

Summary of Political Economy Analysis

About this summary

- This briefing is a summary of a study conducted in October 2020 by Ghana Somubi Dwumadie. A Political Economy Analysis (PEA) was undertaken to enhance existing knowledge and understanding of how power dynamics, values, and customs and conventions affect mental health and disability policies in Ghana
- It has been developed from six available studies prepared for Ghana Somubi Dwumadie on different aspects of disability, including mental health conditions. The information from these studies, plus other literature, were analysed to better understand what incentivises and influences behaviours when addressing the needs of people with disabilities, including mental health conditions
- The analysis also suggests how to facilitate a more favourable engagement with government and civil society to develop and implement strong, human rights-based disability and mental health policies, as well as protect existing policies, and repeal and/or revise those that prevent the full realisation of the rights of people with disabilities and mental health conditions

About Ghana Somubi Dwumadie

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

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

About Political Economy Analysis

What is Political Economy Analysis? Political economy analysis is about understanding the political dimensions of any context and actively using this information to inform policy and programming. Politics is the formal and informal ways through which contestation or cooperation occurs in a society.

Political economy analysis involves looking at the dynamic interaction between structures, institutions and actors (stakeholders), to understand how decisions are made.

Key findings

Structural Features

- Socio-cultural norms and historical colonial legacies have led to the development of a culture of patronage at the expense of building state administrative capacities by appointing candidates purely on merit
- Social and economic inequalities persist in Ghana, between regions and different population groups, with vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, including mental health conditions, being poorer and having fewer opportunities to advance economically
- Stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities, including mental health conditions remain very high, which in turn leads to increased exclusion from people participating socially, politically and economically in their communities
- Women with disabilities are especially at risk given the intersectional effects of disability and gender, including being subjected to high levels of gender-based violence
- Ghana's health and social care institutions have the potential to provide higher quality services for people with disabilities, including mental health conditions, as they reach into communities
- Legislation and policies are in place for the protection of the rights of people with disabilities, including mental health conditions, as well as to guide programmes and services. However, these are not being effectively realised through plans, budgets and action
- COVID-19 is putting additional strains on the structural aspects that also affect people with disabilities, especially on people's mental health, due to economic downturn, restrictions on service provision and access, and increased gender-based violence

Agency Features

- Stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities, including mental health conditions results in politicians and other decision makers at all levels de-prioritising needs and issues
- Ghana's history and politics has led to a political culture that rewards individuals for their electoral support, meaning decision makers can be more incentivised by short term visible investments, such as large infrastructure projects, as opposed to longer term programme and service quality improvements
- There are promising community-based and civil society initiatives that raise awareness of the needs of, develop the capacity of, and provide supportive services for people with disabilities, including mental health conditions
- Advocacy by civil society organisations and NGOs have successfully resulted in the Ghanaian government putting in place a number of disability inclusive elements to support policy implementation. This has included the placement of community psychiatric nurses and social welfare officers in every district and legislating for 3% of the District Assembly Community Fund to be protected for disability related programmes and individual support
- International and national non-governmental organisations and development partners have helped to heighten the awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, and to influence the mobilisation of resources for national and local initiatives

What can be done to improve the current situation?

Discussion and recommendations

While Ghana has several good policies in place to support people with disabilities, including mental health conditions, not enough attention or financial resources are provided to ensure that these are implemented. To fill this gap, Ghana Somubi Dwumadie will need to place substantial emphasis on the following:

1. Bringing evidence to bear on, and support for, the finalisation of strategies, plans and monitoring frameworks
2. Support to community based disability organisations, including mental health disability organisations, to strengthen voice and accountability
3. Support for improving the quality, accessibility and availability of disability inclusive services and programmes

The above analysis of structural and agency features of disability, including mental health conditions, in Ghana suggests a number of significant challenges to improving the current situation, but also a number of useful opportunities. The key to making good use of these opportunities to benefit people with disabilities, including mental health conditions, is to ensure that the programmes partners form alliances to work with the Ghanaian health and social care system at all levels

Bringing evidence to bear on, and support for, the finalisation of strategies, plans and monitoring frameworks

- Experience from technical support programmes in other countries suggests that in most cases the people in existing posts are highly capable individuals, but there may not be enough people in an institution or department to fully implement strategies. It will be useful for the programme to look at where these capacity bottlenecks might exist in order to see where technical assistance could help to increase the flow of decision making needed to unblock planning, budgeting and implementation
- By working with key sympathetic influencers to improve social perceptions and attitudes towards disability, Ghana Somubi Dwumadie will help to ensure targeted disability plans are developed and to shift political reluctance to invest in, for example, the Mental Health Fund at national level, or to ensure that the 3% of the DACF is used for genuine social, economic and health needs of people with disabilities, including mental health conditions
- An important step to ensuring that district plans and budgets are being prepared and implemented in ways that meet the needs of individuals and families is to provide those using the services and programmes with the means to collect and use data, monitor and feedback on their scope and on their reach. There are many examples of how this could be developed for other health conditions and in other countries that could be built on or used as models if they appear to be effective
- Beyond these foundational actions the programme could also work to help finalise national strategies and plans that are still in draft form, such as the Mental Health

Policy, as well as support the implementation and monitoring of these strategies and plans

Support to community-based disability organisations, including mental health disability organisations, to strengthen voice and accountability

- An important area of improvement is ensuring that community groups and networks have better data on disability, including mental health. Having more accurate data on the scale and scope of the types of disabilities, both physical and mental, and where they are located can be used by advocacy groups to target their campaigning more
- There already are a number of potential partners and initiatives that are working to tackle the high levels of stigma and discrimination faced by people with disabilities, including mental health conditions. These are often very localised and not necessarily working to scale. Ghana Somubi Dwumadie could help these partners to develop a more structured voice and accountability strategy to bring together and consolidate various initiatives and to build on best practice examples that have worked in Ghana and elsewhere. This would help increase the profile of, and to de-stigmatise, people with disabilities, including mental health conditions

Support for improving the quality, accessibility and availability of disability inclusive services and programmes

- Changing attitudes and behaviours, especially ones that are culturally ingrained, is difficult, but not impossible. Key influencers, such as opinion leaders in certain communities and in national life can make a difference because their actions and opinions often strongly influence national governance and discourse
- The programme's partners could work together to identify key individuals to work with and support, while also running a wider set of awareness raising workshops at community level, with faith leaders and community and political leaders. Politicians looking to boost their popularity may be looking to work on issues of concern in their communities. This can be an opportunity to develop disability inclusive services and programmes

Revised theory of change

- Ghana Somubi Dwumadie's revised theory of change reflects the agreed positions of all consortium partners and the current understanding of what is required to create an environment where the overall impact goal is met. A set of interconnected strategies and approaches brings key programme inputs together to achieve change



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