

Ghana's SDG Progress 2022-2023

Introduction

This brief report presents Ghana's progress towards the attainment of the health and health-related Sustainable Development Goals (HHSDGs) - notably climate action, mental health provision, and gender equality. Despite remarkable achievements since adopting the global developmental agenda, Ghana acknowledges the urgent challenges posed by climate change, mental health disparities, and gender inequities, and is committed to tackling them. Climate change poses a national threat, impacting farmers and coastal communities. Ghana is committed to reducing its emissions and enhancing resilience to climate impacts. Moreover, mental health issues persist due to stigma and limited access to facilities, prompting efforts to improve support and raise awareness. Furthermore, gender disparities persist despite strides made, urging Ghana to prioritize women's rights, bridge gender gaps in education, employment, and governance, and foster equal opportunities for all. This brief highlights Ghana's progress toward the achievement of the HHSDGs and challenges in that regard. This report can contribute to shedding light on progress made so far and interventions that are needed to

Highlights

- Mental health is underrepresented in reports in Ghana.
- Improved parliamentary, ministerial, and judicial representation of women, alongside a decline in child marriage rates.
- Active participation in global climate agreements, implementation of robust policies and deployment of innovative zero-carbon emission medical drones.
- SDG progress challenges include inadequate financing, disparities in access, subpar policy implementation, limited data management, and societal norms.

accelerate progress. Ultimately, we aim to enhance Ghana's contributions to the 2030 global SDG agenda.

Problem/Issue Overview

In September 2000, global leaders pledged to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing to combat poverty, hunger, gender inequality, and other developmental challenges, leading to the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ghana implemented various strategies to achieve these goals, including poverty alleviation plans, agricultural and health initiatives, and measures to promote gender equality. Despite advancements, obstacles such as limited social services and infrastructure persisted. In September 2015, Ghana embraced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and launched numerous programmes to attain them, including agricultural, health and climate change initiatives. Significant progress has been made in areas such as climate action, education and maternal health, but challenges persist in achieving targets related to hunger, health (mental health), and gender equality. Despite concerted efforts, issues like inadequate funding and ineffective data management continue to impede progress. By incorporating ongoing integrated monitoring and evaluation, Ghana can enhance accountability, optimize resource allocation, and ultimately accelerate progress towards achieving the 2030 SDGs.

Analysis/Synthesis Methods

This brief presents evidence from a 2022 scoping review aimed at assessing Ghana's progress towards the HHSDGs. It analyzed implementation progress and identified challenges. Data were extracted from peer-reviewed articles and grey literature sources published between September 2015 and October 2022, utilizing qualitative evidence synthesis techniques guided by the population, concept, and context (PCC)

framework. The review included 37 articles from online databases (Scopus, PubMed, Medline, and CINAHL), as well as 14 grey literature sources (WHO website, UNICEF website, non-governmental organizations' websites, Google, Google Scholar, and EBSCOHost).

Key Findings

While Ghana has made significant health progress, mental health is underrepresented in reports due to limited data. In our review, only three out of 42 SDG 3 reports address mental health. Mental health disorders affect various demographic groups. For example, the psychosocial well-being of children aged 36-59 months was reported at a concerning proportions of 68.4%, underscoring the urgent need for intervention and acceleration. Among individuals aged 6-19 years, mental health disorder incidence stands at 4.2%. Moreover, 51.8% of female caregivers suffer from at least one mental health condition, including depression, anxiety, and stress.

Gender equality (SDG 5) in Ghana is making moderate progress. The government has taken proactive measures to address gender disparities, including revamping ministries, launching national gender policies, and amending laws to protect women, girls, and boys. The legislative changes include the Affirmative Action Bill and amendments to various gender-related laws. Initiatives also involve implementing quotas for girls and women in education and leadership roles and increasing female representation in government. For example, female representation in parliament (14% in 2020 to 15% in 2021), ministerial positions (22% in 2019 to 25% in 2020), and judicial appointments (26% in 2019 to 28% in 2020 to 31% in 2021). Child marriage proportions have declined (23.2% in 2015 to 19% in 2017). However, challenges remain in addressing violence against women and girls, and defilement, which are stagnant areas of progress.

Ghana's climate action (SDG 13) is commendable, with the nation firmly on track. The country has actively participated in global

agreements like the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Additionally, Ghana has implemented robust policy interventions, such as the National Climate Change Policy and National Climate Change Master Plan, to address climate challenges effectively. Leveraging technology, Ghana has deployed zero-carbon emission medical drones to deliver essential supplies to remote communities, aligning with the UN's agenda for zero net carbon emissions. Through these proactive measures, Ghana is making significant strides in mitigating climate change and advancing sustainable development.

Primary challenges hindering Ghana's health SDG progress include inadequate financing, disparities in health affordability, geographical barriers to healthcare access, inequitable distribution of health staff, subpar policy implementation, COVID-19 impacts, NHIS limitations, and data management issues. Specifically, limited data may stem from unsustainable tracking systems and poor information management for mental health. Additionally, mental health's absence as a standalone SDG affects monitoring, resulting in insufficient attention, resources, and fragmented evaluation, hindering disorder assessment and service delivery.

Similarly, challenges to achieving gender equality by 2030 in Ghana include inadequate information management systems and data tracking tools for SDG 5 progress evaluation, limited programme financing, centralized gender programs, fragmented support for gender-based violence victims, patriarchal societal norms, insufficient lactating-mother-friendly infrastructures for exclusive breastfeeding, delays in gender law passage and implementation, and persistent cultural practices.

Finally, inadequate financing for climate action programmes and low budget credibility among stakeholders pose significant challenges to achieving climate action goals in Ghana. This is compounded by low awareness of climate change among the population, deficiencies in data tracking, and limited institutional capacity to

manage climate change effectively, resulting in poorly coordinated programs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Ghana has made some progress towards the SDGs, yet challenges persist, particularly in mental health, gender equality, and climate action. It is crucial to conduct a comprehensive study to understand how these areas intersect within the broader SDGs framework. Identifying the impact of climate change on mental health and its link to gender equality can inform targeted interventions. Addressing these interrelated issues with evidence-based policies is essential for Ghana to advance towards its SDGs objectives. Collaboration among stakeholders and research including primary data collection and analysis of disaggregated data for under-represented population subgroups particularly the vulnerable are vital for informing interventions and accelerating progress towards the attainment of the sustainable development goals by 2023.

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References/Resources

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