

GFD IN THE NEWS

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MAINSTREAM ISSUES OF DISABILITIES INTO NATIONAL PLAN

Douglas Quartey, a Development Strategist Sunday observed that the input of People with Disabilities (PWDs) into Ghana's all round growth, was equally important as that of the gender perspective on policy formulation and execution.

He said mainstreaming issues of PWDs into national plans at all levels, therefore deserved same vim as gender mainstreaming.

Mr. Quartey was speaking to the Ghana News Agency (GNA) on the sidelines of the Board Retreat, 2014, of Voice of People with Disability (VOICE-Ghana), a Ho-based disability interest advocacy group.

A critical topic of the retreat was the actualization of plans to turn VOICE-Ghana into a Think-Tank on disability issues.

Mr. Quartey said Voice-Ghana as a think-tank such as planned by Voice-Ghana was apt and should provide the hard evidence based on cogent research for policy planners and developers.

On the initial Consultancy and Research Team for the Think-Tank with Mr. Quartey are Dr. Deodat Adenutsi, Founder of Volta Educational Renaissance Foundation (VEReF), a Research, Advocacy and Pro-Marginalized support NGO, Harrison Bele, a Governance Professional and DrTenasu Kofi Gbedemah, a People's Interest Campaigner.

A document passed round at the retreat indicated that the Think-Tank, a strategic decision at Voice-Ghana's Annual General Meeting held on September this year, will undertake evidence-based research on social issues affecting persons with disabilities to inform policy advocacy at both local and national levels.

It will also develop variety of training modules for professional capacity building on disability to Civil Society Organizations, State Agencies, Businesses, Industries and Corporate Bodies.

Additionally, it will offer professional advice to owners of public buildings, architects and contractors to keep and maintain accessibility standards for persons with disabilities.

Francis Asong, Director Voice-Ghana, said the retreat was to identify the gaps in the general operations of the NGO and not harp on its successes.

He listed self-help empowerment, disability mainstreaming policy interface, health intervention and inclusive education as some of the core programmes run by Voice-Ghana.

Mr. Asong said another key programme of the NGO was preparing PWDs for participation in the forthcoming Local Government Elections as candidates and officials.

He said the group networks with up to 10 international and local Civil Society Organizations

Paul Fiavi, Board Chairman of Voice-Ghana, said 12 years after the NGO was founded it had become a robust disability advocacy group that could not be ignored.

Board Members later broke into three groups to discuss issues of Governance, Management and Human Resource, and Programmes and Operations.

Reports of the groups included the need to develop capacities of staff and importance of de-stressing among staff.

There was also a suggestion that the NGO engaged in some numeracy and literacy education for adults with disabilities.

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