a clear gap in gender responsive disability inclusive programming efforts in Ghana and is an important area for improvement.

Overall, women with disabilities experience increased discrimination and stigma in Ghana. They also face risks of gender-based violence (GBV), which are perpetuated by systemic factors, including cultural practices, stigma and discrimination, inadequate social protection measures to minimize their vulnerabilities, lack of inclusive systems for reporting abuses, and an inaccessible justice system, particularly in remote communities.

Some studies have revealed that women with disabilities have limited support and access to maternal health care services due to the lack of quality support from family or community members.

Inequalities

The voices of underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities are not adequately captured in national policy decisions and discussions about disability inclusive programmes. These groups include women with disabilities (particularly in rural communities), deafblind persons, persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, etc. Persons with disabilities from LGBTQ+ community also face increased forms of discrimination, abuse and social exclusion due to negative attitudes towards them. The need to protect their rights has not been addressed in the current Disability Act or the proposed re-enactment bill.

On a positive note, in the case of mental health care and the rights of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, there has been a shift towards supporting deinstitutionalization. This is an important effort towards emphasizing community mental health care rather than confining persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities in institutions. So far, these efforts have depended on support from international CSOs.

4.4 Disability inclusion in broader development, humanitarian and emergency contexts

National development plans

Disability inclusion is reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and makes reference to disability as highlighted in the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and Socio-economic Response and Recovery Plan (SERRP). Specifically, disability inclusion is captured as part of the goal of Outcome 1 in the UNSDCF regarding inclusive employment and livelihoods for persons with disabilities and well as in the UN's theory of change framework. The theory of change recognizes that the pathway of changes requires the empowerment of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups and it is emphasized a high-priority area. Despite this, there is no specific indicator addressing disability inclusion among the seven selected monitoring and evaluation indicators in the UNSDCF.

Furthermore, the UNCT Results Report³ indicates a commitment to undertake programmes with significant bearings on the achievement of disability-inclusive results. For instance, the UNCT Results Report 2020 stated that among the seven expected outcomes, outcome 4 is focused on “marginalized and vulnerable populations demand and utilization of social services”. It further reported that the “ministry of education was supported to develop teaching and learning support materials for HIV education and awareness campaigns targeting young people with special needs and various forms of disability”. There is however no information on the specific results achieved for persons with disabilities.

Climate change, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action

In the Ghana National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Framework, which was developed by the Environmental Protection Agency in collaboration with the National Development Planning Commission, the state has recognised the need to address inequality among the various vulnerable groups, which include persons with disabilities. However, in several of Ghana's climate change and disaster response plans including the Ghana Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation, there is no specific mention of persons with disabilities. The Ghana Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation do not mention disability or persons with disabilities as a specific target group, but include them as part of vulnerable groups (which does not guarantee that they are included in practice). As indicated in the state's report to the CRPD committee, there is no policy framework and provisions in the Disability Act on inclusive disaster management.

In the country's National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework 2022-2025, it has been stated that "efforts to mainstream climate change into government development agenda have not been as successful as expected due to limited political commitment, and inadequate public financial mechanisms to address climate change as a development challenge; limited awareness and weak capacity among MDAs and MMDAs"⁴. These general challenges demonstrate the reasons why there is a lack of clear policies on disaster risk management targeting the specific needs of persons with disabilities.

COVID-19

The situational analysis did not include relevant information on the impacts of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities. However, the report indicated that 21, 566 persons with disabilities across 165 districts in Ghana received disability inclusive COVID-19 information.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the progress made to improve the legislative and policy frameworks for disability inclusion, several gaps remain. Based on the findings of the situational analysis, the following recommendations were developed to address challenges identified:

Recommendations for the UN

- Support the government to expedite action on the ongoing review processes towards reforming domestic disability legislations, particularly the re-enactment of the Disability Act to align with the CRPD.
- Provide technical support to the Ghana Statistical Service and other state institutions to improve disability data through the mainstreaming of the WG short set of questions on disability into administrative data collection and analysis processes.
- Support the government to prioritise the setting up of multidisciplinary disability assessment centres in the country to enable the linking of the outcomes of assessments and access to assistive devices and support services for people with disabilities.
- Prioritize informal primary caregivers and support workers, particularly, mothers who have children with severe forms of disabilities, as key target groups in all ongoing and future programmes as a way of empowering them to improve the quality of informal care and support for persons with disabilities in critical need of such services.
- Strengthen the national CSOs platform on SGDs to expand its focus on disability-inclusive development, monitor the CRPD implementation and include underrepresented disability groups in its activities.

Recommendations for Government actions

- The government needs to expedite ongoing actions to reform the legislative and policy frameworks for the effective implementation of the CRPD. The re-enacted bill to replace the Disability Act 715 needs to move beyond its current stage of consideration as a matter of urgency.
- Improve systems and structures for coordination among NCPD, CHRAJ and ODPs/CSOs in the implementation of the CRPD or a national disability strategy.

- Initiate policy dialogue and national discussions about the urgent need to have a sustainable scheme to finance the implementation of a national disability strategy.
- Prioritize the setting up of multidisciplinary disability assessment centres across the country to aid the linking of assessments to access to goods, support services, and assistive technologies.
- In the absence of a funding mechanism for the implementation of a national disability strategy, the government needs to adequately resource the NCPD and CHRAJ to implement and monitor key provisions of the CRPD in line with their mandates as the national focal point within the government for CRPD implementation and the national independent human rights commission respectively.
- The government should formally recognise the role of informal disability support workers and caregivers through state-funding schemes and training.
- Strengthen national institutions to enforce the implementation of the Ghana Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment (GASB) which has been developed by the Ghana Standards Authority to improve access to the built environment.
- Prioritize the creation of senior-management level disability/diversity and inclusion units within public sector organisations and strengthen existing ones for internal coordination and mainstreaming of national disability strategy into the plans of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs).

Recommendations for Rights Holders and CSOs

- Strengthen their advocacy capacities to better support the implementation and monitoring of the CRPD and Global Disability Summit commitments. This should include the tracking of implementation of national development planning frameworks and the medium-term development plans of local MMDAs.
- OPDs, NGOs and government need to collaborate more effectively to identify, mobilize, and strengthen underrepresented disability groups of people with disabilities to effectively participate in the national policy decision-making processes.
- OPDs and CSOs, through the existing SDGs monitoring platforms, need to be strengthened to increase their focus on issues of disability inclusion and CRPD implementation, including the increase in the participation of underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities.

ANNEX 1: 26 SELECTED COUNTRIES



ENDNOTES

- 1 2021 P opulation and Housing Census, Ghana Statistical Service
- 2 CRPD Report 2018
- 3 UNCT Results Reports 2020 for Ghana. <https://ghana.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/UNCT%20Ghana%202020%20Results%20Report%20Final.pdf>
- 4 https://ndpc.gov.gh/media/MTNDPF_2022-2025_Dec-2021.pdf



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