



THE SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION AND STIGMA REDUCTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITY INCLUSION PROJECT



Hope for Future Generations

Hope for Future Generations (HFFG) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization registered in 2001 that seeks to improve the health and socio-economic status of women, children, young people and persons with disabilities through innovative and acceptable participatory strategies in beneficiary communities. The organization works in close partnership with the public and private sectors at every level to roll-out empowerment, capacity building, social and behaviour change interventions and advocacy programmes for targeted beneficiaries in selected communities. All its interventions are evidence-driven to ensure that communities and vulnerable populations are empowered to lead healthier lives.

The PsyKForum

The PsyKForum is a national non-governmental organisation focused on forming partnerships for psychosocial well-being. The PsyKForum aims to mobilize various groups and empower people to take action for improved mental wellbeing and reduce stigma and marginalization.

Ghana Somubi Dwumadie (Ghana Participation Programme)

Ghana Somubi Dwumadie (Ghana Participation Programme) is a four-year disability programme in Ghana, with a specific focus on mental health. This programme is funded with UK aid from the UK government. The programme is run by an Options' led consortium, which also consists of BasicNeeds-Ghana, Sightsavers, Tropical Health and Kings College, London and focuses on four key areas:

1. Promoting stronger policies and systems that respect the rights of people with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions.
2. Scaling up high quality and accessible mental health services.
3. Reducing stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities, including mental health conditions.
4. Generating evidence to inform policy and practice on the effectiveness of disability and mental health programmes and interventions.

Ghana Somubi Dwumadie is undertaking a range of activities to address the

impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with disabilities, including mental health conditions.

Background on Disability in Ghana

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates disability prevalence in Ghana at 12.8%. According to the Ministry of health this number continues to rise due to demographic trends and increase in chronic health conditions, among other causes.

Ghana has signed, ratified and adopted various international agreements and implemented a number of policies and programmes that protect the fundamental freedoms of all Persons with Disabilities, promote and respect their inherent dignity and make provisions that safeguard their rights. Despite these positive strides, a number of obstacles to the integration and inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in all spheres of life still exist.

The Ghana Somubi Dwumadie Programme in November, 2020 conducted a study that showed that stigma and discrimination related to disability and mental health conditions are widespread in Ghana and present major barriers which prevent people with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions from equitably accessing health and other social opportunities. The study identified language around disability and mental health conditions, community and family support, culture and religion, and lack of enforcement of laws on disability as key behaviours that need to change in order to address the problem of stigma and discrimination.

As part of efforts to encourage Government, Development Partners and Stakeholders to invest more in mental health and ensure better disability inclusion Ghana, the UK Government through UK Aid has provided funding to support The Ghana Somubi Dwumadie Programme to ensure that the health and wellbeing of persons with disabilities and mental health conditions are improved, and that they engaged, empowered and able to enjoy improved social and economic outcomes and rights.

The Social Behaviour Change Communication and Stigma Reduction for Mental Health and Disability Inclusion Project

HFFG and The PsyKForum have, as a consortium, been awarded a grant from Ghana Somubi Dwumadie (Ghana Participation Programme) to promote mental health and disability inclusion in Ghana. The grant is for a period of three years commencing on 26th April, 2021 and ending on the 31st of December, 2021. The grant is expected to support efforts to remove barriers such as stigma and discrimination which prevent people with disabilities, including mental health conditions, from reaching their full potential.

Project Goal and Objectives:

The goal of the project is to reduce negative and discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and norms faced by people with disabilities in Ghana, including people with mental health conditions.

Specific objectives of the project:

- To create a positive culture of support to allow people with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions, to reach their full potential.
- To increase the use of positive disability and mental health language among community stakeholders and the media.
- To improve enforcement of Ghana's Disability and Mental health policies and laws by duty bearers.

Project Locations:

The project will be implemented in four regions, namely Greater Accra, Central, North East and Savannah, and in 18 districts in the country.

Target Population:

HFFG and The PsyKForum will work together with Persons with disability and mental health conditions, families and caregivers of persons with disabilities and mental health conditions, traditional and religious leaders, health workers, the media, state agencies such as health facilities and MMDAs, schools and health facilities, and law enforcement agencies such as CHRAJ, DOVVSU and the Ghana Police Service to ensure that persons with disabilities and mental health conditions are engaged, empowered and able to enjoy improved social and economic outcomes and rights.

Some activities to be undertaken during the project period include the following;

- Organizing inception meetings with organisations of persons with disabilities, state agencies responsible for implementing Ghana's policies and laws on disability and mental health (district assemblies, health centers and schools), traditional and religious leaders and other key stakeholders.
- Organizing language design meeting with traditional leaders, religious leaders, opinion leaders and Center for National Culture, language experts and organisations of persons with disabilities to develop non-discriminatory positive language.
- Capacity building for persons with disabilities and their caregivers, health workers, media and community stakeholders.
- Conducting advocacy at the district level with MMDAs and religious and traditional authorities for the enactment/enforcement of by-laws that prohibit negative and discriminatory attitudes and practices towards people with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions.
- Holding policy dialogue sessions with the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development for the integration of actions to address stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities and mental health conditions into the indicators assessed as part of the Functional Organisational Assessment Tool (FOAT) for District Assemblies
- Partnering government agencies like the Legal Aid Scheme, DOVVSU, CHRAJ and Social Welfare to undertake Strategic Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution on behalf of persons with disabilities, including mental health conditions.

References

1. (WHO, World Bank,2011)



For more details about our organization,
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