

Legacy and Sustainability Grants Evaluation Summary

Introduction

The Legacy and Sustainability grants call implemented by Ghana Somubi Dwumadie harnessed the unique contribution and strengths of small and grassroots organisations by strengthening their capacity to bring about sustainable change in the lives of people with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions, and particularly women with disabilities or mental health conditions. Specifically, it sought to:

- Strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of small and grassroots Self-Help Groups, Women's Right Organisations, and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities thus enabling them to play a greater role in user-led approaches to claiming the rights of people, especially women, with disabilities, including those with mental health conditions
- Improve the wellbeing of and empower people, especially women, with disabilities, including those with mental health conditions, through interventions implemented by small and grassroots self-help groups, women's rights organisations, and organisations of people with disabilities

Building on the experiences and lessons from the COVID-19 Psychosocial Resilience Grants and the Evidence and Effectiveness Grants implemented by Ghana Somubi Dwumadie, there was recognition of the importance of supporting small and grassroots women's rights organisations and organisations of people with disabilities to build their own capacity across a broad range of themes. The Legacy and Sustainability Grants were awarded to four local organisations of people with disabilities and women's rights organisations in November 2022. The grants ended in October 2023 and an end of project evaluation was commissioned to assess impact on the grantees and their participants.

Throughout the implementation period, grantees were supported to develop and finalised their result frameworks, Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool, work plans, and quarterly and final completion reports. The result frameworks and work plans served as guides for project implementation, while the quarterly and final reports documented the project progress and achievements.

Table 1: Description of grants and their project

Grantee	Location	Project Title	Outcomes
Duapa Mothers Union	Southern Ghana: Bono East Region	Women's Rights and Inclusion for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions at district and community levels • Strengthen Institutional and technical capacity of Duapa making it more functional in carrying out its mandate
Ghana Blind Union (GBU)	Northern Ghana: Savanna and Northern Regions	Justice for all blind and partially sighted persons in the society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBU and its members gain capacities and a minimum of 3 out of 5 blind and partially sighted (BPS) persons whose rights were violated in the three project districts access justice • By 2023, a minimum of 3 informal institutions of justice in the 3 project districts are aware of the needs of BPS persons and have modified their practices to support BPS persons to access justice and reduced discrimination and stigma
Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GNAD)	Southern and Northern Ghana: Upper West, Northern and Greater Accra Regions	Promoting Opportunities for Deaf Women's Empowerment and Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen the capacity of GNAD's Women's Wing to participate in decision making and advocate for the rights of Deaf women • Institutional capacity of GNAD to be strengthened to be more functional in carrying out its mandate
Women with Disability Development & Advocacy Organisation (WODAO)	Southern Ghana: Volta Region	Capacity for Change Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-advocacy skills of 40 women with disabilities, to be built to start speaking up for themselves, and accessing social services including 3% DACF • Institutional capacity of WODAO, strengthened to be more functional in carrying out its mandate



Study methodology

The evaluation design included the use of both secondary and primary methods to gather relevant data for assessment. A desk review of secondary documents such as the grantee project completion reports, quarterly reports, project results framework, grantees organisational capacity assessment tools among others, was done. The desk review was complemented with qualitative field interviews with project participants and stakeholders using key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Respondents for these interviews included persons with disabilities including persons with mental health conditions and their caregivers; officials from district assemblies and traditional authorities; and the project implementers from the following project districts;

- Sene West (for Duapa)
- Ho Municipal (for WODAO)
- Savelugu, Sagnarigu and Central Gonja districts (for GBU)
- Tamale Metropolis and Wa Municipal (for GNAD)

Data gathered were analysed based on the evaluation questions which include;

- The extent to which specific projects achieved their respective outcomes and outputs;
- The extent to which projects contributed to the objectives of the Legacy and Sustainability call;
- The effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation strategies;
- The extent of projects' sustainability;
- The extent of projects' participatory and empowering manner with stakeholders;
- The extent of projects' ability to enhance local ownership and capacity to influence policy

Based on these, the evaluation then assessed the specific project's contributions towards;

- Institutional and technical capacities of grantees; and
- Reduction of stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities including persons with mental health conditions



Key Findings and Results

Enhanced Organisational Capacity

As part of the inception activities, Ghana Somubi Dwumadie supported the four grantees to conduct an Organisational Capacity Assessment, using a participatory and engaging approach which encouraged participants to take ownership of the process. An assessment tool was developed to guide grantees to assess their strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats. Grantees then developed their own action plans after which funds were released for them to implement tailored interventions they had identified. Based on the capacity assessments, some central training needs across the four grantees were identified and appropriate training was provided centrally by Ghana Somubi Dwumadie. The four grantees benefited from a range of training and development sessions on: Monitoring and evaluation; Strategic planning; Making change happen; Grants management; Financial management; Risk assessment and management; Data protection; Gender mainstreaming; Safeguarding; and Branding, marketing and communication.

The grantees also benefited from mentorship sessions through quarterly mentoring and supportive supervision visits by the Ghana Somubi Dwumadie team, as well as demand-led mentorship support from the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations. In addition, there was also knowledge sharing among the legacy and sustainability grantees themselves and with the programmes' evidence and effectiveness grantees. For instance, ABAK and VOICE, both evidence and effectiveness grantees were included as peer facilitators at the 'Making change happen' training. They also provided support for Duapa and WODAO, especially in terms of technical delivery like helping with approaches to addressing stigma. Other combined learning events between all grantees also provided opportunities to learn from each other.

These capacity-building sessions, knowledge sharing events and the mentorship support provided by Ghana Somubi Dwumadie made significant progress in building the institutional and technical capacities of grantees. The GBU has, for instance, been able to develop an additional eight operating manuals and policies (safeguarding, non-discriminatory and anti-corruption, data protection, whistleblowing, code of ethics, anti-slavery, procurement) which have been mainstreamed into their operations. With emphasis on the safeguarding and procurement policies, for instance, a key GBU staff member interviewed during the evaluation added,

'Now GBU staff and members are aware of practices that expose members and staff to harassment and harm as well as where they will report issues in case of abuse.'

‘I had a challenge with procurement prior to the inception of Somubi project because we did not have a clear procurement policy in place to guide us. The Somubi legacy grant created the environment for effective networking and we were able to network with the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations and received strategic mentorship to develop a procurement policy. This has made my work easier as the policy provides appropriate guidelines for procurement.’

GBU, on its own has also been able to develop and review its 2-year strategic plan (2023-2025), an activity which hitherto was a challenge for them. This has also helped them to reduce operational costs as affirmed by a staff member interviewed,

‘This strategic plan which could cost GBU huge sums of money through hiring of consultant service was reviewed by GBU staff and the Board president as a result of training received through the project. It also helped to build our internal capacity’

GNAD, on their part, within the project period has witnessed greater institutionalisation of their policies in their operations. This includes the gender policy, where deliberate efforts were made to include women in the association’s key decision-making processes. For the first time a woman represented GNAD on a national media platform as a panelist on a Ghana TV programme called The Breakfast Show. The constitution of GNAD has also been amended to promote the inclusion of women. Now the National Vice President position and National Vice Secretary positions are reserved solely for women, and two positions (based on appointment) are to be allocated to women.

As a result of the capacity building provided, GNAD now has an improved governance structure with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

‘There is now a new 9-member national executive which meets frequently, at least on quarterly basis to deliberate on strategic organisation issues. This was not initially the situation, but after the capacity building provided to the national executive by Ghana Somubi Dwumadie, we have this in place and it’s working effectively’ An executive GNAD member

Other remarkable impacts in GNAD’s operations now include enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems as well as programme management and reporting, which has become an integral part of the association’s programme implementation. These have enhanced visibility and confidence of GNAD staff and the organisation as a whole. There is evidence of donor confidence in GNAD as donors have shown interest in working with GNAD and have scaled up their funding support to them, a situation GNAD has attributed to the capacity building support received.

‘The various training programmes gave me insight into effective report writing and presentation as well as how to use participatory and engaging approaches. One of the presentation styles I now adopt is ‘experience sharing’. This method allows participants to share their experience with each other and critically examine each other’s situations. Applying this style of presentation have indeed helped me in my work. For example, I am now able to engage more and get positive feedbacks on lesson learned from participants.’

To me the grantees learning, capacity building, and other activities related to the programme have contributed significantly to my growth and development as staff of GNAD.'

Similar to GBU and GNAD, WODAO has also improved its governance structure as a result of the capacity building support and mentorship programme organised for its leadership. WODAO now has seven new board members who have been appointed to steer the affairs of the organisation for the next four years. The Board and management have revised the organisation's Constitution and developed a three-year strategic and operational plan to guide its activities into the future. In addition, WODAO has developed key operational policies and procedure documents to enhance its operation and administrative systems. Internal restructuring has also been made to demarcate the secretariat and management from the Board by employing two permanent staff for the secretariat. In addition, the organisation is now;

- Registered with the Non-Profit Organisations Secretariat in Accra
- Become a member of NETRIGHTS of WOMEN, an umbrella organisation for women's rights organisations in Ghana
- Developed its website (www.wodao.africa)
- Has new Board members to steer the affairs of WODAO

WODAO's engagement with state and non-state stakeholders has been enhanced within the project period. WODAO has collaborated with institutions such as Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, municipal and district assemblies; the regional and the districts social welfare departments; department of Gender, National Health Insurance Scheme, Ghana Health Service Directorate, Domestic Violence and Victims Unit of the Ghana Police Service, among others. All these have enhanced WODAO's visibility and also strengthened its institutional capacities to be more functional in carrying out its mandate. A staff of WODAO confirming this said,

'Reflecting on all the trainings received directly by the programme, we must confess that, WODAO has become a better organisation as a result of all the trainings. The organisation including the human resource has now been equipped to function better than before.'

Another staff attesting to the positive impact of the project said,

'It is an undeniable fact that, within the one-year period of implementing the Capacity for Change project, WODAO has gone through so many transformational activities which has placed the organisation on a higher height than before. WODAO has now received the needed technical capacity to fully operate as a full-fledged user-led disability women's rights organisation not only in Volta and Oti but Ghana as a whole.'

Finally, the institutional capacity of Duapa Mothers Union is strengthened through improved resource mobilisation skills. Duapa is now able to develop new winning proposals for funding. It has improved its donor mapping skills and expanded its networks with other local organisations. For example, Duapa has been able to win new funding for its women empowerment programme. The evaluation further

revealed improved networking and collaboration of Duapa through the capacity building and mentorship supports.

‘As a result of the training and mentorship received, we have been able to establish partnerships with other organisations, advocacy groups, and government agencies involved in similar work. These collaborations have increased our visibility especially in disability inclusion and mental health support.’ A staff member of Duapa

As part of the capacity building sessions, grantees were guided to conduct an organisational capacity assessment where they identified their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at the initial stages of the program. A final assessment was also done after the programme. General findings from the final assessment reveal an improvement in grantees’ capacities, mainly in the areas of;

- Organisational governance, leadership and management
- External relationships
- Stakeholder engagement
- Financial management
- Risk management
- Monitoring and Evaluation

‘The existence of the association is well noted at the local level. Members are invited to occasions once in a while. Members are also invited to meetings when necessary. In the Somubi project districts for instance, traditional leaders now engage freely with GBU’ Extract from GBU assessment

‘We had a financial policy, but it was not detailed and also mostly not in use. But with support from Ghana Somubi Dwumadie, the policy has now been reviewed to ensure that it covers common financial processes which is now being used’ Extract from Duapa assessment

Empowered Participants

Grantees implemented a range of activities such as;

- Sensitisation on relevant acts and processes and procedures for accessing justice from informal institutions
- Legal education workshop for confidants
- Community durbars and workshops to create public awareness about discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions
- Training workshops for participants on leadership and advocacy
- Interface meetings to engage duty bearers on opportunities for persons with disabilities
- Training of queen mothers as Queens for Change and Inclusion Agents on positive languages, and myths and misconceptions around mental health and disabilities

- Socialisation meetings among people with disabilities and mental health conditions

The evaluation revealed that the implementation of these activities yielded some positive results such as improved access to justice, stigma reduction, increased confidence among persons with disabilities and mental health conditions, and change in societal attitude towards persons with disabilities and mental health conditions, among others.

Who are the Confidants?

The confidants are BPS persons selected at the community level and trained to voluntarily assist BPS persons to access justice from informal institutions of justice. Confidants are persons that BPS persons confide in and trust to lead discussions that resolve their issues. They engage heads of informal institutions of justice to sensitise them on the challenges confronting BPS persons in their communities.

GBU interventions have enhanced the confidence levels of participants, which is evidenced by some of them standing for leadership positions in their communities. Five BPS persons made up of one woman and four men have been appointed to leadership positions in Dimali in the Sagnarigu districts and Buipe and Kabilipa communities in the Central Gonja district. These leadership positions include a welfare secretary for a village savings and loans group, a sub-chief and executive leaders of a youth group.

Access to justice from informal institutions by BPS persons has been another success of GBU interventions. Across the project districts, 38 BPS persons reported human rights abuse cases through the informal institutions of justice. It is noteworthy that 28 (73%) of the reported cases were resolved at the time of project closure in October 2023. These have been made possible as a result of initiatives put in place by project communities such as;

- Appointment of elders in palaces to be responsible for issues concerning persons with disabilities
- Removal of customary fees charges for persons with disabilities as a requirement for seeking audience at the palace to report cases for redress

With these initiatives and the continues presence of the confidants, together with the commitment of the informal justice institutions, the remaining ten cases and any other new cases will be resolved even after the exit of the project.

‘One blind person from a royal family in this community who was denied his chieftaincy title because of his disability, has now been honoured with the title Jisonayilli naa¹ as a result of the interventions by the GBU’ A traditional leader interviewed

¹ A chief at Jisonayilli (a community in northern Ghana)

GNAD's interventions targeted its women's wing to participate in decision-making and advocating for the rights of Deaf women. One success for these interventions has been the willingness of these women to participate in leadership roles. More than 20 of the Deaf women trained exhibited changes in attitudes and readiness to take up leadership roles, a situation which was not common prior to the project interventions. One woman elected leader in the Northern region affirming this in an interview said;

'Prior to the training provided by the programme, I considered these roles as being the roles of men who are active and could take part in association activities. I simply did not think I can ever be leader and I did not want to ever try it as I did not believe I can ever succeed. My fear was that if I become leader, my fellow women will speak bad about me and I did not want any problem. However, after the training sessions I realised that I can also make it and indeed I have made it'

Another elected woman from GNAD also shared her views, **'I was just shy and did not have the confidence. I did not believe I can succeed and I was afraid of comments from my fellow women. But now I fully participate in all decision-making with great inputs'**

The evaluation also revealed evidence of enhanced advocacy skills as trained leaders have been able to engage and negotiate with regional and district level organisations for the betterment of Deaf women. For instance, Northern Regional association leaders have joined forces with the regional executives to engage with state institutions to support income generation activities for members of the women's wing. Subsequently, the Savannah Investment Fund has provided support to the Northern Regional Association of the Deaf to commence commercial farming which including growing maize and soyabeans. In the Upper West Region, the Women's Wing have also engaged with other donors for support to Deaf women farmers into the agricultural value chain system.

Through Duapa's extensive awareness campaigns, panel and focus group discussions and advocacy efforts in the communities, there have been noticeable shifts in societal attitude and behaviours towards persons with disabilities. People in the project communities of Duapa are now more aware and understanding of persons with disabilities resulting in a reduction in stigma and discrimination. Some persons with disabilities in the Sene West district interviewed during the evaluation shared the following;

'Duapa Mothers Union have helped people with disability to mingle themselves with people in the society that is the reason why we are happy with Duapa.'

'At first, they were calling me Pozzo, I was ashamed and never liked that. Now they call me Alan Cash or Dadda Cash which makes me feel proud and doing my business. This new name is giving me more boost in doing my leather work business.'

'The benefit we have gained is that most of us with disability now feel that we are humans and can now mingle with other people in the society.'

The confidence level of women with disabilities has also increased as a result of Duapa interventions. As many as 15 women filed their nomination to contest in the 2023 district-level elections, out of which eight of them were successful.

WODAO's advocacy initiatives led to the submission of applications of 25 women with disabilities for the 3% District Assembly Common Fund for persons with disabilities. Similar to the other grantees, WODAO's interventions have also contributed to the reduction in stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities including people with mental health conditions. People with disabilities who were interviewed said:

'After the implementation of this project, there has been much more involvement of us in community work, leadership and also in decision making. A fine is given to whoever is found physically or verbally abusing anyone with disabilities by the chiefs and elders of the community'

'There has been change or decrease in the name calling, verbal and physical abuse. There has also been some positive attitude of society toward disabled and mentally challenged people and their families'

'Previously in our community, persons with disability or those with mental health issues were not buried in the community. However, after the project implementation I could see a change in the treatment given to us. We are wholly accepted in everything concerning development or decision-making in the community. Our chiefs have passed byelaws against those who use disparaging words against us. Anyone who is found guilty will be fined'

Project participants are now confident to voice their concerns as a result of the advocacy and assertiveness training provided by WODAO. A participant in this training, a woman with a disability who prior to the project interventions struggled to voice her issues, confidently stated,

'My confidence has been built to the extent that I am currently contesting as a unit committee member in my community (Abutia Kloe) during the upcoming District Assembly Elections'



Project Sustainability

The adoption of user-led approaches in project implementation is a positive sign of project sustainability. The technical capacity of project participants, who are people with disabilities including women with disabilities or mental health conditions, were built to take lead roles in project implementation. The use of this approach ensured that key actions affecting persons with disability were led by persons with disabilities. For all four grantees persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, were at the forefront of almost all actions leading to results. For instance, confidants used by GBU were BPS persons; Duapa's awareness campaigns were led by women with disabilities; GNAD members through the women's wing led the engagement of stakeholders; and WODAO's engagement with community and

district-level stakeholders were led by women with disabilities. With this approach, community leaders and duty bearers saw the genuine issues facing persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, and were more willing to lend support and address the issues. This user-led approach has contributed to building their capacity to continue to advocate for their rights for improved wellbeing and access to justice and social services.

The involvement of other key stakeholders at the district and community levels in project implementation processes is also another indicator of project sustainability. These stakeholders mainly included religious and traditional leaders, the media, officials of the District Assembly and Department of Social Welfare, Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, among others. The project implementation was led by the grantees themselves, who are persons with disabilities, and co-opted other stakeholders to support their cause. The cooperative and proactive role of traditional and religious leaders as well as district assembly officials will sustain the gains made beyond the lifespan of the project. For instance, the buy-in of traditional and religious authorities as informal institutions of justice to help resolve and seek for justice for BPS persons and other persons with disabilities is a strong factor for the project's sustainability. Again, traditional leaders across Duapa's project communities have declared their communities as stigma-free and shown commitment in supporting persons with disabilities.



Key Learnings and Promising Practices

- The adoption of the user-led approach combined with capacity building of grassroots participants (users) helps not only to secure the buy-in of stakeholders, but also create legitimacy for the advocacy action and anchor sustainability. The evidence adduced in the evaluation report shows that when the user is at the forefront of demanding their rights, they more easily convince stakeholders to act. Key actors and implementers of the legacy and sustainability grants have been persons with disabilities who have been driving their own course, engaging community and district-level stakeholders on matters that affect their lives. This, as has been revealed by the evaluation, yielded positive results for all grantees. This was made possible through the capacity building support these key actors received from the programme. A GBU staff member affirming this stated; **'Building the capacity of members and creating the platforms and resourcing them to lead advocacy at the grassroots using their own stories and experiences turn in quick results and change'**. This approach should therefore be replicated in similar interventions by ensuring that the capacity building of users is made a requirement of the project design and sustainability strategies
- Sharing information on good practices across all levels of the organisation is important to spread knowledge and build the capacity of organisations. The projects provided the opportunity for grantees to network with each other and

thereby learn from each other's experiences. There were also combined learning events between all grantees that served as means of learning from each other.

'Some key activities of this legacy and sustainability project that enhanced our organisational capacity were the learning events. We were able to network and also learn a lot from other grantees' A Duapa staff member

- Deeper community involvement in the implementation of social and behavioural change action is critical to sustaining the gains made. The grantee implementation experience has shown that in situations where key community actors are involved, results are achieved in a timely manner. The involvement of key actors like traditional, religious and local authorities by grantees yields results. It is even faster when the engagement is led by the end users themselves. An instance is the concept of confidants, where BPS persons at various communities were used as focal persons in leading discussions with community leaders and assisting BPS persons to access justice
- The project experience has shown that for young grassroots civil society organisations to endure, there is the need for strong networking and collaboration not only with state institutions but with traditional and religious bodies and like-minded civil society organisation both within and outside project districts



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A full report of the study and methodologies used in this study is available from Ghana Somubi Dwumadie on request.



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