

Background□

A growing evidence base is highlighting the often-heightened experience of vulnerability, deprivation and exclusion common to persons with disability across low and middle income countries. As a result, PWDs are increasingly being included in mainstream and targeted social protection programmes. Coverage and inclusion of PWDs in these schemes is often subject to a range of barriers and facilitators that as of yet, have not been well explored or understood.□

The district assembly common fund disability component, administered by the Government of Ghana, aims to promote the social and economic well being of PWDs across the country, by providing one time grants for improving health and education outcomes, facilitating income generating activities, subsidizing assistive devices, and building capacity in organizations of people with disabilities. As is common with these types of schemes, access to the fund is quite low.

Previous investigations to the fund have revealed administrative challenges, that often delay and inhibit the fund. However, investigations into barriers to accessing the fund have largely excluded the voices of PWDs.

Aims□

A case study investigation in a district in Ghana's Upper East Region was undertaken to explore PWDs and fund administrator's views on barriers and facilitators to accessing the fund, as well as to explore how understandings of disability commonly held in the community shape access to the fund. Findings will be used to provide a basis for improving access to the DACF in the study district, and in districts across the whole of Ghana.

Methods□

22 semi-structured interviews conducted with fund administrators, past fund recipients, and PWDs in the community, were supplemented by thorough observations and reflections on community interactions, to provide rich data sets. This data was thematically analyzed in order to draw out recurring themes and ideas, exploring and highlighting barriers and facilitators to accessing the fund.

Results□

The study revealed a number of key barriers to accessing the fund, including; physical and financial barriers, temporal delays, administrative misuse, ambiguous eligibility criteria, and attitudinal barriers. These barriers were rarely present in isolation and many existed in concert, amplifying each other's effects. The nature of these barriers often meant the most vulnerable PWDs were the least likely to benefit from the fund.

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