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Promoting recognition for unpaid care work for carers of Children with Developmental Disabilities (CWDDs) in Ghana

Impact Story 9

KEY IMPACTS

This project seeks to promote recognition for unpaid care work for caregivers of children with developmental disabilities and contribute to influencing policy and practice to better recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work for CWDDs in Ghana. The project has generated evidence to inform national and local policy reforms on unpaid care work for Children with Disabilities and fostered policy uptake, stakeholder ownership, and sustainable change in the implementation of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy.

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Project Overview

The [Promoting recognition for unpaid care work for carers of Children with Developmental Disabilities \(CWDDs\) in Ghana](#) project seeks to address policy gaps in unpaid care work for Children with Developmental Disabilities (CWDD) by employing scaling science to influence Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy. The project seeks to promote recognition for unpaid care work for caregivers of children with developmental disabilities and contribute to influencing policy and practice to better recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work for CWDDs in Ghana. Target beneficiaries include caregivers of CWDDs, policymakers, education sector stakeholders, and local government actors. The goal is to mitigate the burden of unpaid care work in Ghana by advocating for the scaling of the Inclusive Education Policy to be implemented in all public basic schools across the country.

Project Activities

The project employed participatory action research (PAR) to generate evidence for policy reforms. Activities included maintaining valid ethical clearance, conducting stakeholder meetings and consultations, continuous media engagements, and structured discussions with policymakers to integrate research findings into Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy.

The project engaged 700 caregivers in Accra and Tamale, including 36 interviews captured through the photovoice technique, and held dissemination workshops in September 2025 and January 2026.

The project worked closely with the Ghana Education Service (GES), the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), the National Council on Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), civil society organisations (CSOs), caregiver support groups, and a Project Steering Committee to support stakeholder buy-in and policy uptake.

Project Achievements

The project is making significant strides in shaping the discourse on unpaid care work for CWDD in Ghana. Through research and stakeholder engagement, the project is already helping to shed light on how unpaid care work is not adequately and appropriately recognised, valued, and addressed in policy discussions. One of the most notable impacts of the project is its role in starting national conversations on unpaid care work. The establishment of a Project Steering Committee has ensured sustained conversations about the integration of research findings into ongoing policy discussions, particularly within Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy Framework.

A major milestone achieved is the successful completion of dissemination workshops and finalisation of mid-project evaluation where policy recommendations from the first conference were validated and the Advocacy, Reform, Inclusion, Support, and Empowerment (ARISE) framework was developed as an implementation guide to help reduce the burden of unpaid care work for caregivers of children with developmental disabilities. Representatives from GES, MoGCSP, NCPD, and other CSOs participated in this process.

The research team surveyed 700 caregivers in Accra and Tamale, including 36 interviews captured through the photovoice technique. Early evidence from the project demonstrates that enhancing school curricula and teacher training to be more responsive to the needs of children with developmental disabilities benefits their caregivers, mostly mothers, who would otherwise be spending several hours in a day providing care for their wards with little or no support. Insights from these engagements are shared through media engagements. These efforts are massively increasing awareness of the importance of addressing this often-overlooked aspect of care work, which significantly impacts both mothers and children.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

The project faced delays due to political transitions following Ghana's general elections in 2024, which halted implementation while the steering committee was reconstituted. Delayed disbursement of grant payments due to financial reporting technicalities also affected implementation. The project also found that coordinating multi-sectoral

stakeholders was complex and required consistent follow-ups and adaptive engagement strategies.

A key lesson learned was that leveraging institutional champions within key agencies, such as the Ghana Education Service, improved responsiveness and collaboration.

Care Sector Contributions & Next Steps

The project's main contribution is generating evidence to inform national and local policy reforms on unpaid care work for Children with Disabilities and fostering policy uptake, stakeholder ownership, and sustainable change in the implementation of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy. The co-created ARISE Framework provides an implementation guide to help reduce the burden of unpaid care work for caregivers of children with developmental disabilities.

Next steps include prioritising the publication of manuscripts and production of the final project report, conducting dialogues geared towards advocating for the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy and scaling it to public basic schools in Ghana, and exploring additional funding avenues to ensure sustained engagement beyond the project's initial timeline. The project will also continue strengthening communications, outreach, and policy dialogue opportunities to support policy uptake and implementation.

About the Africa Cares Together Community of Practice

The [Africa Cares Together Community of Practice \(ACT CoP\)](#) is a vibrant, inclusive network of diverse actors committed to amplifying care work across Africa. It is coordinated by ActionAid International (AAI) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and the Hewlett Foundation. The ACT CoP network is made up of members from the 19 projects of the [Scaling Care Innovations in Africa \(SCIA\)](#) initiative, a partnership between IDRC and GAC.

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