Intellectual Disability Advocacy Strategy

2012 - 2014
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Background

Persons with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs) belong to a group of people who are often ignored or overlooked by society. Their families also share this exclusion. The lives of PWIDs have had a long history of segregation and discrimination in Ghana and being excluded from education, healthcare, social life and jobs. The baseline report on the level of stigmatisation, discrimination and exclusion by Inclusion Ghana tells us how much need to be done for PWIDs and their families to be included and accepted in society. One such area is advocacy. Persons with intellectual disabilities deserve advocacy support.

Advocacy will promote the social inclusion, equality and rights of PWIDs. It will safeguard PWIDs who are vulnerable. It will make sure people have the right information to make choices. It will make sure people can express their views, make decisions and be in control of their lives. It will also be a voice for people who are unable to speak for themselves.

People have talked about advocacy in Ghana for a long time. Inclusion Ghana (IG) has had consultation with its members, where people said they want to see advocacy services for PWIDs. This document is Inclusion Ghana’s strategy for making it happen. IG has drafted this strategy by looking at what people have said, what works best, and what needs to change.

This strategy is about the commitment of Inclusion Ghana and its members to provide and support advocacy of persons with intellectual disability. The Strategy also seeks to enhance the visibility, credibility and effectiveness of the advocacy work of IG and would be contributing to the vision, mission and values of IG.
2.1 Defining Advocacy

- Advocacy is an action directed at changing the policies, positions, and programs of any type of institution. (An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide, SARA Project, 1997)

- Advocacy is speaking up, drawing a community’s attention to an important issue, and directing decision makers toward a solution. Advocacy is working with other persons and organizations to make a difference. (Centre for Development and Population Activities, 1995).

- Advocacy is “a strategy for changing policies, programs, or legislations using persuasive communication. It entails raising awareness and creating a supportive environment through the dissemination of information.” (UNESCO)

- Advocacy is “a process of creating support, building consensus and fostering a favourable and supportive climate towards a specific cause or issue through a set of well-planned and organized actions that undertaken by a group of individuals or organizations working in concert.” (UNFPA)

2.2 Principles of Advocacy

Advocacy embraces four main principles:

- Empowerment
- Autonomy
- Inclusion and
- Citizenship

2.2.1 Empowerment

Persons with intellectual disabilities are among the least powerful in our society. They are often not given the opportunity to voice their concerns or issues, and in some cases may be incapable of doing so themselves. Advocacy can provide these people with the support necessary to make their own decisions and choices. It can enable them to have more control over their lives. Even the provision of information and education on the options available, and the advantages and disadvantages of them, is hugely empowering for the individual in the sense that it may give them the self-confidence to act on their own. The empowerment that advocacy brings supports the other three principles of autonomy, inclusion and citizenship.
2.2.2 Autonomy

An autonomous individual is considered to be someone who directs their own life in accordance with their own conception of what they want to do with their life. Autonomy should not be confused with independence. Where persons with intellectual disabilities may have to depend on others for some level of support in their everyday living, it is still possible that they can determine their own lives by being autonomous. Advocacy supports a person’s right to voice their views, opinions and preferences in fora where others are making decisions which impact directly on that person’s life. It plays a key role in enabling people to make informed choices about, and to remain in control of, their own lives.

2.2.3 Inclusion

The most vulnerable people in society are often isolated from social groupings and communities because of inequalities in access and opportunity. These inequalities can occur at many levels from the physical, where actual access to public transport and other public facilities may not be user-friendly, to the emotional, where persons with intellectual disabilities are not treated as independent-thinking individuals in their own right. Having an advocate to communicate with, and work alongside can help to increase all levels of access thus offering greater opportunities within the community to all.

2.2.4 Citizenship

Advocacy can also serve to protect the rights and privileges that should be available to all citizens within a society, but which are often blocked from those more susceptible to exclusion and isolation. It fundamentally identifies, promotes and defends a person’s basic human rights.
What forms of Advocacy do we want

We aim to ensure that the following forms of advocacy are available and pursued by Inclusion Ghana and its members:

- **Self Advocacy** – Where persons with intellectual disability speak up for themselves, often with the support of a group or peers. With the right support in terms of advice, information and encouragement, self-advocacy is something that persons with intellectual disability can achieve.

- **Peer Advocacy** – This occurs when a person with intellectual disability acts as an advocate for another person with intellectual disability. The knowledge of the relevant systems and organisations and their own experience makes them informed and powerful advocates. The advocates also tend to have considerable empathy for the other, and the relationship between them is often of a very equal nature. This adds to the empowerment of the individual.

- **Parents Group Advocacy** – Where a group of parents speak up for their children. It is often the case that a person with intellectual disability will receive the informal advocacy services of their parents or siblings. Families may engage in collective advocacy through parents self help groups or member organisations located in their community.

- **Citizen Advocacy** – Provided by volunteers who work in partnership with persons with intellectual disability based upon compatibility or shared interests, with whom they develop long-term advocacy partnerships – e.g. supporting a neighbour to socialise in the community. Citizen advocates can operate in two capacities. On one hand, they can act as supportive enabler, encouraging their partners to advocate for themselves. On the other, they can speak up for those who do not have a voice of their own.

- **Voice Advocacy** – IG will represent all Intellectual disability issues, individuals and organisation as a single voice of a community of interest. Persons with intellectual disabilities will be supported to be fully involved in national, regional, citywide and local forums; boards and working groups; and in joint work with decision makers.

- **Informal Advocacy** - This will be provided by family members, support workers, social workers or others who are important presences in the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities. We are calling this informal advocacy because people may not recognise themselves in an advocacy role. People have the right to choose an informal advocate to support them. A family carer, support worker or other person has the right to speak up on behalf of someone with an intellectual disability. We want informal advocates to be able to receive the right support.
Description of the Advocacy process

a. Identifying the Issue - Advocacy would start with identifying the problem, situation or issue around which advocating for policy change will be promoted. It is the subject matter that determines the field of analysis of the whole advocacy process.

b. Stakeholder Analysis - This step involves an analysis of individuals and institutions or organizations that may affect, or be affected by, the advocacy action. It includes analysis of the target beneficiaries which in this case is persons with intellectual disabilities and, also, the target audience (the policymakers). The effect may be direct or indirect and positive or negative. Stakeholder analysis answers the basic premise that various groups and individuals have different concerns, interests and capacities and that these need to be understood fully and recognized in the advocacy process.

c. Environmental Scanning - Environmental analysis is used to analyze the internal strengths and weaknesses of an organization (be it a parents self help group, member organisations, or Inclusion Ghana) and the opportunities and threats it faces. It is otherwise known as SWOT analysis.

d. Problem, Objective and Strategy Analysis - These are three interrelated steps that start with a systematic and detailed analysis of the problems that relate to the issue under study followed by a similar analysis of the objectives, and ends up with a determination of the strategies to be undertaken to enhance the feasibility for carrying out advocacy. In problem analysis, the negative aspects of an existing situation are identified and their cause-effect relationships established. An analysis of objectives requires describing the situation in the future once the identified problems have been remedied by establishing the means-ends relationship. The alternative strategies are derived by scoping and arranging the complex array of objectives into clusters of related objectives and classifying them into options.

e. Building Partnerships, Networks and Coalitions - Numbers significantly matter in advocacy and developing a network of organizations that will provide the base and perform tasks in support of the issue add might and clout to advocacy. This step may form part of action planning.

f. Developing Messages and Selecting Channels of Information - Developing compelling and tailor-fit advocacy messages and selecting channels for communicating them to the policy audience enhance the effectiveness of advocacy. Advocacy channels may range from relatively inexpensive channels such as policy briefs, press releases, press conferences, getting invited to radio and TV public affairs programs to relatively expensive ones such as public forums, public debates, policymaker conferences, newspaper, radio and TV ads.

g. Advocacy Action Planning - Action planning involves developing the planning structure, clarifying the logical arrangement of the goals, immediate objectives, results and activities, providing the indicators
and sources of verification for the achieved results and identifying the assumptions and risks that may influence the advocacy action’s outcome. It also includes preparation of the detailed activity schedule and estimating the means (budget and other resources) to carry out the activities.

h. **Fundraising** - Funds and other resources (personnel, time and other materials) are necessary to carry out the advocacy activities uninterruptedly. All of these may not be available from within parents self help groups, member organisations, or Inclusion Ghana hence the need to identify contributors/donors and carry out the advocacy plan.

i. **Implementing the Advocacy Plan** - After the action plan has been finalized and the funds and other resources have been ready, it is time to implement the activities according to the plan of action. Because of uncertainty in the advocacy environment, it is necessary to exercise maximum flexibility in the implementation the action plan.

j. **Data Collection and Analysis** - Data collection and analysis are an ongoing process and traverse all the other advocacy steps. It is necessary to collect and analyze data to arrive at an informed judgment as alternatives and choices rise every step of the way in advocacy.

k. **Monitoring and Evaluation** - It is also necessary to conduct monitoring and evaluation of the entire advocacy process. Parents Self Help Groups, Member Organisations, and Inclusion Ghana should put in place a monitoring plan even before the implementation of the advocacy plan. If using the logframe, there should be no problem evaluating the results as the objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) should have been clearly stated there already.
5.1 Domestic legislation

- The Persons with Disability Act was passed in June 2006 and guarantees Person with Disabilities (PWDs) access to education, employment, transportation, public places, and free general and specialist medical care. The Act addresses all major disability concerns however does not make enough provisions for persons with intellectual disabilities. The Act has 12 main objectives and provides guidelines for the relevant sectors on how they should respond to the needs of PWDs:

  a. To educate Ghanaians on the rights, potentials and responsibilities of both society and PWDs
  b. To generate and disseminate relevant information on disability
  c. To create an enabling environment for the full participation of PWDs in national development
  d. To ensure access of PWDs to education and training at all levels
  e. To facilitate the employment of PWDs in all sectors of the economy
  f. To promote disability friendly roads, transport, and housing facilities
  g. To ensure access of PWDs to effective health care and adequate medical rehabilitation services
  h. To ensure that women with disabilities enjoy the same rights and privileges as their male counterparts
  i. To ensure that law enforcement personnel in cases of arrest, detention, trial and confinement of PWDs take into account the nature of their disabilities
  j. To encourage full participation of PWDs in cultural activities
  k. To ensure access of PWDs to the same opportunities in recreational activities and sports as other citizens
  l. To promote CBR Programmes as a means of empowering and ensuring the full participation of PWDs in society

- Under the 1992 Constitution, persons with disabilities are guaranteed protection against all exploitation and treatment of a discriminatory, abusive or degrading nature by the constitution (Article 29). It also mandates the legislature to enact appropriate laws (Article 37) and requires access to FCUBE (Article 38). Provision is also made for special incentives to be given to PWDs engaged in business and also to business organizations that employ PWDs in significant numbers.
5.2 International Policy Environment

- **Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC)**
  One of the most important pieces of international law protecting PWID’s right is the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC). The Convention sets out these rights in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. Every right spelled out in the Convention is inherent to the human dignity and harmonious development of every child. The Convention protects children’s rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal, civil and social services.

- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**
  In General the convention emphasizes on the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development and recognizes the need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons with disabilities, including those who require more intensive support. The convention also recognizes that discrimination against any person on the basis of disability is a violation of the inherent dignity and worth of the human person. The UNCRPD was ratified by Ghana in March 2012.
Advocacy objectives

6.1 Objective 1

IG and member organisations will encourage and support parents to be effective advocates

Actions:
- IG and member organisations will provide information, training and support to parents on how to advocate and how to support advocacy
- IG and member organisations will collaborate with parents self help groups around the country
- IG and member organisations will provide support and training to parents to participate on parent speaking panels.
- IG will support parents to participate on Consultative meetings of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Ghana Federation of the Disabled
- IG will encourage member organisations to have parent representation on their Boards and committees

Performance Indicators:
- Parents are empowered to advocate for the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities
- Parents receive information, training and support on advocacy
- A dedicated section on parent advocacy is created on the IG website
- Publication on parent advocacy is produced
- Parents are trained to deliver presentations to professionals who will work or provide services to persons with intellectual disabilities
- IG and member organisations receive regular updates and feedback from parent self help groups

6.2 Objective 2

IG and member organisations will actively encourage and support self advocacy

Actions:
- IG will provide independent facilitation to self advocacy groups
- IG and member organisations will work with self advocates in a way that decision making always rests with the self advocate
- IG will encourage members to have self advocates on their Boards and committees
- IG will encourage members to support best practice in self advocacy
- IG and member organisations will provide information, training and support on self advocacy
to persons with intellectual disabilities
- IG and member organisations will bring self advocacy groups together for training, information and conferences

Performance Indicators:
- A National Platform of Self Advocates is established and supported by IG
- A guide to establishing self advocacy groups is produced
- IG has a dedicated self advocacy section on its website
- A series of meetings with self-advocacy groups around the country are organised and supported
- Member organisations are made aware of the role and value of self advocacy groups
- Self advocacy events and initiatives are promoted on IG’s website and thorough its social media

6.3 Objective 3

IG will advocate for legislative and policy reform relevant to persons with intellectual disabilities

Actions:
- IG will participate on committees and working groups in respect of disability policy and law
- IG will host press conferences with other interested agencies on certain issues
- IG will continue to monitor implementation of the Disability Law (Act 715) and National Disability Strategic Plan
- IG will monitor and review all policies and laws affecting persons with intellectual disabilities
- IG will respond to legislative and policy issues as they occur through press statements; meetings with government Ministers and officials and through social media

Performance Indicators:
- Submissions, presentations, press statements; policy papers and campaigns in respect legislative and policy reform are instigated and delivered
- IG will use its influence at the Ghana Federation of the Disabled and other potential national disability stakeholder monitoring group, and working groups to advocate for legislative and policy reform
- IG uses media, newsletter, website and social media to highlight issues in respect of policy and legislation

6.4 Objective 4

IG will advocate for the transfer of persons with intellectual disabilities from psychiatric hospitals to appropriate accommodation

Actions:
- IG will call for an end to the practice of placing persons with intellectual disability in psychiatric hospitals and nursing homes
- IG will seek a representative advocacy service for all persons with intellectual disabilities in psychiatric hospitals
- IG will respond to issues as they arise that warrant statements on inappropriate accommodation
- IG will call for the provision of an independent assessment of need for persons of all ages with
Advocacy objectives

6.5 Objective 5

IG and member organisations will advocate for the provision of services based on the needs and requirements of persons with intellectual disabilities

Actions:
- IG and member organisations will advocate for a person centered approach to the delivery of services to all persons with intellectual disability
- IG will call for innovative thinking in respect of the delivery of services to persons with intellectual disability
- IG and member organisations will seek full implementation of the Disability Act, UNCRPD, Children’s Act, Education for All, Special Education Needs and other relevant legislation
- IG will publicise instances of inappropriate services or cuts to services

Performance Indicators:
- IG and member organisations uses media, newsletter, website and social media to encourage support for the provision of services based on the needs and requirements of persons with an intellectual disability
- IG participates in projects and activities associated with the provision of innovative residential, day and respite services to persons with intellectual disability and their family members
- IG uses its role and influence at the Ghana Federation of the Disabled to advocate for person centered services

6.6 Objective 6

IG will provide quality and accessible information services and publications

Actions:
- IG will provide a quality information service to members and to the wider public
- IG will ensure its website is relevant and accessible
- IG will continue to produce information that is relevant to persons with intellectual disabilities in an easy to read form
- IG will continue to publish information on issues relevant to persons with intellectual disability
- IG will monitor the effectiveness of IG internal information systems
Performance Indicators:

- The number of persons using IG information and services increases
- Increase in visitors to IG website
- The number of fans and followers on IG social media networks increases
- New IG publications and existing publications updated
- The work of IG is promoted at every opportunity
- The effectiveness of IG internal information system is reviewed
- Persons with intellectual disability have access to accessible information in all areas relevant to their lives

6.7 Objective 7

IG together with member organisations will advocate for the implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability

Actions:

- IG and member organisations will promote the Convention as the instrument to which all policies and laws affecting persons with intellectual disability should be measured against
- IG will actively support services that promote and protect the human rights of persons with intellectual disability
- IG will recognise the annual anniversary of the signing and ratification of the Convention
- Questions and post on IG website

Performance Indicators:

- Press conference and events to recognise signing and ratification of the Convention
- An IG guide to protecting and promoting human rights is produced and disseminated
- Human rights training developed and delivered to key stakeholders
- Submissions, press statements, policy papers, campaigns are developed and disseminated in respect of human right
- IG uses media, newsletter, website and social media to highlight issues in respect of the Convention

6.8 Objective 8

IG and member organisations will promote and support citizen advocacy

Actions:

- IG will research best practice in respect of citizen advocacy
- IG and member organisations will explore the possibility to resource a citizen advocacy project
- IG and member organisations will support good practice in respect of citizen advocacy

Performance Indicators:

- Research on citizen advocacy undertaken
- Proposal for funding is developed
- IG uses media, newsletter, website and social media to acknowledge good practice
6.9 Objective 9

IG will provide information and support on statutory and non statutory schemes for making complaints and seeking redress

Actions:
- IG will provide information on systems of complaints and redress to persons with intellectual disability and their family members
- IG will encourage persons with an intellectual disability and their families to see themselves as citizens with rights in relation to the services they receive
- IG will develop and implement policy and procedures to deal with cases involving redress
- IG will ensure that persons who engage in complaints and redress are aware of the processes that needs to be followed
- IG will make representative advocacy services available to persons in respect of making complaints and seeking redress

Performance Indicators:
- Increase in the numbers of persons with intellectual disability supported to make complaints and seeks redress
- Representative advocacy is made available to persons to enable them to make complaints and seek redress
- IG uses media, newsletter, website and social media to highlight right of persons to complain and seek redress where appropriate

6.10 Objective 10

IG will advocate for quality standards and statutory inspections of services provided to persons with an intellectual disability

Actions:
- IG will advocate for the introduction of national standards and statutory inspections of intellectual disability services. eg, the assessment centers.
- IG will respond to issues as they arise that warrant statements on standards

Performance Indicators:
- IG uses its role and influence at the Ghana Federation of the Disabled to advocate for legislative and policy reform for standards and inspection
- Submissions, presentations, press statements; policy papers and campaigns in respect of standards and inspection are produced and disseminated by IG
- IG uses media, newsletter, website and social media to highlight issues in respect of standards and inspections
In order to build support for the advocacy, Inclusion Ghana and its members will segment and understand the target audiences. We will first look at the primary audience, composed of the key decision-makers who can affect the objectives of the advocacy strategy directly. We will then look at the secondary audience, which is made up of individuals and groups who can influence decision-makers. For each audience we will seek to understand who the key players are.

### 7.1 Primary Audience

Suggested audience includes:
- National Council on Persons with Disability Council – One of main function of the council is to coordinate advocacy and other activities related to the elimination of stigmatisation, discrimination and exclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Ghana.
- Ghana Federation of the Disabled
- Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare
- Ministry of Education – Provide quality but inclusive education for Persons with intellectual disability
- Ministry of Health and affiliated bodies – The Ministry of Health through its mandate is committed to quality health care delivery of Ghanaians. In case of free health care for PWIDs were to be submitted to the State for approval, the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the National Health Insurance Authority would be required to draft an legislative instrument.
- Ministry of Women and Children
- Member of Parliament and members of appropriate parliamentary committees.
- Regional Ministers and District Chief Executives - High level advocacy should encompass heads of regional legislative bodies and organs of executive power, etc. as these persons will be the key advocates in their respective regions.
- President’s Office - The role of the President is essential in endorsing legislation and in setting the pace in the implementation of legislation.
- Traditional Authorities
- Opinion Leaders

### 7.2 Secondary Audience

Suggested audience includes:
- Christian Council of Ghana
- Ghana Muslim Mission
Building support

- Member Organisations
- Parents Self Help Groups
- The Media
- Priests, Pastors, Apostle and Reverends
- Social Workers
- Imams
- Community Activist
- Human Rights Activist
Many of the advocacy objectives in this strategy are dependent on resources. During the lifetime of this strategy, Inclusion Ghana and its members will continue to work to secure the necessary resources required to achieve its objectives.
Once the advocacy strategy is validated by member organisations, specific capacity-building and awareness raising suggestions for each target audience to implement the advocacy strategy each at their individual work level will be provided. A generic advocacy training module would be developed that can be used to train different audiences at national, regional, district and community levels. The idea is that parties trained in advocacy understand how advocacy works as a tool so that peers can then be trained further. Suggested capacity-building areas include:

- Persons with Intellectual Disability would be trained in Self-Advocacy and Peer Advocacy
- Parents Self Help Groups and NGOs would undergo hands-on advocacy training as they are important partners to Inclusion Ghana in advocating and in building alliances.
- Training would also be provided to media organisations and related partners in preparing effective advocacy communication tools to promote the rights of PWIDs.
- The capacity building of high-level policy-makers at national, regional and district levels on the importance and how to advocate for the elimination of discrimination and exclusion of PWIDs and their families will receive priority attention given the objectives of the strategy.
- Equipping Pastors, Reverends, Priests, Imams, Human Rights Activists, Parents of PWIDs with advocacy tools to strengthen their role as advocacy champions for PWIDs may also want to receive priority attention.
- It may be useful that some key parliamentarians go on a study tour in some of the regions to understand the plights and needs of PWIDs and their families.
Monitoring and Evaluation

This part touches upon aspects of monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy. A more detailed discussion would be developed in another document. As part of the advocacy strategy, it is essential that there be a systematic monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy to detect flaws and oversights in the targeting of the audiences, in the strategy, in the choice of communication tools and channels, as well as in the capacity building and raising of awareness. In order to ensure the full success of the Strategy it may be worth to develop quickly the monitoring and evaluation guidelines of the strategy.
Office Location: Inclusion Ghana
24 Feo Eyeo Link
North Industrial Area
Accra-Ghana

Telephone: +233 (0) 302 243 291
+233 (0) 208 151 523

Email: info@inclusion-ghana.org

Website: www.inclusion-ghana.org