

Domestication of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at district level

In December 2006, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the UN General Assembly and opened for signature in March 2007. Consequently, the Uganda Government signed the CRPD in March 2007 and ratified it in September 2008.

In fulfillment of its mandate as stipulated in the National Council for Disability Act 2003 section 6 sub section (c), this lays out the function of the Council;

‘to act as a co-ordinating body between Government departments , other service providers and persons with disabilities’

The NCD and other disability organizations, thus:

- Created awareness on the CRPD and the need to implement it at different levels.
- Translated the CRPD in Luganda and Lusoga so that the local councils could easily understand the convention
- Equipped the councilors with skills of relating the convention to the practical needs of persons with disabilities in the communities.

As a result, the district local Governments of Iganga and Wakiso formulated district ordinances for implementing the CRPD in their districts. This was done through:

- Conducting a baseline survey on the situation of persons with disabilities in the district;
- Analysing the legal framework in the district addressing the rights of persons with disabilities to identify the gaps;
- Consulting the district disability Councils and other disability organizations on proposals to be tabled to the district Local Government Council meeting for translating the Convention in to district ordinance;
- Enacting the district ordinance following the council procedures for debating district ordinances in accordance with the 1997 Local Government Act and its amendments;
- Selecting one article of the CRPD and formulating a district legislation for implementing that particular article. For example the ordinance of Wakiso district legislated article 9 of the CRPD on accessibility, while the ordinance of Iganga district legislated articles 24 and 25 on Education and Health; and
- Seeking approval of the Solicitor General to gazette the district ordinance as one of the laws of the district in accordance to the 1997 Local Government Act.

Despite the ratification of the CRPD by the Uganda Government and the awareness creation on the CRPD to leaders of district Local Governments, National Council for Disability while fulfilling its mandate of monitoring implementation of programs by Government and other implementers at all levels, discovered the remaining 110 districts had not domesticated the CRPD. This was attributed to limited information on the CRPD and knowledge of how to domesticate the Convention, coupled with lack of understanding on the benefits of domesticating the Convention at district level.

In order to support the 110 districts to learn the domestication of the CRPD from Iganga and Wakiso district local governments, There is need for exposure visits by the district leaders of the 110 districts to the districts of Iganga and Wakiso as a way of practical learning and information sharing. The 110 districts need to make a deliberate effort to work with the District Disability Councils and other disability organizations to formulate district ordinances for implementing the CRPD. The National Council for Disability and the other DPOs need to provide information on the CRPD and guidelines for domestication; whilst explaining the benefit of domesticating the convention at district level such as the contribution of persons with disabilities to the economic growth of the district through addressing their right to education, health, participation in political life and employment stipulated in articles 24, 25, 29 and 27 of the CRPD respectively;

Promoting conducive environment for persons with disabilities contributes to improvement of the lives of not only persons with disabilities but the older persons, pregnant women and the sick people in the community.

Conclusion:

This article calls upon the leaders of the 110 local Government councils to follow the example of Iganga and Wakiso districts to domesticate the CRPD by:

- i. Conducting a baseline survey on the situation of persons with disabilities in the district;
- ii. Analysing the legal framework in the district addressing the rights of persons with disabilities to identify the gaps;
- iii. Consulting the district disability Councils and other disability organizations on proposals to be tabled to the district Local Government Council meeting for translating the Convention in to district ordinance; and
- iv. Selecting relevant articles of the CRPD to legislate on in line with the practical needs of persons with disabilities in the districts and priorities of the district Local Governments.

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