

NATIONAL DECENTRALISATION POLICY (2025-2029)

Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Crosscutting

The central theme that underlines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, is the concept of leaving no one behind. GEDSI has become international best practice approach to addressing inequalities and transforming distribution of resources, choices and opportunities for all, so no one is left behind.

Whereas there is evidence from the implementation 2020 2024, to show there have been improvements in basic infrastructure services across the length and breadth of the country; the fact remains that the achievements over the years in the pursuit of decentralization and local governance have not been fully inclusive. Women, girls, and persons with disabilities continue to face exclusion from meaningful engagement and productive participation in local governance. The deep-rooted gender biases, stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities in our society, often fuelled by harmful social norms, negative behavioural practices, serve as key drivers of unequal gender representation, deprioritising of persons with disabilities, and limited economic opportunities, particularly for women including those with disabilities.

The unique needs of women, girls, the vulnerable, particularly the youth and women with disabilities are often not considered in decentralized planning and there not prioritized for local government financing. In addressing these challenges and bridging the gap, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) is fast becoming an international best practice index for measuring inclusive development. GEDSI calls for the action needed to ensure equal protection of rights, political participation and quality of services for ALL, particularly women, persons with disabilities including those with mental health conditions, the poor, and vulnerable and marginalized groups who often face exclusion. GEDSI brings to life the issues of intersectionality and disability. This helps to understand the combination of multiple individual characteristics and various social categories such as age, sex, gender and disability, and the interconnectedness relating socioeconomic status and how these characteristics can intersect to create unique and complex experiences with differential needs. Any policy uptake that fails to

recognise the intersections individuals may face create more harm and deepened social exclusion.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) calls for member state to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. In line with the above, Ghana has the obligation to adhere to the principles on the UNCRPD to and to “ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability.”

Recognising the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) gaps in the decentralized system, the social democratic values of the NDC manifesto, commits to working towards eliminating discrimination, promoting fairness, and creating an inclusive society where everyone can participate fully and equally in social, economic, and political life, to promote Economic and social inclusion. In the next four years, the current political administration in Ghana, commit to significantly reducing poverty and increasing social and political representation of women as well as persons with disabilities. GEDSI support more inclusive approach to policies, and a mindset that seeks to increases the voice and influence of all actors in driving inclusion in inclusive development.

To further deepen Ghana’s local level democracy, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), the National Decentralisation Policy (2025-2029), there is the urgent need to deliberately provide opportunities for women, and persons with disabilities, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, and meaningfully consider their differential issues, and address them throughout the implementation and delivery. This is to contribute to gender equality, disability and social inclusion, so as not to cause harm, and does perpetuate further inequalities and exclusion.

Key Strategic Objective:

The key strategic objective for a GEDSI considerations into the National Decentralization Policy 2025 – 2029 is to:

- Provide more equitable environment for all, particularly women and girls, persons with disabilities including those with mental health conditions, to drive rights to equality and protection from nondiscrimination, rights to accessible social services, including access to information for inclusive citizen participation in decision making and local development **so as not to cause harm and does perpetuate inequalities.**

This objective could be achieved through GEDSI integration into the key thrust of the policy as follows:

Political Decentralization –

- Ensure Women's representation local Politics, and political participation, including women with disabilities.
- Ensure compliance to a minimum 30 percent quota for women in all political appointments.
- Direct MMDAs to adhere to the minimum of 5 percent hiring of persons with disabilities in public, particularly local government service and the private sector.
- Build capacities of DISEC on GEDSI responsive Safety and security considerations in local governance

Administrative Decentralization -

- Promote gender balance and equal gender representation in local government staffing and trainings
- Prioritize the employment of at least 5 percent of its total staff from persons living with disabilities
- Decentralise the National Council of Persons with Disability (NCPD) at the subnational level including MMDAs

- Elevate disability desks and build capacities of disability officers at all MMDAs to facilitate user-led approach to integrating disability issues into local governance by persons with disabilities themselves.
- Provide Employability Assistive Support for persons with disabilities who are in employment to deliver effectively for enhanced performance
- Direct the Local Government Service to increase availability of sign language interpreters in subnational structures, particularly at health care facilities

Fiscal Decentralization/Local Government Financing

- Gender-responsive and Disability inclusion Budgeting considerations in all government financing
- Budget for employability assistive support in job and skills trainings for the youth.
- Budget for security safety and social protection and emergency shock responsiveness for women, girls, and persons with disabilities, particularly for marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Decentralized Planning

- Build capacities of MOGCSP, OHLGS on reasonable accommodation, accessibility and meaningful engagements of women and persons with disabilities for inclusive decentralised planning processes.
- Consider youth-led and women-with-disability-led businesses including market women
- Revisit the Community Action Plans (CAPs) approach to district planning process to embrace GEDSI considerations.
- Set GEDSI targets and integrates gender and disability-specific indicators into local economy development planning.

Local Economic Development –

- Ensure Financial Inclusion and digital financial literacy for women and persons with disabilities, particularly communities in rural deprived districts.

- Decentralise the management of the Ghana School Feeding Programme and create spaces for women with disabilities at the district level to achieve the overall aim of contributing to poverty alleviation and food security for poor and vulnerable households.
- Build skills training, and micro-entrepreneurship support out-of-school mature minors¹ 15years² and above to address streetism and rural urban migration among others.
- Empower rural youth, particularly girls and youth with disabilities to ensure sustainable livelihoods, and economic empowerment, for sustainable community development for young people in rural areas.
- Leverage on global funding for climate action to secure climate finance for sustainable affordable housing in rural Ghana for the poor and vulnerable.

Popular Participation –

- Increase women-led and disability-userled citizens' participation to drive demand for transparent, accountable and inclusive governance.
- Provide GEDSI responsive service delivery engagement by ensuring increased voices of women as well as persons with disabilities to influence decision-making, and drive inclusion and accessible development including social infrastructure designs.
- Ensure reasonable accommodation including sign language and access to assistive support and physical environment for persons with disabilities for inclusive participation in physical infrastructure designs to promote meaningful and constructive community engagements.
- Build capacities for accessible and easy read document formats for persons with disability

¹ Mature minor is **a person less than 18 years of age** who is considered sufficiently matured and who can reasonably demonstrate the capacity to understand, make and vary decisions despite being underage by law.

² The Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560) **sets the minimum age for apprenticeships at 15 years** or upon completion of basic education.

Summary Table

THRUST CC ISSUE	Political Decentralization	Administrative Decentralization	Fiscal Decentralization/ Local Government Financing	Decentralized Planning	Local Economic Development	Popular Participation
Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	• Ensure Women's representation local Politics, and political participation, including women with disabilities. • Ensure compliance to a minimum 30 percent quota for women in all political appointments. • Direct MMDAs to adhere to the minimum of 5 percent hiring of persons with disabilities in public, particularly local government service and the private sector • Build capacities of DISEC on GEDSI responsive Safety and	• Promote gender balance and equal gender representation in local government staffing and trainings • Prioritize the employment of at least 5 percent of its total staff from persons living with disabilities • Decentralise the National Council of Persons with Disability (NCPD) at the subnational level including MMDAs • Elevate disability desks and build capacities of disability officers at all MMDAs to facilitate user-led approach to integrating	• Gender-responsive and Disability inclusion Budgeting considerations in all government financing • Budget for employability assistive support in job and skills trainings for the youth. • Budget for security safety and social protection and emergency shock responsiveness for women, girls, and persons with disabilities, particularly for marginalised and vulnerable groups.	• Build capacities of MOGCSP, OHLGS on reasonable accommodation, accessibility and meaningful engagements of women and persons with disabilities for inclusive decentralised planning processes. • Consider youth-led and women-with-disability-led businesses including market women • Revisit the Community Action Plans (CAPs) approach to district planning process to embrace GEDSI considerations. • Set GEDSI targets and	• Ensure Financial Inclusion and digital financial literacy for women and persons with disabilities, particularly communities in rural deprived districts. • Decentralise the management of the Ghana School Feeding Programmes and create spaces for women with disabilities at the district level to achieve the aim of contributing to poverty alleviation and food security for poor and vulnerable households. • Build skills training, and micro-entrepreneurship support for out-of-school mature minors over 15years to address streetism and rural urban	• Increase women-led and disability-userled citizens' participation to drive demand for transparent, accountable and inclusive governance. • Provide GEDSI responsive service delivery engagement by ensuring increased voices of women as well as persons with disabilities to influence decision-making, and drive inclusion and accessible development including social infrastructure designs. • Ensure reasonable

	security considerations in local governance	disability issues into local governance by persons with disabilities themselves. • Provide Employability Assistive Support for persons with disabilities who are in employment to deliver effectively for enhanced performance		integrates gender and disability-specific indicators into local economy development planning.	migration among others. • Empower rural youth, particularly girls and youth with disabilities to ensure sustainable livelihoods, and economic empowerment, for sustainable community development for young people in rural areas. • Leverage on global funding for climate action to secure climate finance for sustainable affordable housing in rural Ghana for the poor and vulnerable.	accommodation including sign language and access to assistive support and physical environment for persons with disabilities for inclusive participation in physical infrastructure designs to promote meaningful and constructive community engagements. • Build capacities for accessible and easy read document formats for persons with disability
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