

Creating and Enabling a Sustainable Livelihood for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities:
A Comparative Study of Ghana and Canada

Ferdinand Reimmer, B.A., M.A.

Centre for Applied Disability Studies

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Faculty of Social Sciences, Brock University
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Abstract

Despite the plethora of published studies on rights, including employment rights, for persons with intellectual disabilities (Hatton, 2002; Tarulli, et al., 2004; Ward & Stewart, 2008), relatively few have discussed their applicability to individuals with intellectual disabilities to facilitate their full involvement in socio-economic development. This study explored the mechanisms facilitating and inhibiting the full participation of persons with intellectual disabilities in the area of employment through a comparative case analysis of policies and practices in Ontario, Canada (a developed country) and in Ghana (a developing country) both of which are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The study employed targeted recruitment based on the nature of the research which is a combination of policy and practice investigation.

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Introduction

Since the signing of the United Nations Declaration Human Rights (UNDHR) in 1948, United Nations member states have ratified various protocols and conventions instituting policies and legislation that ensure the protection of the human rights of all their citizens, including persons with disabilities. In light of these international developments, this study aims to compare two UN countries (Ghana and Canada) that have all ratified the UNDHR and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (UNCRPD) specifically in terms of their achievements and progress in supporting the employment of persons with disabilities in their various jurisdictions.

Intellectual Disability Defined

One of the overarching issues that impact on the development and implementation of most legislation, policies and programs for persons with disabilities is the inconsistent and varying definitions of disability (Public Services Commission of Canada, 2011). Intellectual disabilities (ID) have been defined in a different ways by different scholars. The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) defines intellectual disability as “a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18” (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2002). The current study will use the terms developmental disability (DD) and intellectual disability (ID) interchangeably. This is because many individuals with intellectual disability will also meet the definition of developmental disability (Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, 2000). Also important is the fact that “the selection of a particular term

can be influenced by where one lives, the policies and regulations of a particular locale, as well as the discipline or background of the speaker” (National Coalition on Dual Diagnosis, 2008, p.2).

The varied definitions of intellectual disability in the literature has created challenges to reporting consistent prevalence rates around the world. Gilbert & Soderstrom (2003) reported that the prevalence rate in the western world is estimated to be between 1% and 2.5%. The key problem is the lack of precise occurrence rates of intellectual disability, despite numerous international studies that have been conducted (Gilbert & Soderstrom, 2003; Richardson, 1989). Several reasons may account for the disparity in findings.

Richardson (1989) asserts that the lack of a clear definition of intellectual disability in many studies, along with the lack of description of the methods used in selecting participants, are some of the problems faced in determining the prevalence of intellectual disability. However, despite the inconsistencies and inaccuracies in estimating the prevalence rate of intellectual disability, it is important for governments to note that persons with disabilities are part of the general population around the world and hence their human rights must be a priority of every government and citizen. Hence, organizations that advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with intellectual disabilities themselves have questioned what impact legislation and international and national instruments are having on improving the lives of persons with disabilities (International Liberation Organisation (ILO) in-focus Programme, 2002). Based on their experiences, they question whether human rights are truly universal (O'Manique, 1990).

What are Human Rights?

“Human rights implies the provision of the basic universal necessities of life including food, shelter, security, health, knowledge, work, freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and self-determination" (Tarulli et al., 2004, p.164). Despite the universal affirmation of rights for all citizens in the world through the ratification of international and national documents (such as the UNCRPD, 2006) by United Nations member countries, persons with intellectual disabilities have not seen the much-needed improvement in their socio-economic livelihoods. Evidence based documentation attests to the reality that persons with intellectual disabilities are at a higher risk of experiencing victimization in every sector of life, including the search for work or employment, compared to people without such disabilities (Hatton, 2002; Tarulli, et al., 2004; Ward & Stewart, 2008).

The provision of employment, amidst other important human rights for persons with intellectual disabilities, will to a large extent contribute to the growth and strengthening of their abilities and capabilities in all spheres of life, including economic, social and political participation. This is because granting persons with disabilities these fundamental rights will give them a sense of belonging, hence making them feel more included in the community and the country as equal citizens (Quinn & Degener, 2002; Rioux & Carbert, 2003). Therefore, the current project focuses on persons with intellectual disabilities and their right to employment rights. More specifically, the current investigation seeks to examine employment rights for persons with intellectual disabilities vis-à-vis the enactment of the UNCRPD in policy and practice in two countries. This aim is underscored by an

understanding that everyone has the right to work and to make a decent living as enshrined in most United Nations international and national treaties and conventions.

Right to Employment

For the purpose of this study, employment will basically refer to a person's profession/career/job/work with financial benefits and financial compensation. Being employed is one of the fundamental human rights entitlements that studies have shown impacts positively on the social and emotional lives of people with intellectual disabilities (Jahoda et. al 2009). Yet, it has been noted that “Disability-based discrimination in the employment context constitutes one of the most pervasive and insidious forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in many societies” (Disability and Development, n.d, p.1). These discriminatory practices are manifested in the form of barriers that pose enormous environmental and physical challenges to persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities. For example, persons with intellectual and other disabilities regularly encounter barriers to accomplishing daily tasks such as accessing transportation, accessing public facilities and buildings, or even communicating information in every country (Gajar, 1992).

Moreover, persons with physical and intellectual disabilities have experienced a history of physical and social exclusion in the workforce (Bessis, 1995; Bhalla & Lapeyre, 1997; Lee & Murie, 1999) which continues to affect their socio-economic livelihood. For example, evidence shows that the employment status of persons with intellectual disabilities has been less satisfactory in comparison to international and national policies and conventions requirements and expectations on employment of persons with disabilities

(Chesler 1982; White, Deshler, Schumacker, Warner, Alley, & Clark, 1983). As Crawford (2011) suggested, "people with intellectual disabilities are much more likely (at 39%) than others with disabilities (6.4%) and people without disabilities (6.2%) to indicate that they have never worked in their lives " (p. 11). Furthermore, most persons with disabilities who have worked have reported a number of social and physical barriers, including negative perceptions and stereotypes from their employers, (Minskoff, Sautter, Hoffman, & Hawks, 1987; Thomas, 1981) which did not help them in contributing their entire abilities and capabilities to the organisation.

As a result, the proposed study aims to ascertain the reasons why this huge number (39% of persons with intellectual disabilities) is likely to never have worked before (Crawford, 2011). Again, as postulated by Crawford (2011), 50.6% of persons with intellectual disabilities who have experienced discrimination in the workplace. However, one of the questions that this study will explore concerns the factors that may have led to this high level of workplace discrimination. Moreover, the study will explore the barriers and facilitators to the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in order to address some of these concerns.

Employment Support Organisations and Intellectual Disabilities

Most United Nations member countries, in their efforts to promote inclusive citizenship and also to ensure the meaningful participation of every citizen in the socio-economic development of society, has set up Ministries and agencies to provide financial and human resource support and assistance to organisations that provide employment support to persons with intellectual disabilities. In Ontario, one reputable organisation that

has been involved with employment support for persons with intellectual disabilities is called Mainstream. Mainstream is a direct employment support agency based in St. Catharines. Mainstream has provided progressive residential and day support services for adults with a development disability since 1984.

In Ghana, employment support for persons with intellectual disabilities has recently received quite a fair amount of attention. One organisation that continues to push for government support and assistance for this cause is VOICE Ghana. The organization was set up in July 2002 and is managed for and by people with disabilities including physical and intellectual disabilities. VOICE Ghana is a direct employment support agency based in the Volta region of Ghana that supports persons with disabilities, including children, via the promotion of their human rights in a constructive and inclusive manner (VOICE Ghana, n.d). For example, through the District Assemblies and local government agencies in Ghana, VOICE Ghana has collaborated with other organisations to advance the Persons with Disability Act, (2006) and the (UNCRPD, 2006).

With discussion of employment rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, VOICE Ghana and Mainstream was the focus of the study. The study looked at the international and national policies of the two jurisdictions and their implementation, but with no expectation of generalizability to other jurisdictions. This study is the first to investigate the practical application of the UNCRPD by governments in Ghana and Ontario

with respect to the employment rights of persons with intellectual disabilities. The study focused on Ghana and Ontario¹.

Finally, the study compared Ontario and Ghana because as reported by UNICEF Country bulletin in 2000, “disability prevalence has been estimated to be at 10% in Ghana” (p.18), which is comparable to an estimated 15.5% of Ontario's population (OADA, 2005). These reasons made the comparison of the two jurisdictions appropriate as the outcome of the study could inform the enactment of future legislation in both areas.

Literature Review

A search of different academic databases, including Academic Search Premier and PsychLit, revealed very limited information on employment rights for persons with intellectual disabilities, especially comparative information of the sort of interest here. This situation makes it extremely challenging for governments and policy makers to think through and come up with policy initiatives and/or recommendations that will best serve the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities. The little data that were retrieved indicated that, while there is some progress being made in the integration of persons with intellectual disabilities in mainstream employment, the process of inclusion, as enshrined in international and national documents of these two case study countries, has made little head way. Furthermore, it was found that there has not been any study between the two case

¹ While Ontario (a province of Canada) is almost three times the size of Ghana (a country) in terms of geography, it has a similar population and hence invites comparative analysis on that demographic characteristic. Moreover, Ontario, just like Ghana, has incorporated the international conventions and treaties such as the UNDHR and the UNCRPD into their policy strategies, and hence both have a common denominator for research.

study countries that was geared towards policy analysis with regard to practice and implementation relating to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Historical Overview: Human Rights and Intellectual Disability in Perspective

Throughout much of human history, human rights abuses, including imprisonment, sterilization, and overmedication as well as negative stereotypes, have been associated with persons with intellectual disabilities (Noll & Trent, 2004; Schreenberger, 1983). Some thinkers, especially from the Greek and Roman period, regarded this population as barely human and suggested that “the sick were seen as lesser humans” (Barker, 1953, p. 103). In the *Republic*, Plato suggested putting any “deformed” progeny in some “mysterious unknown places” (Goldenberg & Plato, 1974, pp. 393). In the 17th century, intellectual disabilities were deemed by Thomas Willis to be a disease. The latter part of the 18th and early 19th centuries was the era of placing the “idiots and the feeble-minded” (Jackson, 1998, p. 364) into institutions for specialized treatment and training and care (Noll & Trent, 2004). In the late 19th century and the early 20th centuries selective breeding was proposed through surgical sterilization of humans to reduce the number of persons with intellectual disabilities (Noll & Trent, 2004). The 20th century saw the rise of the eugenics movement throughout the world, which propelled Hitler’s regime to kill over 90,000 people with disabilities in Nazi Germany (Owen, Griffiths, Tarulli, & Murphy, 2009), people who were accused of being consumers but not producers, and hence not worthy to live.

Since the late 20th century, support for the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights obligations by states and countries has constituted the linchpin of the United Nations efforts all around the world to promote the rights of every global citizen. The

rationale for this support lies in an understanding of the past discriminatory and stereotypical practices drawn from the history of abuse and neglect of part of the world's population. More especially, the unfavourable treatment of persons with intellectual disabilities made headlines around the world culminating in debates on the need to uphold human rights globally. As a result of horrible episodes of human rights abuses, some of which are enumerated above and which include physical and sexual abuses (Sobsey, 1994), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) was developed by the United Nations.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The UNDHR (1948) outlined the universal expectations of the treatment of every person. This document defined what human rights are and was signed by all fifty eight member countries as an instrument to guide and shape how the human rights of every human being should be considered and treated all over the world.

Since that time, the UNDHR has become the measuring scale of most United Nations member countries to ensure equal and fair treatment of every global citizen. To ensure the practical assessment by the United Nations of the fundamental freedoms protected in the UNDHR, the Human Development Index (HDI) was developed by Amartya Sen (1999). This index is to serve as a checklist in ensuring that member states are on course with regard to their promise to abide by the UDHR document. Although the HDI has succeeded in raising practical awareness of the economic livelihood standards of the citizens of the UN member countries, it does not include any specifics related to the 10% or 650 million persons with disabilities around the world (European Network of Independent

Living Report, 2013). As estimated by the World Health Organization, this 10% or 650 million persons with disabilities is likely to increase due to “population growth, medical advances and the aging process” (World Health Organization Report, 1981, p.1). Hence, the acceptance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) by United Nations member states serves to protect the rights of this population.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UNCRPD (2006) was developed for the sole purpose of promoting equal rights and protections for persons with disabilities. The convention recognizes accessibility and the inclusion of this population as basic steps towards the enjoyment of their rights. Hence, most United Nations member states around the world have signed the UNCRPD (2006) in addition to the UNDHR to affirm their commitment to human rights protection amongst their citizenry. This is because persons with disabilities are part of the citizenry of every country and they do also have the right to autonomy and individual rights (Hosking, 2008), as well as entitlements to basic human needs, including food, shelter, physical safety, security, health, and other things that enrich one’s life. Such things may include “access to knowledge, work and freedom of conscience, expression and association” (Griffiths et al., 2003, p. 26). These are rights and freedoms that historically have been denied persons with intellectual disabilities; in this denial of rights, persons with intellectual disabilities have been relegated to the background and seen as second class citizens. Generally, rights are granted to all people as members of the human race by virtue of being born into a country as a citizen. Therefore, these rights cannot be taken away by coercion, persuasion, any

systemic or institutional forces or others “constructed by institutional practices” (Oliver, 1990, p. 82) which was the practice prior to 1948.

Prior to the emergence of the UNDHR (1948) and other international rights documents, including the UNCRPD (2006), the general practice was to put people with disabilities into institutions, which literally means “locking up” their rights as human beings. Hence, persons with disabilities at these institutions had little or no control over their lives (Tarulli & Sales, 2009). This institutionalisation practice ultimately imposed artificial limitations upon these individuals while denying them equal developmental prospects (Munyi, 2012), all the while confining their rights and freedoms despite their citizenship status (Roehher Institute, 2004).

Persons with disabilities do not intentionally or by choice acquire that “label” but are given it as a result of circumstances beyond their own control. These circumstances include natural or artificial disaster or they are born with a disability or they might acquire it through life stages such as aging. As suggested by Stone (1988), disability is a common experience, just like sex and like aging, and everyone will become disabled before death. Hence, policies and legislation related to disability must be of prime importance to everyone. Meanwhile, with the enactment of these international conventions and treaties that advocate for employment equity, amongst other principles, persons with intellectual disabilities and other types of disabilities have hope that at least their rights and freedoms will be protected and respected. Furthermore, it is hoped that with these conventions, society will also erase all erroneous perceptions and misconceptions that they might have towards persons with disabilities. However, although the impact of these international

conventions has led to some gains for persons with disabilities, employment remains an issue.

International Policies: Intellectual Disability

There are many conventions that have been enacted by the United Nations and its other agencies to ensure the universal protection of the human rights of every global citizen. These conventions cover every facet of society where there will be interaction between persons, including rights issues in the workplace. For example, the International Labour organization enacted convention No. 159 that was passed in 1983 and which focuses basically on reintegrating persons with disabilities into the workplace. There are also Recommendations No. 168 and No. 111 of 1983, which focus on treating every person equally in the workplace regardless of their race, age, sex, disability or even religion. The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006) was enacted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The full participation of persons with disabilities in society was the reason for the enactment of most of these employment rights documents (ILO Report, 2002). These international employment rights documents are translated at the national level and inform the development of Constitutions, Labour Codes, Employment and Conditions of Work Acts (ILO, 2002).

International Liberation Organisation

In 1992, ILO contributed actively to the formulation of a new UN instrument called Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities. The term "Equalization of Opportunities" was introduced into the international debate by the United Nations World

Programme of Action. The introduction of this instrument was as a result of concerns raised around the world that persons with disabilities need improvements in service and program delivery (ILO, 2002). This means, in particular, that persons with disabilities need fair chances to get involved in the social and economic life of their societies and that society has an obligation to remove the many barriers that are still in the way of full participation and equality. Consequently, 75 countries, including Canada and Ghana, ratified most of the above stated employment rights documents and conventions in their bid to protect persons with disability from discriminatory acts that will affect their emotional and social well-being.

However, in spite of the above noted documents that were adopted to ensure their equal representation in the workforce, in both countries persons with disabilities still remain largely unemployed and poor mainly due to negative social attitudes and perceptions towards them. Hosking (2008) points out that in every cultural context, people with disabilities are depicted as worthless and perilous beings who are incapable of making any significant contribution in life. Hence, they often become dependent and defenceless and have to rely on society for care and protection. There is, therefore, still more work needed to sensitize citizens of member States towards an attitudinal change concerning how persons with intellectual disabilities are viewed in light of all the above mentioned international instruments, more specifically with reference to the most recent UNCRPD which focuses on employment rights.

Persons with Disabilities at the International Level

As a result of all the above incidences of prejudice and discrimination that persons with disabilities encounter on a daily basis, the United Nations adopted the UNCRPD in 2006 to protect, among others, the employment rights of the over one billion persons with disabilities world-wide (UNCRPD, 2012). The UNCRPD report noted that the involvement of “the world’s largest minority,” (p.1) in societal activities has come with immense difficulties and challenges in a wide array of areas, including the environment, communication and technology. Other barriers stem from legislative and policy areas, or from societal attitudes or discrimination as well as inaccurate perceptions of persons with disabilities. These discriminatory practices exist in all sectors of society (education, health care, employment, and transportation). As evidence has shown (Kaletta, Binks & Robinson, 2012), society benefits greatly when persons with intellectual disabilities are accorded the right environment to work and participate and contribute meaningfully in society, where environmental, physical, communication and technological barriers and challenges are removed.

Article 27 of the UNCRPD requires that:

States parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis of others;... [as well as to] safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation, to inter alia:

1. Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, continuance of

employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions;

2. Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances;
3. Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others;
 4. Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programs, placement services and vocational and continuing training;
 5. Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;
 6. Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperative and starting one's own business.
 7. Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace.

8. Promote the acquisition by persons with disabilities of work experience in the open labour market.

9. Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programs for persons with disabilities.

10. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery or in servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forces or compulsory labor (UN Enable: Development and Human Rights for All, 2008).

In sum, the UNCRPD has stated categorically that, in spite of how different member states are (in terms of population, geography, and religious beliefs) and how different cultures within those states perceive persons with intellectual disabilities, the universal principle that States have signed on to is that persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, have the right to employment/work. As such, all necessary provisions and accommodations must be made to ensure their inclusion in the workforce. However, despite the existence of these international and national protectionist documents for persons with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities remain largely unemployed. As a result, most countries have enacted national policies that have legal backing for equal rights regardless of disability (Neuman, 1984).

National Policies on the Employment for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

International treaties and conventions (UNDHR, UNCRPD) have trickled down to the national level and find their way into the constitutions of the majority of the United

Nations member states that have ratified them. However, the practical implementation of these policies to reflect in the lives of the citizenry, especially persons with intellectual disabilities, has not been successful largely because “societal attitudes significantly impact negatively the necessary intervention needed to make that change occur” (Park, 1975, p. 47). Hence, Ghana’s and Ontario’s bid to ensure that the international conventions are reflected in national policies that will impact positively on persons with disabilities while dispelling society’s negative attitudes and perceptions has yet to materialize fully.

Canada ratified the UNCRPD on March 11, 2010 with enforcement beginning April 10, 2010 (United Nations, 2006). By being among the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Canada has recognized that equal rights extend to people with a disability. Under the Convention, UN member countries must include aspects of the UNCRPD in their national legislation/constitution, and amend sections of already existing policies to suit the convention criteria. Ghana and Canada are also required to render mandatory periodic account of their successes or failures to the United Nations (Public Service Commission of Canada Report, 2009).

Ghana, on the other hand, signed the UNCRPD in March 2007 but did not ratify the process until July 2012, making it the 119th country worldwide and the 32nd country within Africa to ratify the Convention (Inclusion Ghana). The delay led to mass abuse of human rights, including the rights to liberty, access to healthcare, and freedom from discrimination of persons with disabilities (Inclusion Ghana). The ratification of the Convention in 2012 was, therefore, deemed as an important first step in the process of the realization for persons

with intellectual disabilities of the equal access to and treatment of citizenship rights (Inclusion Ghana).

Canada- Federal Level.

At the federal level, the Canadian government integrated the UNCRPD to meet the legislative requirements of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter) This charter includes “protection for equal rights and prohibition against unequal treatment of persons based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disabilities” (Government of Canada, 1982, p.3). The charter also sets events and activities that aim to improve the livelihood of persons with disabilities. Despite the values and protectionist measures spelled out in the Charter, “discriminatory practices on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability” (Ontario Human Rights, 2011, p.7) have placed this population as a disadvantaged group. The Charter also allows for special programs to improve the conditions of disadvantaged groups including persons with disabilities. In section 15 of the Charter, for example, the words “physical and mental disability” were placed there which “ensures that disablement and persons with disabilities are recognized politically” in regards to equity rights (Cameron & Valentine, 2001, p.35).

Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA). There is also the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA, (Wayne, & Kim, 2009) that prohibits unequal treatment and sets up services aimed to reduce any form of discrimination based on race or nationality or disability

(Government of Canada, 2011). The CHRA also states the duty of the employer to make fair accommodation consideration for persons with disabilities prior to making any decision concerning the person's employment status (Public Services Commission Report, 2009).

Employment Equity Act (EEA).

Furthermore, there is the Employment Equity Act (EEA)(Doyle-Bedwell, 2008)which sets out what measures, including policies and practices, an employer must put in place to ensure equal accommodation for all its employees, including persons with disabilities (Public Service Commission (PSC) Report, 2011). The implementation of this act (EEA) does lie in the hands of the employer, whether federal or provincial governments.

Public Service Employment Act.

Another item of Canadian federal level legislation that relates to employment rights of persons with disabilities is the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA) (Langford, 1987). The Act ensures that appointments in the public service are based on merit and not party affiliation. It also ensures that managers are accountable for any and every employment decision they make and take with respect to filling positions in the public service. The Act encourages fairness, transparency and representation at both the federal and provincial levels (Ontario) in Canada. Meanwhile, the Public Service Commission (PSC) 2009-2010 Annual Report stated that: "The PSC remains concerned that persons with disabilities are the only group whose share of appointments has been below their work force availability for the past few years" (p.36). All this federal legislation, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadian Human Rights Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Public Service Employment Act, is enacted to ensure human rights

protection as well as to ensure the equal representation of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups within the broader spectrum of the Canadian economy. But despite this federal legislation every province, including Ontario, also legislates differently although the federal policies act as guidelines for the inclusion of policies at the provincial level.

Canada- Provincial Level.

The Canadian government has ensured that every province has enacted human rights legislation that supports the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and also includes provincial areas of jurisdiction. The Canadian government seeks “inclusion and respect in an overarching Canadian citizenship” (James, 2006, p.4) which is visible through some of the policy legislation in most of the provinces in Canada.

Ontarians with Disabilities Act. So far, Ontario is one of the provinces in Canada with special laws focusing specifically on persons with disabilities, as reflected in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005). Hence, government measures and plans are far advanced in making and ensuring an accessible Ontario by 2025.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Under the AODA, the Ontario government has made accessibility a rule to ensure that physical barriers that people with disabilities confront in their daily activities are identified and removed and this rule is applicable to both public and private organizations, and includes employment (OADA Act, 2005).

Other provinces have started discussions on the need to ensure an accessible space for persons with disabilities in society. As a result, most provincial governments have also started to seek public input to help restructure the provinces by making them accessible and barrier-free. Although most provinces do not have legislation focusing specifically on disability, they have established and executed strategies aimed to assimilate persons with disabilities in areas including employment (Public Services Commission of Canada, 2011).

Ghana –National Policy of Persons with Disabilities.

Ghana is a country in West Africa that was the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain independence from the British in 1957. The World Health Organization (WHO) suggested that the disability rate in Ghana is at 7% to 10% (Ghana Federation of the Disabled Report, n.d.). As is characteristic of any developing country, persons with disabilities in Ghana lack needed protection and support and are most often marginalized. They also lack basic necessities including health, education and other services that their non-disabled colleagues take for granted (Ghana Federation of the Disabled Report, 2013).

Persons with disabilities in Ghana, including persons with intellectual disabilities, are often viewed as incompetent and incapable of contributing to society's growth. Rather, they are regarded as problematic to their immediate families and society in general (Fefoame, 2009). This situation always worsens the already volatile plight of persons with disability leaving them in a vicious cycle of poverty. Meanwhile, disability movements are virtually absent in these countries, including Ghana, thereby leaving persons with disabilities to their own fate. In Ghana, there are approximately 5 million people living with various degrees of disability. This has made them the largest minority group. Out of

this number, at least 2.8 million live with mental disabilities (Ghana Human Rights Report, 2012). In an effort to protect the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, Ghana has also ratified all the international instruments and treaties including the 2006 UNCRPD.

Ghana Disability Act.

At the national level, in 2006 Ghana passed the Ghana Disability Act (GDA), 715, aimed at enhancing and improving the lives of Persons with disabilities (Government of Ghana, 2006). The Act stipulates an accessible Ghana by 2016. Sections 6 and 7 of the Act stipulate that any public facility and any services provided to the public must all be accessible enough to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities (Government of Ghana, 2006). Section 39 under the Miscellaneous Provisions of the Act indicates that any publicly organised event shall have facilities that will facilitate the involvement by persons with disability (Government of Ghana, 2006). In spite of these provisions in the Act, a recent event organized at the State House in Accra, Ghana and attended by persons with disabilities; found that the situation of accessibility at the government house is not different from what it was before the passage of the Act in 2006. The question being asked by non-governmental stakeholders that are advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities is whether the State can hold accountable other organizations that must provide accessible facilities for persons with disabilities (Ghana Accessibility News, 2013).

Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II.

Ghana has also included disability as one of the central topics in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II). The policy outlines the legal steps that persons with disabilities can take to ensure the respect and protection of their full citizenship status.

It also makes clear what services are available for persons with disabilities including free general and specialist medical care, education, employment and transportation (GPRS, 2009). Also included in the Act is how service providers will ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their planning and service delivery roles. However, one big question about the Act is its relative silence concerning intellectual disability, although the Act enumerates grounds for prohibition including stigmatization, discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities (Inclusion Ghana Report, 2013).

Meanwhile, five years since the passing of the Persons with Disability Act in Ghana, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), an NGO in Accra that advocates for human rights, reported in its newsletter that:

It should be a time for celebration and reflection upon the great strides that have been made in improving the lives of Ghana's disabled. However the great strides expected have instead turned out to be a few faltering steps. Rather than celebrate, we lament this inexcusable failure of the government to fulfil the commitment it has made to its most vulnerable citizens (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Report [CHRI], 2011, p. 4).

The CHRI reported that a visit to

233 schools revealed that no disability facilities were provided, denying disabled children access to any form of education. The healthcare system is unequipped to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities and the state of mental healthcare is pitiful. Commitments made to employment creation have been ignored and where persons with disabilities do gain employment they continue to face many constraints. (CHRI, 2011, p.11)

Although the rights of persons with intellectual disability are guaranteed both by national and international conventions, including the UNCRPD, in reality these provisions have offered persons with intellectual disability virtually no protection from discrimination in the area of employment as the employment statistics of this population still remain low and at unacceptable levels.

Employment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

In the constitutions of both Ghana and Canada are entrenched principles that ensure that every citizen is equal and must have an equal share of dignity and respect. No one has the choice at birth to be male or female nor can they choose what race they belong to. As a result, there must be no “discrimination” with respect to inalienable human rights such as the right to life, freedom, work or employment (O'Manique, 1990) based on disability (whether intellectual, physical, learning, hearing, mental health or visual), race, religion, gender, age or sex. It appears that most countries do have some sort of laws and policies on some of the identified areas above, including religion, employment, gender, age etc. However, despite the existence of these laws that ensure and guarantee universal equality, international organisations especially the UN also enacted some conventions to serve as a protection measure for persons with disabilities in most countries.

Undoubtedly, two United Nations documents, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), openly guarantee equality of rights for all persons, with the latter document focusing more on rights for people with disabilities. Both documents guarantee that all individuals are entitled to equal rights without discrimination related to religion, race, creed,

sex, gender, or disability. These conventions and treaties (especially the UNCRPD) have brought about some major changes with respect to how persons with intellectual disabilities are treated currently as compared to the past, granting them some freedom and independence to live their own lifestyle. But that notwithstanding, these fundamental human rights protections, such as the right to work, are still routinely violated, ignored or restricted for persons with intellectual disability. As noted by Jahoda, Kemp, Riddell, and Banks (2008), “work is an aspiration for many people with intellectual disability and is regarded as a vital goal by policy-makers in pursuit of social inclusion” (p. 1). However, in spite of these treaties and conventions that aim to leverage the rights for all citizens, unemployment of persons with disabilities has remained one of the greatest predicaments of this population. This situation has been the bane of both international and national policies; hence examination of the causes of unemployment of persons with disabilities is relevant to explore in order to investigate how this trend can be reversed to ensure that the human rights of all citizens are respected, protected and upheld.

Causes of Unemployment for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

“Human rights are universal” (O'Manique, 1990, p. 465) and every citizen has the right to enjoy life with all that comes with existence on this earth and in this world, including the right to work. Historically, persons with intellectual disabilities have been treated with disdain in different countries based on different beliefs and cultures (Munyi, 2012). People’s attitudes and the societal perceptions towards individuals with disabilities along with the treatment of persons with disabilities have been the bane of persons with intellectual disabilities. This discriminatory treatment meted out to persons with intellectual

disabilities in the area of employment, education, healthcare access, transportation, is reflected in the failure to create conditions that will facilitate the inclusion of this population into mainstream employment and accessing public facilities. False notions and fears that have existed within these societies for a long period of time have been largely due to lack of knowledge and awareness of what persons with intellectual disabilities can do, and a disregard for their basic rights and dignity.

“Employment is viewed by policy makers as both a human right and as a means of changing the marginalized status of people with intellectual disabilities, with important social and emotional benefits” (Jahoda, et al., 2009, p. 1). However, various studies point to different causes of employment discrimination among persons with intellectual disabilities, including disability itself, wrong perception and misconceptions from the public as well as cultural and religious factors.

Disability itself.

While it is currently believed that the unemployment experienced by people with disabilities is as a result of the disability itself, it is also believed that there are environmental and social factors that are contributory factors. Disability itself cannot be the basis for denying or discriminating on employment, but attitudes and general perceptions about disability are the causative factors, such as the belief among the general public that persons with intellectual disabilities are inferior and incompetent (Tarulli et al., 2004). Hence, this population is deemed to be unable to contribute to the economic development of their country. However, even when persons with intellectual disabilities are employed, they face various degrees and levels of barriers that negatively impact their work performance.

Perception of Disabilities in Ghana

Persons with intellectual disabilities are seen in a variety of ways by the people of different countries depending on the type of lens that the viewer is using. Ghana is located in the Western region of Africa and it is made up of 10 regions each seeing persons with intellectual disabilities differently.

Disability is a curse.

The Ashanti region is found in central Ghana. This region treats deformity as a curse. Hence, “any male with a physical deformity will not be crowned as a chief, and any already crowned chief will lose his status if he becomes physically or mentally derailed” (Sarpong 1974, p. 79). Parents who give birth to physically deformed children have their children rejected; some of these children may be killed upon birth (Rattray, 1952). As rivers and seas were revered by these people as places where strange animals were found as well as where the spirits of the dead converged, some children with severe disabilities were abandoned at riversides so they returned to these rivers and seas which were believed to be their original habitat (Danquah, 1977). Avoke (2002) reports that in Ghana, many people in the community regarded children with disabilities as “children of the rivers and forest” (p.7) and were returned to these rivers and forests in the past (Avoke, 2002).

According to Fefoame (2009), a family that gives birth to a child with a disability is not given the opportunity for scientific evaluation and/or explanation for the reason for the disability, such as nutrition deficit or birth complications, but society begins to pronounce judgement such as the gods are annoyed and or the gods need a sacrifice. These

unsubstantiated pronouncements from members of society and the family unavoidably lead to the abuse of the fundamental human rights of both the child and the family.

Persons with intellectual disabilities are small gods.

On the other hand, the people of Ga from the Greater Accra region treat persons with disabilities with respect and love and kindness, believing that persons with intellectual disabilities are small gods that will bring them joy and peace (Field, 1937). These misconceptions, superstitions and attitudes have their basis in a fundamental lack of understanding of the functioning abilities and capabilities of persons with disabilities and until this basic information is taught and/or made known, the treatment of this population will continue to be indifferent in many parts of the world (Abosi, 2002). This perception that disability is as a result of a curse and superstitions (gods being annoyed) resulting in the killing of “deformed” children upon birth in Ghana is a sharp shift from international convention documents that Ghana has ratified as a country, documents that call for the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms of all citizens including the right to life. In spite of that, this development is not peculiar to Ghana; it is found in most African countries. On the contrary, the way persons with disabilities are perceived in western industrialised countries, such as Ontario, is different from their counterparts in the developing countries. However, one could argue from an historical perspective, and even presently, that there is still some overlap in cultural ideologies (Wolfenberger, 1972) with regards to the negative treatment of this population.

Perception of Disabilities in Ontario

Exercise of choice.

Ontario has included policies and legislation that aim to respect and protect treatment of persons with intellectual disabilities. However, according to a 2012 report on the inclusion of Canadians with disabilities by the Canadian Association for Community Living, “a significant proportion of Canadians with disabilities are not given the needed chance to exercise choice within their own lives” (p.2). Canada is one of the many developed countries that have ratified most, if not all, of the United Nations’ conventions and treaties. Hence, many believe that Canada will be up to the task when it comes to the treatment of persons with intellectual disabilities. However, this may not be the reality, as issues of disability are handled at the provincial level and every province legislates differently, especially on disability policies.

Meanwhile, comparing Canada and Ghana to other parts of the world, such as Europe and Scandinavian countries, Lippmann (1972) argued that citizens with disabilities in these countries (Europe and Scandinavia) are more accepted than in the United States and Canada. According to Lippmann, the provision of better rehabilitation services is what has made the difference between these countries and the rest of the world. This finding was corroborated by Munyi (2012) who said a commitment to social responsibility for all is what the Scandinavian countries use in ensuring equality amongst their citizenry regardless of disability. Thus, these countries have made great strides from the perspective of treatment and/or protection to the prevention and acceptance of the rights of persons with disabilities (Zola, 1983).

Canada's efforts to make persons with disabilities more accepted in order to provide better rehabilitation services became evident when the country joined the celebration of the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981. Prior to 1981, in 1960 the federal government passed the Canadian Bill of Rights that spoke of fundamental freedoms, legal rights and equality before the law. Unfortunately, this bill was widely recognized as ineffective because it did not explicitly amend any conflicting statutes, it was not a constitutional amendment, and was seen as just an ordinary statute, and hence could not readily be applied in most provinces (Kasoff & James, 2013). Hence, the most important outcome of the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981, was the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly by its resolution 37/52 on 3 December 1982.

The International Year of Disabled Persons and the World Programme of Action provided a strong impetus for progress in the field. They both emphasized the right of persons with disabilities to the same opportunities as other citizens and to an equal share in the improvements in living conditions resulting from economic and social development. As a result of resolution 37/52 Canada set up a committee that made about 130 recommendations for better and more inclusive citizenship for all Canadians. The Charter was signed into law by Queen Elizabeth II of Canada on April 17, 1982, along with the rest of the Act, but the equality rights section of the Charter was delayed until April 17, 1985.

Employment Barriers Faced by Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Since the signing of international treaties and conventions, most United Nations member states and governments have developed national measures and policies aimed at

advocating for the care and respect of the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities especially in the area of employment. That being said, historically, treatment procedures including institutionalization of this population were reported to have affected negatively the efforts of governments in their bid to implement policies that will advance the rights of this population (Du Brow, 1965). This is because persons with disabilities at these institutions had little or no control over their lives (Tarulli & Sales, 2009) which ultimately imposed artificial limitations upon these individuals while denying them equal prospects for development. This led to calls for promotion and protection of human and civil rights for all and humane treatment for everyone (Curtis 1986; Bachrach 1989).

More recently, governments have moved away from institutionalization to de-institutionalization in order to give persons with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to access needed support and intervention through community living (Burrell & Trip, 2011). However, the integration of this population by governments and other civil society organizations into community living has not been fairly smooth (Mansell, 2006) as there are still negative societal attitudes and perceptions which largely impact the success or otherwise of the efforts of various governments.

As stated by Varela (1983), this situation is compounded by "social, political and intellectual obstacles, as well as physical ones" (Varela 1983, p. 37) that persons with intellectual disabilities are faced with in society. These obstacles include the public (and employers') attitudes, perceptions and misconceptions about persons with disabilities, the lack of accessible accommodations to ensure easy movement of persons with disabilities, governmental policies and legislation which still need to incorporate more sections on realizing the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the psychological, emotional and

intellectual obstacles that persons with intellectual disabilities may face when they are, in fact, employed, including fear, discomfort, and feeling devalued.

Meanwhile, persons with physical and intellectual disabilities may accept that they have limitations but restrictions must not exclude them from enjoying their basic rights, such as the right to employment. In any case, despite the constitutions of most UN member countries making mention of equal treatment of every citizen, this is clearly not what is practiced in the majority of the countries (Health and Limitation survey, 1991). This discrepancy illustrates that, although the creation of treaties, conventions, and protocols over the past fifty years implies major advances in human rights norms, the true impact of these measures is questionable, especially in the area of employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in both Ghana and Ontario. This is because of various barriers (enumerated below) that are in place that inhibit persons with intellectual disabilities, and also because of perceptions that citizens of both jurisdictions have concerning the employability of this population.

Intellectual and Environmental Barriers

The UNCRPD acknowledges that barriers in society are disabling factors for persons with disability. Hence the Convention has included measures on how to avoid attitudinal and environmental barriers that stand in the way of persons with intellectual disabilities in their daily involvement in society (International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2012). Historically, persons with intellectual disabilities have been treated with disdain in different countries based on different beliefs and cultures (Munyi, 2012). People's attitudes and the societal perceptions of individuals with disabilities along with

their treatment have negatively impacted their human rights pursuits. Not granting persons with intellectual disability basic rights which their non-disabled colleagues take for granted, including their right to work, has created more vulnerabilities for this population. This type of treatment meted out to persons with disabilities is in sharp contrast to the agreed expectations of fairness and equality of these United Nations member states as stipulated in both their national and international documents. This has been due largely to lack of knowledge and awareness of what persons with intellectual disabilities can do, and to a disregard for their basic rights and dignity. This lack of knowledge and awareness of the capabilities that this population might bring to the employment field when they are accorded their rights has created barriers to their employment based mainly on myths, stereotypes and public perceptions.

Public perception

The general negative attitude of the public towards persons with disabilities has impacted their employability. Over the years the public, which includes employers, has seen disability as a disabling factor mainly due to lack of knowledge and awareness that it is the duty of the employer to accommodate. Hence, employers have come to believe that disability affects the output and/or productivity of an employee with a disability especially in this era of “multi-tasking.” Employers believe that persons with disabilities will be incapable of doing multiple assignments simultaneously, and that hence they will be less productive than their colleagues who do not have disabilities.

Income Support Programs

Furthermore, income support programs, such as the Ontario Disability Support Programme (Government of Ontario, 2008) and social assistance, have been made in such a way that a percentage of whatever income one makes over a specified amount while on any of these programs is deducted from their pension. This has made it more difficult for persons with intellectual disabilities to take up employment as they know that in spite of how hard they work, they will only be rewarded with a fraction of their earnings. Also worth noting is the improved and adequate physical infrastructure needed to facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities into the workplace. A study by the U.S. Job Accommodation Network in 2006 revealed that “workplace accommodations to be low cost, with 57 percent of participants spending nothing at all. Of those accommodations that did have a cost, the typical one-time expenditure by employers was \$500” (p.2). However, the question as to whether employers are actually making these accommodations available to persons with disabilities remains largely unanswered.

Despite all the above identified issues that act as barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities, little is being done to address them in order to facilitate the employability of this population.

Facilitators to employing persons with intellectual disabilities

Awareness creation.

An enhanced public awareness of the skills of persons with intellectual disabilities may dispel the myths and stereotypes surrounding their employment and can be a first step

in facilitating their employability. Moreover, making known to the public how this population does contribute and how they impact positively both on organizations they have worked for and also on other employees, will facilitate the employment of this population. For example, a study conducted by Kaletta, Binks & Robinson (2012) revealed that the employment of over 40 percent of employees with disabilities (physical and intellectual disabilities) by Walgreens in two different states in the U.S. (South Carolina and Connecticut) indicated that employees with disabilities did not pose any major health or safety concerns to employers. The study revealed that when compared with the national average accident costs for stores, the two States had a lower than 60 percent safety incident rate as compared to 40 percent of stores that employed persons with disabilities; 67 percent lower medical treatment costs for stores that employed persons with disabilities; 63 percent lower employee time away from work due to accidents for stores that employed persons with disabilities and an overall 78 percent lower costs associated with accidents as compared with other States that employed fewer persons with disabilities in general (Employment and Social Developmental Canada, n.d.). In addition, the study showed lower turnover rates among its employees with disabilities. A similar study conducted on a Tim Horton's franchisee, Megleen Inc., revealed that for the last 18 years, employees with disabilities in general including physical and intellectual, have claimed no insurance for any work-related injury (Employment and Social Developmental Canada, n.d.).

Employer positive testimonials.

Such positive testimonials from former employers of persons with disabilities may facilitate the eradication of the negative perception and stereotypical attitudes of persons

with disabilities in general, including physical and intellectual disabilities. For example a study by DuPont/Australian Public Service Commission (2007) revealed that the job performance of over “90 percent of people with disabilities in general including physical and intellectual disabilities rated average or better” (p.12). More recently, another study by Hernandez and MacDonald (2010), “compared workers with and without disabilities (including intellectual disabilities) in the hospitality, health care and retail sectors, and found that job performance and supervision were similar for both groups” (p.15).

Benefits of Employment for Person with Intellectual Disabilities/Employers

More purposeful lives and increased social status.

Across the studies reviewed by Jehoda et al. (2009) and the surveys they conducted with thirty five persons with mild to borderline intellectual disabilities, “the study indicated that the participants perceived continuing benefits from entering mainstream employment, including more purposeful lives and increased social status” (p. 1).

Social inclusion and quality of life.

A similar study by Flores, Jenaro, Orgaz and Martín (2011) also found that meaningful employment for persons with intellectual disabilities increases their social status, social inclusion, and quality of life. These are benefits derived from employment that every citizen is entitled to enjoy by virtue of having a profession/career/job/work.

Zero percent absenteeism.

Another study by Tim Horton’s franchisee, Megleen Inc., with six Toronto stores, has employees with disabilities involved in every part of their business. They reported a 35

percent employee turnover rate compared to the industry average of 75 percent (Employment and Social Developmental Canada, n.d.). In 2011, according to the study, there was zero percent absenteeism by employees with disabilities at Megleen. It was also reported that there was a 20 percent increase in production after an employee with a disability was hired (Employment and Social Developmental Canada, n.d.).

Low turnover rate.

Another “three-year study at Washington Mutual found a turnover rate of 8 percent among people with developmental disabilities, compared to an overall rate of 45 percent in the general population” (Crain’s Chicago Business, 2003, p. 5). At Marriot, out of over 52 per cent turnover rate, only 6 per cent was reported as turnover among persons with disabilities² (Employment and Social Developmental Canada, n.d.). The report also stated that turnover rate among Canadian workers with disabilities were also low as compared to other workers.

High retention rate.

A similar study from the report of the Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities published by HRSDC (2012) examined data between 1999 and 2007 and found a high job retention rate of 10.5 percent for persons with disabilities versus 8 percent for employees without disabilities. However, despite all the benefits of employment, including reduced turnover rate, that accrues to both employers and employees with disabilities still have lower employment rates all over the world.

² The term “disabilities” is used to denote persons who have various disabilities that may include physical and intellectual disabilities.

Rates of Employment among Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

“Unemployment among the persons with disabilities stands at 80 per cent in certain countries” (International Labour Organization Report, 2010, p.1). While Jahoda et al. (2009) concluded that further research needs to be conducted to determine more accurate estimates of unemployment prevalence, they also concluded that the available research indicates that people with disabilities likely experience higher rates of unemployment than persons without disabilities and persons with intellectual disabilities likely experience higher rates of unemployment than persons with other disabilities. This study was confirmed by PALS in their study which also reaffirmed the fact that “persons with intellectual disabilities experience even lower rates of employment: only 27.3% were employed when PALS was conducted and 40.1% had never worked” (Stainton et al., 2006, p. 3).

On the other hand, a survey on Health and Activity Limitation (HALS) of 1991 also showed that only 38.1% of people with intellectual disabilities were employed at the time of that survey compared with 49.0% of other people with disabilities. Some 38.2% with intellectual disabilities had never worked. The persisting general pattern, then, is one of low employment for people with intellectual disabilities as reflected in Statistics Canada’s disability surveys (Stainton et al., 2006, p. 9).

Defining Moments for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Canada

According to Rioux and Carbert (2003), the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (1948) that recognized that all people, regardless of difference or disability, have the same human rights as all other people ultimately was aimed to mark the beginning of a shift in thinking to a rights based approach to disability where all citizens are to be seen as people who are to be treated equally and accorded the same rights, respect and freedoms and “not as objects with problems that need to be fixed” (Quinn & Degener, 2002, p. 17). Although this did set the precedent for the protection of rights, with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971), the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975) and the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), informing and impacting positively on persons with disabilities, there is still more room for improvement in order for this population to enjoy the same rights (equality and fairness) as their non-disabled counterparts.

In the bid for Canada to ensure that every citizen is treated equally and fairly, the federal government became more sensitive to the plight of the community of persons with disabilities. Canada’s bid to ensure that persons with disabilities are accorded the needed rights and freedoms started in 1981 when Canada joined the celebration of the International Year of Persons with Disabilities. This was followed with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. Meanwhile, before the Charter, the Ontario government enacted a protectionist document called the Ontario Human Rights Code for any and every Ontarian.

The Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) was enacted in 1962. Prior to this was the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights. However its widely acknowledged ineffectiveness (Kasoff & James, 2013) was the main reason that Ontario enacted the OHRC in 1962 to supplement the Bill of Rights until 1982 when the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted. The OHRC document was the first provincial code in Canada in terms of human rights protection and advancement. The Code spelled out actions that constituted discrimination against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area, such as age, creed, family status, etc. As well, the code covers areas such as freedom from discrimination, the Ontario human rights commission and its functions and offices and policies, the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario where persons who feel that their human rights have been infringed upon can seek redress, and the Human rights legal support center for legal advice on human rights abuses. Some of the protected grounds in the protected social areas that the Code addresses include: (a) age, (b) ancestry, (c) colour, (d) race, (e) citizenship, (f) ethnic origin, (g) place of origin, (h) creed, (i) disability, (j) family status, (k) marital status (including single status), (l) gender identity, (m) gender expression, (n) receipt of public assistance (in housing only), (o) record of offences (in employment only), (p) sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), and (q) sexual orientation. Protected social areas are: (a) accommodation (housing), (b) contracts, (c) employment services, and (d) vocational associations (unions) (Ontario Human Rights Code, 1961).

The Ontario Human Rights Code is provincial legislation that, of course, governs only Ontarians. In 1982, the protection of rights was guaranteed by law in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Canada's 1982 Constitution Act, recognized through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that every Canadian would be accorded the necessary rights and freedoms to participate in every aspect of society without discrimination. Some of the fundamental freedoms cited in this document include the: (a) freedom of conscience, (b) religion; (c) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (d) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (e) freedom of association (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982).

The Charter, which was to be a source for national values and unity for Canadians, was also explicit in conferring on every citizen the needed provisions for democratic rights, mobility rights, legal rights, language rights, equality rights, and minority educational rights. Pierre Elliott Trudeau stated that, after enshrining the Charter in the Constitution, "Canada is now a society where all people are equal and where they share some fundamental values based upon freedom, and that Canadians could identify with the values of liberty and equality" (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982, pp. 322-323). This same statement was reinforced by the former Premier of Ontario, Bob Rae, when he stated that the Charter "functions as a symbol for all Canadians" (CBC News Online, April 2002) because it epitomizes the core value of freedom. But the question being asked by this study is whether the pronouncements by Trudeau and Rae are the reality today in Canadian society. This same question of whether the human rights of persons with disabilities are

being protected can be asked after analyzing the defining moments for persons with disabilities, especially for persons with intellectual disabilities, in Ghana.

Defining Moments in Ghana for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Any form of disability in the Ghanaian context comes with a lot of stigma attached, and intellectual disability is no exception. It is estimated that persons with intellectual disabilities make up a third of persons with disabilities in Ghana (Ghana National Disability Policy Document, 2000). As discussed earlier, persons with intellectual disabilities are denied their rights and excluded from formal “educational or employment activities and other areas of life” (Williams 1998, p. 17) in their community based on superstitions surrounding their birth and intellectual abilities (Inclusion Ghana Report, 2011).

However, in 2006, Ghana passed the Disability Act 715, which many human rights and disability rights activists believed was the defining moment in Ghana as it espoused clearly legal measures for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the Ghanaian society. This Act, which includes the goal of an accessible Ghana by 2016, was aimed at fulfilling a constitutional and international obligation to enact laws to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities (GDA, 2006 Report). The Act contains 61 clauses that are grouped into the following sections:

- i. Rights of persons with disability
- ii. Employment of persons with disability
- iii. Education of persons with disability
- iv. Transportation
- v. Health-care facilities

vi. Miscellaneous provisions

vii. Establishment and functions of National Council on Persons with Disability

viii. Administrative and Financial provision

With the inclusion of disability policies in the subsequent Ghana Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II), rights activists became even more hopeful that government was more committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of persons with disabilities, as the GPRS document espouses legal steps that persons with disabilities can take if they feel and think their rights as full citizens of the country are being undermined (GPRS report, 2009).

With these conventions, codes, strategies and charters that both Ontario and Ghana have enacted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, it is believed that persons with disabilities in these jurisdictions will also have equal employment opportunities as employment is deemed to be one of the important benefits associated with social inclusion. However, as has been described above, the rates of employment for persons with disabilities are far lower than the workforce abilities and capabilities of this population. Although the governments of both Ontario and Ghana have made some gains with regards to the employment of persons with disabilities, promoting employment must still be a priority for both the Ontario and Ghana governments.

Promoting Employment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Ontario and Ghana

Society discriminates through unfounded perceptions and assumptions that employees with disabilities are not productive. This assumption stems mainly from how persons with disabilities are treated in the workplace. Keeping persons with disabilities

from engaging in employment will only buttress assumptions that this population is less able to perform productive work (Barnes & Mercer, 2005).

For various reasons, including societal attitudes and perception, employment facilities and opportunities that are designed more in favour of the able-bodied and transportation accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities, there are restricted employment prospects for persons with disabilities, and more especially for those who have intellectual disabilities (Munyi, 2012).

Training advocacy.

However, with the rise of many global movements (globalization, technology, etc.) advocating for training and the promotion of the economic livelihood of persons with disabilities, there appears to be a shift from looking at persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities as unproductive by employers to a social, rights-based approach where everyone is seen as equal with equal abilities and capabilities (Piron, 2004). This might be a positive breakthrough for persons with disabilities, more especially if they are able to be in a position to make independent choices and decisions for employment equality. Hence an analysis of the current employment status of persons with disabilities in both Ghana and Ontario will help to highlight some of the positive gains of the rights based approach in each jurisdiction.

Policies on Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disability in Ontario and Ghana

Employment in the broad sense includes formal sector, self-employment, income-generating activities or participation in family businesses or cooperatives. Policies based on equally accessible employment opportunities that include necessary technological and physical assistance for persons with disabilities must be the priority of governments. However, statistics show that low-level employment opportunities for both Ontarians and Ghanaians with disabilities (Burge et al., 2006) have been the bane of this population.

Treating persons with disabilities less favourably than persons without disabilities is discrimination. Within the various professions in most countries, governments have encouraged an equal and fair chance for employment of every citizen in the past two to three decades (Evans, 2000). However, the focus of these policies related to equal employment opportunities has been in the area of gender and race inequality (Hogan, 2003). Although some literature exists regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce, especially with recent policies on equal and fair employment opportunities for all citizens regardless of disabilities (Hogan, 2003), there are no specific studies on the employment rights of persons with disability that make a comparison between Ghana and Ontario.

In cases where policies on employment rights exist, including equally accessible employment opportunities, persons with disabilities tend to be faced with stereotypical public (including employer) attitudes that negatively impact their work. This situation is a testament to the fact that persons with disabilities are less represented in the public sector,

as well as strategic and management positions, where important policy decisions are taken (Massie, 2006).

Employment rights of persons with disabilities is one of the main areas in which the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities makes it illegal to discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against persons with disabilities all over the world. Every accommodation effort that will not pose any major structural or financial challenge must be made by employers in order to facilitate the effective performance of the job responsibilities of a person with disability (O'Donohue, 1997).

According to Steinberg et al. (2002), attitudes of people towards persons with disabilities are the main barrier to the enjoyment of basic rights by persons with disabilities regardless of whether it is in employment or other areas. Persons with disabilities are faced with many physical and technological/informational barriers and restrictions that impede their job promotion in the general community (Healey, 2000). As discussed earlier, employers seem to be concerned about some “inaccurate assumptions” that are not facts especially about financial commitments that go into the employment of persons with disabilities. These concerns include accessibility and facilities (improving facilities within the workplace to make them more accessible) as well as assumptions about health and safety concerns, and the performance rates of employees with disabilities (Employment and Social Developmental Canada, n.d.). These barriers suggest a lack of focus on the abilities that persons with disabilities bring to the job (Hogan, 2003).

Policies on Income Support in Ontario and Ghana for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Ontario Works.

There are two main programs in Ontario with respect to social assistance. The first support comes in the form of financial and employment support, called the Ontario Works (OW) programme. This programme was started in 1997 for persons without disabilities who are capable of going back to work but for some reason need temporary support.

Championing precarious jobs as the new normative model of employment and as a desirable alternative to social assistance, OW recipients are obligated to participate in one of three program streams: community participation (up to 70 hours of unpaid work in public and non-profit settings), employment support (job search, skills training), and employment placement. (Ministry of Community and Social Services, n.d.)

As a rule, recipients of OW are obliged, unless one decides to defer participation, to complete the program streams while maintaining their benefits, with penalties set out for noncompliance (Lightman et al., 2008).

Ontario Disability Support Program.

On the other hand, there is also the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). In order to bridge the gap between persons with and without identified disabilities in terms of realizing their full potential, the Ontario Disability Support Program Act was created by the Ontario Provincial Government in June of 1998. The ODSP Act was also aimed at ensuring the economic stability and improving the financial benefits of persons with disabilities. It

provides financial assistance to persons whose disability conditions are unlikely to change over a long period of time. Also included to benefit from the ODSP programme are persons with disabilities who need reasonable accommodation to be able to work, but who are still deemed by the ODSP programme as people who cannot work throughout their lifetime (Stapleton & Tweddle, 2008).

This development (ODSP Act) was considered to be the “start of a new era” (Fraser et al, 2003, p. 2). Some advocates of disability rights have identified some barriers that individuals with disabilities are faced with on a daily basis especially when it comes to accessing the ODSP programme as a disability income support policy. These include: the application processes and procedures for accessing the ODSP programme that have been described as lengthy and time consuming and the amount that ODSP gives to persons with disabilities that has been described as “very meagre” (Personal Communication, June 7, 2009) thus ensuring the continued marginalization of recipients.

The Disability Adjudication Unit.

The disability adjudication unit (DAU) that reviews the ODSP applications has also been considered to be a “major barrier for disabled individuals attempting to access supports” (Fraser et al., 2003, p. 16). The Unit has been accused of using unfair and subjective criteria in proving ineligibility (Fraser et al., 2003). Meanwhile, in spite of the ODSP denials for potential recipients by the DAU, gaining employment is also problematic as discussed earlier.

Income Support in Ghana.

Ghana does not have a similar social assistance programme as compared to the ODSP and OW programmes but it does have a disability insurance pension plan that is administered by the Social Security and National Insurance Trust of Ghana. The “social security is a series of public measures aimed at providing income replacement to citizens in the event of certain specified contingencies such as old age, invalidity, unemployment, death” (Social Security and National Insurance Trust Report, 2013, pp. 11-17). This disability insurance pension is paid if the insured is assessed with a permanent disability and is incapable of any gainful employment with at least 12 months of contributions in the previous 36 months (Social Security Programs throughout the World: Africa, 2013). A qualified and recognised medical officer must do the disability assessment and this must also be certified by the medical board of the region where the assessment is done (Social Security and National Insurance Trust Report, 2013).

The Ghana Disability Grant.

There is also the disability grant that is paid if the insured does not meet the qualifying conditions for the disability pension under the social insurance scheme. The scheme also has the mandatory occupational pension that is paid if the insured retires or leaves the workforce as a result of a total or permanent disability. (Social Security and National Insurance Trust (Ghana), 2013). However, Ghana has no policy similar to Ontario Works that provides income substitution while applicants for the insurance benefits await their payments.

In spite of all these support systems in both jurisdictions to assist persons with disabilities to achieve basic economic security (although some have argued that the pension plan keeps people in poverty), both jurisdictions are still faced with a myriad of challenges in wholly integrating persons with disabilities into policy and legislative agendas.

Challenges in integrating persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana.

Ghana has yet to adopt a framework that encompasses a comprehensive disability policy. The creation of the National Council on Persons with Disability to articulate guidelines for the execution of rights based initiatives took almost three years before it became possible. It again took another “five years for guidelines for the disbursement and management of the now 3% share of the District Assembly Common Fund [DACF] assigned to persons with disabilities to be produced” (Picton, 2011, p.1).

A recent study by Alison Picton of CHRI Africa suggested that SEND Ghana found that out of the districts that are aware of the existence of the 3% DACF, only a third of people with disabilities in these districts know how to access it (SEND Ghana Report, 2007). Again, funding for mental healthcare in Ghana is a major challenge. Less than 1 percent of the national health budget is spent on mental health services, and support services including medical care are very few (Ghana Human Rights Watch Report, 2011).

Rate of Employment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Ghana and Ontario

“Reported employment rates for the general populations of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom range from 75% to 95%, while rates for persons with Intellectual Disabilities in those countries, are reported at anywhere from 9–28%” (Burge et

al., 2006, p. 29). Similar research has shown that only 5% of persons with disabilities are represented in the Ghana workforce (A. Tetteh, personal communication, May 26, 2014), leaving the question of what the almost 95% of this population are doing with their lives. As reported by Hunt (1998), competent and qualified persons with disabilities are turned away by employers by reason of their disability. This situation, as reported by Hunt (1998), is not different from Ghana and Ontario. This can be seen from the above reported employment data of persons with disabilities from these two jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, employment is one of the priorities for every adult (Burge et. al, 2006) in society. It can be said that gainful employment is one of the means through which an individual can become economically self-sufficient, meet others in society, boost self-worth and dignity, and achieve a means of self-expression. As described in the above review of literature on the benefits that accrue to persons with disabilities when employed, it is evident that persons both with and without identified disabilities do benefit from employment. For example, studies have shown that employment has multiple social and economic benefits for both employers and employees and for the country as a whole (Cooney, 2002; Graffam et al., 2002; Freedman & Fesko, 1995). These benefits that accrue to both persons with or without disabilities include the individual building of social networks, having a sense of fulfilment in contributing to society, feeling valued and worthwhile in society, having an income, and having opportunities for continuous growth (Flores, Jenaro, Orgaz, & Martín, 2011). Other benefits to society of employment include lower costs of supporting persons with disabilities as well as their contributing to the tax revenue of the country (Cooney, 2002; Freedman & Fesko, 1995; Kregel, 1999).

Unfortunately, these economic benefits that can be derived from employing persons with intellectual disabilities have not been fully realized or enjoyed by this population as reflected in the low statistics that both countries have recorded for the employment of this population. Although there exist international and national documents that give legal backing for the employment of persons with disabilities, the above literature review is indicative that in spite of all the discussion about rights, more especially employment rights of this population, there is still more room for improvement in terms of the employment of persons with disabilities.

Moreover, it can be seen that although both the Ontario and Ghana governments have adopted good measures and policy documents to integrate this population into mainstream employment, the actual practice and reality of employment of this population still remain very low (Crawford, 2007, A. Tetteh, personal communication, May 26, 2014). Again, as reflected in literature discussed above, it can be said that persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities are victims of a disinterested or ignorant society rather than individual victims of events and situations in both countries. Societies appear to be disinterested in the affairs of persons with intellectual disabilities and do not care as much as they will care for persons without disabilities. Addressing their employment rights needs as a group will impact positively at the individual level, as society will be better informed about the abilities and capabilities of persons with disabilities and start to care about their rights (Oliver, 1990).

However, it is still evident that the current status quo of persons with disabilities is still questionable despite efforts that have been made by governments and disability rights activist to ensure equality of rights and respect for everyone. Also worth noting is the fact

that the literature has demonstrated ample evidence of the benefits that accrue to both employers and persons with disabilities when they are given the opportunity to participate in the socio-economic development of their country. However, it is evident from the literature that their participation in the economic development (employment-wise) has been low due to various barriers/reasons that the literature review outlined. Moreover, there seems to be no literature on employment rights and disability that compares Ghana and Ontario. Therefore, the proposed project will focus on examining the following questions:

1. To what extent does legislation in Ghana and in Ontario and Canada, at the provincial and federal levels, align with the employment rights section of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?
2. How does the work of a community support agency for persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana and a community support agency for persons with intellectual disabilities in Ontario reflect enactment of the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?
3. What are the barriers to employment of persons with disabilities in Ontario and in Ghana as reported by management staff of two disability support agencies: Mainstream and VOICE Ghana?
4. To what extent are these two employment support organizations engaged in advocacy and in the policy-making process of their respective province/country?
5. What programs/care do these two employment support organizations use/provide in the support of persons with intellectual disabilities with respect to employment?

6. What alternatives to achieve economic independence are available to persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana and Ontario apart from meaningful employment?

Researcher's Perspective

Although I have quite a bit of experience in doing both qualitative and quantitative research, I must say that most of my practice has stemmed mainly from the politics/policy perspective.

As a result, when I first thought about this study, I wanted to do a different research project that would be oriented from my policy perspective. The reason was that my policy analysis perspective has a large influence on my opinions and perceptions based on my long experience in the political science field. Hence, my expectations for this academic research study were to hone further the expertise of conducting qualitative research that included the collection of data from the field. This expertise was accomplished without relying heavily on my policy oriented background and I was able to achieve a balance between policy and practice for an informed conclusion from the study.

Fortunately, this time, there was a convergence of the policy as well as the practice cum implementation aspect of the study. Having a flashback to the major research paper I wrote for my first masters degree in Political Science, which was mainly an evaluation of the performance of women in Ghana's democracy coupled with experience from the field, I have garnered and or witnessed how difficult and challenging it was to actualise policy documents/theories in the real world of practice. This was as a result of quite a number of factors which was not my focus for the present study, as this study was not evaluation but an examination of the enactment of an international covenant and legislation. Nevertheless, historically the treatment of the most vulnerable populations in this world, including women

and persons with disabilities, has been mainly cosmetic. The practice perspective is a far distance away from what policy makers and bureaucrats have put down on paper. With this at the back of my mindset, I right away imagined some potential biases that I needed to acknowledge.

First, prior to and during the study, I believe that for the reason of abiding by the ratified UNCRPD and other human right documents of the United Nations, governments, including the governments of the two case study countries always make efforts (genuine or not) to formally and officially reflect these UN documents in their national policies. This from the political perspective will make these governments appear to be abiding by the treaties and the conventions they have signed; hence the UN will encourage its members states to transact economic business and trade with each other which are just but a few of being a law/treaty abiding country under the UN. In sum, my belief is that governments do sign onto these documents for the perceived benefits that will accrue to them rather than for the welfare of their entire citizenry. Thus, coming into the present study, my belief was that employment rights of persons with intellectual disabilities would be exposed as just rhetoric rather than the reality in practice. I did not believe that I would actually see employment support agencies providing all the needed support and logistics with the amount of funding from governments especially in recent times. As a result, employment support that has its mission to ensure the protection and the realisation of the social and economic independence of this population by abiding with international and national documents have been left to their fate in spite of both international and national rights documents and legislations that these governments have ratified.

Meanwhile, I must state that my previous qualitative and quantitative research knowledge and experiences facilitated my data collection and the analysis of my data after the interviews had been done albeit in a new area of study different from my traditional politics as well as with two different methodologies (policy analysis and interviews).

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The study was considered after careful study of international treaties and conventions on the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in the area of employment. This study therefore is designed to investigate the enactment of employment rights, as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant conventions and legislation, be they local or international, in the two case study agencies and in their jurisdictions. The standard for the application of international human rights is the same for every UN member state; hence, an analysis of the trends in applying these policy/legislative directives/standards in the two countries with special focus on employment must be done in the same way.

Research Design

This study utilizes a descriptive case study approach, using Ghana, a developing country and Canada (specifically in the Province of Ontario), a developed country, as case studies to highlight the broader dynamics of the employment rights debate and the feasibility of closing the employment gap for persons with intellectual disabilities. This method of study is designed to narrow the broad debates around the employment rights of persons with intellectual disability. It is qualitative and applied in nature (Quinn Patton, 2002) as the research examined a developing and a developed

country to ascertain what policies and practices are ensuring the practical realization of the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities. Semi-structured interviews and a focus group were used to investigate the experience of employment support organizations working for persons with intellectual disabilities in Canada and Ghana with regard to ensuring that persons with intellectual disabilities are also fairly represented in the job/labour market.

Procedures

In the bid to address the research questions that this investigation has raised in the literature review section, the study employed two major methodologies: The first methodology focused on textual and policy analysis that examined the major differences and similarities in policies and/or legislation for the case study jurisdictions. For example, in Canada, section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was examined in the light of employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in both the public and private sector employment spheres. This was mainly analysis of policy and legislative documents with special focus on employment rights for both countries were analyzed and compared. These comparisons were made through an investigation of, for example, the National Disability Act in Ghana and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Other legislation with specific focus on the right to employment was also examined for both countries. This policy analysis enabled the researcher to compare existing legislation for both case study countries. The policy analysis will be reviewed in the discussion section.

The second major methodology was the use of interviews with community agency professionals in Ontario and Ghana to assess how the international, national and, in the case of Ontario the provincial, legislation and policy legislation in both countries are reflected in the practice

of ensuring that the rights to employment by persons with intellectual disabilities are realized. The interviews explored the challenges, issues and the way forward in the realization of employment rights for persons with intellectual disabilities in the case study countries. The aim of the interview questions was to ascertain the barriers and the facilitators that impede and/or aid the enjoyment of the right to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in both countries. This, the researcher believed, would contribute to the development of recommendations for future research and/or legislation on employment rights of persons with developmental disabilities.

Focus on Ghana and Ontario

This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with direct support employment agencies in Ghana and in Ontario.

Recruitment.

The focus organizations.

Mainstream Ontario comprises two charitable nonprofit corporations that operate as Mainstream with a shared board of directors and senior management. The two organizations include the St. Catharines Mainstream Non Profit Housing and Mainstream: An Unsheltered Workshop. Mainstream has “provided progressive residential and day support services for adults with a development disability since 1984” (Mainstream: We are Here to Make a Difference, 2013) Mainstream provides a number of services within the Niagara region including Options Niagara which is a “program that provides support to young adults between the ages of 18 and 28, with a developmental disability, as they make the transition from school to community life” (Options Niagara: A Foundations Initiative, 2013). Another service provided by Mainstream is their Resource

Centre which “provides weekday supports to adults over the age of 18 who have a developmental disability” (Mainstream Resource Centre, 2013). Also provided are supported living and supportive independent living. Mainstream also has the Graffiti Removal Program that “was created to provide employment opportunities for people with a developmental disability while making a difference in their community” (Mainstream Graffiti Removal Program, 2013).

VOICE Ghana on the other hand is an organization located in the Volta Region of Ghana:

It was set up in July 2002 and managed for and by people with disabilities. The organizations’ vision is to ensure that the human rights and needs of people with disabilities including children are promoted in a constructive and inclusive manner. Services offered by Voice Ghana include gender equality, human rights education/empowerment, advocacy and lobbying, etc. (VOICE Ghana, n.d.)

Participants. The study employed targeted recruitment based on the nature of the study, which was a combination of policy and practice research. This targeted recruitment of managers and staff was facilitated by the Executive Directors of both organizations in the two case study organizations. Executive Directors were invited to participate and also were asked to send recruitment material provided by the student researcher to all members of their staff (managers and front line staff) who are involved in supporting people with intellectual disabilities to obtain employment and/or who are involved in employment supports for persons with intellectual disabilities. Each Executive Director determined the employee group in his organization that best matched the focus of the study since the structure of the two organizations differs. The recruitment

invitation asked that all those who are interested in participating contact the Principal Student Investigator by email (Please see Appendix A).

It must be stated here that the targeted recruitment of participants was agreed to by the Executive Directors and that those who volunteered to participate were permitted by their Executive Directors to do so during working hours. Participation was purely voluntary (Please see participant consent Appendix C). This was also academic research that was not an initiative of either of the two case study organizations. Those who participated contacted the student researcher by email. The researcher then responded back by email, and sent a more detailed Invitation to Participate (See Appendix B), the consent form (see Appendix C), and scheduled the phone interview for VOICE Ghana as well as the individual interview (depending on participant preference and scheduling constraints) for Mainstream, Ontario. Interviews for Mainstream participants were held at Mainstream office in St. Catharines. Interviews for participants in Ghana were done by phone.

Responses from participants from both organizations were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed at a later date. A note taker was present to assist with one of the interviews. Interviews took between 1 to 1.5 hours (Please see Appendix C for interview/focus group questions).

Key informant interviews for the study included 2 interviews with Mainstream, Ontario and one interview from VOICE Ghana. There was no incentive for participation but the researcher verbally thanked each participant for their time and consideration to be part of the study. All interviews took place in a private meeting room to protect confidentiality.

Participants in Ghana consented to participate via email, and confirmed their consent on tape prior to beginning the phone interview. Participants in Ontario were asked to sign their consent at the start of their interview with the Principal Student Investigator (see Appendix C). The researcher had no prior personal relationship with participants.

Final participant sample. Data from three direct front line staff participants were included in the present study. For the purpose of reporting the results while maintaining confidentiality, each organisation was randomly assigned a unique identifier such as M1 for Mainstream participant number one. No further description of participants was provided because of the small sample size.

Data collection.

Semi-structured interview questions were used for the interviews (see Appendix D). The pre-set questions focused on the challenges and issues that employment support organizations face in the two case study agencies and asked for recommendations for change. For reasons of clarity the researcher probed for more details on certain questions if the responses were needed. Prompts were necessary so as to address all questions that were asked. Prompts also served as a fill-in measure for answers that did not reflect the entire theme of the question/research. Prompts also confirm what is already known but also provide the opportunity for learning/talking about new information that may have been left out.

Responses from participants were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim at a later date. This allowed the researcher to be able to include direct quotes from participants in the results section of the study. The interview questions enabled the researcher to get data that revealed the challenges and issues that these support organizations face in their bid to ensure the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities. Interview questions collected data on some success and failure “stories” of employment support organisations and how they were addressed, as well as some facilitators in the employment of persons with intellectual disability.

The study also included a review of the practices of the focus countries with respect to the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in terms of existing national and international policies and legislative documents as a reference/guide for the inclusion of this population in every sector of their countries (Emerson, Hatton, Thompson, & Parmenter, 2004).

Data Analysis of Interviews.

Descriptive thematic analysis.

The researcher used descriptive thematic analysis to examine inductive and deductive themes in the semi-structured interview data, as outlined by Quinn Patton, 2002. The Inductive approach brought to light themes that were not part of the original interview questions, but very relevant to the study while the deductive approach enabled the researcher to deduce/derive responses from interview questions (Quinn Patton, 2002). This included questions about barriers and facilitators to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities including a request for description of anonymous "success" and "failure" cases. A unique case analysis was used to closely examine the details of each individual response to the employment rights questions to get vital responses from interviewees from both organizations. This was followed by a holistic cross-case analysis of the data by organization (Mainstream versus VOICE Ghana) and then a cross-national review of the entire data after transcription to investigate where there were interdependencies (same responses for different questions) in terms of the answers that respondents from each organization gave (Quinn Patton, 2002).

The use of both approaches offered the researcher the sense of the major and significant themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that ultimately addressed the research questions. Based on this, during the transcription of the interviews and during the second reading of the transcribed interviews

(Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), more emphasis was placed on highlighting the pattern of the themes between the focus organizations (Ontario vs Ghana) and across the study, for the differences and similarities for employment support using the two different jurisdictions. Also noteworthy is the fact that important quotes from respondents derived from the raw data was included in the results section of the study (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

All data were colour coded for inductive and deductive themes. The deductive and inductive analysis process included transcription, within case analysis, thorough reading for meaning, deductive colour coding with notes made on inductive themes followed by coding of inductive themes, followed by the same process across cases (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Sub-codes were examined under already existing broader thematic area. Responses that were deductive were first highlighted and other unhighlighted responses were themed inductively and or deductively as an emergent theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analysis of policy enactment.

The themes arising from the interviews were compared to the examined policies and legislation from each jurisdiction to determine the extent of enactment of these principles. In particular the analysis examined the barriers and facilitators to fulfilling the right to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities. The use of both approaches was appropriate based on the research focus which was on the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities. This analysis involved a practical field analysis of implementation strategies of rights by employment support agencies. Each support organization's pursuit of these policies was implemented differently based on a variety of reasons including funding, logistics, and human resource availability just to mention a few. This offered the researcher the opportunity to identify general themes of the study based on the

similarities and differences within and across the case study organisations and countries (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Phase one: Transcription. After transcribing verbatim all the interviews and excluding identifiers from the audio-tape recorder, the researcher coded interviews as "M" and "G" for participant with a number to identify the order of interviews: for example, "1" for the first participant interviewed and "2" for the second participant. Transcribed information was read while highlighting key terms/words in each interview with a pink colour to represent the main idea(s) expressed in each response. During the second reading, the researcher focused more on key themes from within the study and later across the study. This first phase of analysis organized the data into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, any responses by a participant that reflected on the interview question asked, for example on "successes and failures," was highlighted in yellow, etc. Some responses had several coded colours for the one response. This first phase was a within case with deductive analysis. Analysis of the interviews was guided by the preliminary codes of the interview questions (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Once all the interview responses were highlighted based on the semi-structured interview questions, all remaining responses that did not relate directly to questions asked received a highlighted code colour and were logged as either deductive and or inductive themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The goal of the coding process was to rearrange transcribed data into sections that facilitated comparison between themes in the same section as well as between sections (Maxwell, 2008). Upon completion of coding, the researcher composed a summary chart for the three participants. The chart included a within case inductive and deductive summary and an across case deductive and inductive summary.

Phase Two: NVivo. All three transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews were transferred to the NVivo computer software. An across case analysis was explored. Each question in the interviews was coded to create a main node. Categories were created through this coding process and included description of the participants' ideas and beliefs (Maxwell, 2008). For example, interview question number one (see Appendix D for complete list of interview questions) was coded as "what is MS/VG". All responses by the three participants for this question were transferred to this node. In order to avoid fatigue and errors, researcher took frequent breaks once an interview response was coded (Boyatzis, 1998).

Phase Three: NVivo tree nodes. The researcher read and reviewed each node for themes and any emergent themes. Tree nodes were created to transfer these themes into. For example, interview question number one was coded as "what is MS/VG". The tree nodes created under this main node included "how it started"; "how it is governed"; and "how it is funded". This phase in the analysis provided a detailed deductive across case analysis.

Phase Four: Emergent themes. At this phase, overlapping themes that ran across numerous participants were logged into new nodes as inductive themes. However convergence across cases on a deductive then will not be same as an inductive theme. For example, statements regarding other aspects of what the organisations do apart from providing employment support for persons with intellectual disability were repeatedly made. These responses were coded under the reference of "description".

Phase Five: Overall analysis summary and research inquiry. Examination of similarities and differences within and across settings and participants, and general patterns and themes in the data were identified (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This phase assisted in providing a rich description of the entire data set and gave a sense of the predominant and important themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Results of Interview Analysis

Review of Policies in Ontario and Ghana: Response from Participants

The interviews provided the opportunity to examine similarities and differences in the implementation of employment rights policies in both jurisdictions. The few similarities noted between employment rights of persons with disabilities in both jurisdictions include the allusion to the right of persons with intellectual disabilities to work, the need for more government support and funding, the need for more entrepreneurial training for persons with intellectual disabilities, voluntary employment as an alternative to meaningful employment, similar governance structure, provision of support for different kinds of employment, the report that both organisations have recorded more successes than failures, similar barriers to employment in both jurisdictions, and adequate government policies to support employment of persons with disabilities.

The interview results also revealed differences between the two jurisdictions in areas including the need for training in entrepreneurship versus the provision of direct work assistance (employment seeking) and differences in the availability of direct government support for employment support.

Similarities between Ontario and Ghana in the Provision of Employment Support to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Support for the right to work.

The majority of the respondents indicated they were not aware of the UNDHR document, However, all the participants alluded to the fact that that every citizen has the right to be engaged in meaningful employment without any discrimination. Meanwhile, one of the respondents stressed that “they have not been able to assist some of their clients who have come to their organisation seeking employment support because either employers were not ready to hire them or they simply do not have the pre-requisite skills for the jobs they intend to pursue” (M2). Ontario respondents commended the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the yearly grants that help them in funding the organisation. This direct government support is not readily available in Ghana where support organizations rely more on international donor support for their activities and programmes.

Similar barriers identified.

Although according to the national legislation of both Ghana and Ontario, employment discrimination is prohibited, it was noted by some of the respondents that one of the barriers that impedes their service delivery to their clients is prejudice and the negative perception that the public (employers) have towards persons with disabilities. This suggests the perception that some people may fear working with persons with intellectual disabilities. For example, one of the respondents mentioned that “people might be afraid to say or do the wrong thing around people with disabilities” (M1). They may also “feel that they are unable to cope with having a workplace colleague with a disability” (G1), and they may be afraid of being reminded of their own mortality and vulnerability of

becoming disabled when they are around people with disabilities. Unfortunately, how many people handle such fear is to avoid being around people with disabilities.

As noted by one of the respondents as well, a few other people are also under the mistaken impression that people with disabilities are being given unfair advantages and special treatment in the workplace and in acquiring employment. However, the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006 in Canada reported that of employed adults with disabilities, 8.2% of employed adult Ontarians reported perceived discrimination.

According to the respondents from both countries, some employers feel this population does not possess the autonomy to make decisions that will directly impact their work. For example, an employer once said to other employers, “how can you use your organisation as a ‘test’ venue to ascertain the worth of employing persons with intellectual disabilities” (M2). Statements like this do not only sound discriminatory to persons with disabilities but also to the organisations offering the support as well. “It is very demoralising and [one] sometimes wonders if employers will be so bold to make such statements.” (M2)

One of the key points that were again raised by respondents from both jurisdictions is the fact that public awareness creation and education are very important in improving the employment fortunes of persons with intellectual disabilities. According to the respondents, there is still a misconception that persons with intellectual disabilities are dependent rather than independent, weak rather than strong, and that they are followers rather than leaders.

For one respondent, the conclusion was that as long as others believe that people with disabilities are burdens, inferior, helpless, tragic figures, should be pitied, and/or cannot care for themselves, those beliefs will continue to elicit public doubt in the competencies of people with disabilities.

Need for more government support and funding.

Most of the respondents called on their various governments for more support for these organisations that are genuinely providing employment support for persons with intellectual disabilities. However, as noted by a respondent, some organisations are just working towards meeting the numbers that the government requires for funding provision, “there exist some employment support organisations that only aim to meet the number requirement by government so [as] to qualify them for government funding without ensuring that the persons with intellectual disabilities get the necessary assistance and care while at their various job placements” (M2). According to the respondent this approach “leads to employers having a bad-taste for employing persons with intellectual disabilities, of which the trickledown effect comes straight onto the genuine organisations out there that are not only working for the numbers, but for the persons with intellectual disabilities best interest” (M2). It is a requirement of the Ontario government that organisations that provide employment support must provide numbers evidence that match what the government has stipulated before receiving any funding. Hence, some of the respondents called for the government to put in more measures to ensure that organisations are not just playing the “numbers-game”, but are actually genuinely providing support to these individuals.

Respondents from Ontario also noted that funding they receive from government meets their organisational budget at a break-even point. Hence government ministries that provide funding to these organisations must play a “watch-dog’ role with these organisations by ensuring that funds that are made available to organisations that provide supported employment are used for the purpose for which the funds were provided. This will ensure that these organisations do not leave any planned programs undone due to budgets that has been diverted into different areas rather than supported employment. Moreover, there were calls for government employed coaches to assist in ensuring that

those organisations that are operating without due attention to criteria and policies set by the government are either called to book to work in the interest of the population they support or that they receive frequent visits and checks to ensure that funding they receive is put to good use.

In spite of international pledges by their countries that their governments would abide by all ratified rights documents, which are also reflected in national legislation, the majority of the respondents indicated that this is still a work in progress for persons with disabilities who are seeking employment. According to some of the respondents, government is still struggling in terms of providing adequate funding to ensure that these pledges become reality in the economic and social advancement of persons with intellectual disabilities. However, the respondent(s) in Ghana was quick to add that civil society and nongovernmental organisations have been very supportive of their work.

Entrepreneurial Training.

As noted from respondent(s) in Ghana, there is a push from government for organisations that provide employment support to move more into the community in terms of providing them with entrepreneurial skills and training. This, one of the participants in Ghana noted, has been their core operating agenda: “our focus has always been to provide entrepreneurial training to our clients as we do not get adequate government funding” (G1). Moreover, the jobs are just not there especially since the recession started in 2008. Therefore government policies and agendas have since prompted the need to develop entrepreneurial skills of persons with intellectual disabilities rather than finding employment for everyone. Hence, the focus of some of these organisations has been on “developing the entrepreneurial skills of the persons with intellectual disabilities so that they can become self-employed and not live at the mercy of employers” (G1).

Voluntary employment.

On the need for an alternative to paid employment for persons with intellectual disabilities, most of the respondents again suggested voluntary employment. As noted by the respondents, although there is no remuneration for volunteerism it comes with a lot of benefits such as emotional and psychological satisfaction. Moreover, “voluntary employment opens opportunities for employers to be able to assess the skills of these individuals that could give them an advantage over other applicants if any paid employment arises in the future” (M2).

Equality.

Respondents asked the question as to why persons with disabilities do not get the same kind of employment support that their colleagues without disabilities get when they both get the same employment. Respondents from both jurisdictions advised that stakeholders, such as employers, coworkers, service providers, government, educators, and professional associations, must be actively committed, supportive, and accountable to the career success of persons with disabilities. As a respondent in Ontario noted, “the ability to succeed as a person who has a disability is not based solely on their skill, willpower, and positive attitude” (M1); they must also have a work environment that is truly supportive, inclusive, and accepting of them.

Different employment support.

Again, one striking similarity as noted by respondents from both jurisdictions is the fact that these organisations do not specialise in the provision of only a single kind/type of employment support, but will ensure that clients’ goals are taken into consideration before advising on the employment support that will suit the individual. As noted by one respondent, “their organisation has

provided different employment support to different people including, among other occupations, carpentry, working in retail or liquidation shops, and working with seniors and children” (M2). According to this respondent, use they a person-centred approach when providing employment support so that “the individual is placed in an employment context for which s/he has a passion and where there is a greater chance of the person becoming successful at the job” (M2).

As noted by the Ghana respondent(s), this is similar to what their organisation also does in that they ensure that persons with intellectual disabilities are trained in any area that they have a passion and skill for including basketry, weaving, snail and fish farming, beading, etc. with the aim of promoting the development of more entrepreneurs. Hence the focus is and has always been to focus on what the client needs and what s/he wants and then support is given from there.

Empowerment and representation.

According to some of the respondents, their various organisations have been given a mandate to support persons with intellectual disabilities. However, lack of employment opportunities where a person with a disability will compete for the same job with a person without a disability disempowers persons with intellectual disabilities. One respondent was quick to point out that according one employer; “those who have employed persons with intellectual disabilities have given very favourable testimonials about their work ethics and character” (M2).

On the question of the motivation for their work, most of the respondents asserted that the feeling of contributing of impacting positively on the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities in the area of employment is in itself very satisfying. One respondent described how they feel empowered to accomplish these feats based on the backing of international and national documents and legislation: “This gives us a big sense of job security as we are assured that our area of service is

not only recognised nationally but also as international treaties and documents backing them up” (M2).

The respondents alluded to their recognition of the importance of empowerment, but “we are also well aware that many persons with intellectual disabilities are already empowered” (M2), and the problems facing them are the result of being disempowered at the same time - such as from infrastructure and employment related barriers and relevant stakeholders' damaging attitudes and expectations.

Successes outweigh failures.

Despite the call by both organisations for more government support and funding, respondents advised that they have recorded more successes than failures in their bid to ensure that persons with intellectual disabilities are employed or gain the skills necessary to engage in entrepreneurial work. The interviewees noted that they have not encountered any failures so far in providing employment support apart from the fact that not everyone who comes through their door leaves with a mission or purpose. One respondent explained that “some people come with the expectation of getting a job as a cashier; however, during the person centred planning, it becomes evident that this person is not good with mathematics or calculations, hence they are advised [about] other alternative employment that will suit their experience and knowledge. When some clients do not get what they came asking for in terms of employment, they then leave” (M2). However, respondents were quick to add that these are not failures as the reasons for people going back are not the fault of the organisations but could be a result of a number of factors including skill level, what the person intends to do, how long the person is ready to commit to the programme, etc. Meanwhile, another respondent also mentioned that all their encounters have been successful as their organisation

has been able to get employment for quite a sizeable number of their clients: “one of my clients has been working as a dishwasher for over 4 years and the employer and the client’s coworkers love his work and commitment” (M2). Another respondent also mentioned that despite inadequate funding from government, “our organisation based on some external donor support has helped some persons with disabilities to develop various entrepreneurial skills like weaving, basketry, fish and snail farming, bead making, etc. and with the support of their parents, have started running their own small businesses which keeps them going” (G1).

Adequate government policies.

Most respondents also noted that they do not feel the need for government to legislate more policies on providing employment support for persons with intellectual disabilities. The respondents noted that what the government must do instead is to ensure that the policies that are in place at this time are adequately enforced to ensure that persons with intellectual disabilities, when they are employed, become successful at their job. Some of the respondents advised that what government must do is to put in place enforcement measures to ensure that the needed physical and material infrastructure as well as education and awareness creation: “I believe we do have adequate policies in place and we do not need anymore. Government must rather put in enforcement measures to ensure that these already existing policies are enforced to the latter to the benefit of all” (G1).

Civil society support.

Some of the respondents in Ghana and Ontario asserted that there exist quite a number of civil society organisations that support persons with intellectual disabilities by lobbying governments and other agencies on their behalf. However, these civil society organisations do not assist in

integrating persons with intellectual disabilities at the workplace when this population gains/gets employed. As noted by one respondent, “disability organisations must assist with the integration of persons with intellectual disabilities into employment, rather than just providing the funding to help integrate them into the workforce” (M2). These civil society organisations must assist other organisations like our organisation in organising symposiums and conference, etc that will “empower persons with intellectual disabilities that are employed to continue to feel equal and competent amongst their colleagues” (G1). However, there exists a self-help network in both Ghana and Ontario where organisations do call each other to share their experiences and what can be done better to ensure their services become more accomplished and realised.

Social enterprises.

An alternative to meaningful employment is to get involved in social enterprises which will promote social inclusion. As noted by some respondents, “not every person with a disability including intellectual disabilities is willing to get paid employment. Others are interested in voluntary work and others in social enterprise and others are also interested in the other benefits that accrue from employment, be it paid or voluntary” (M1). Respondents mentioned social enterprises as a perfect example to alternative employment. A social enterprise applies commercial strategies to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being, rather than maximizing profits and this ultimately promotes social inclusion. Hence, there must be a shift from seeking paid employment towards the creation of mainstream workplaces that are more accommodating (Hall & Wilton, 2011). According to the respondent, the main focus of social enterprises is improvement in human well-being which does not necessarily come from paid employment. Hence, “in using the person-centred planning approach, much of the emphasis is placed on the individual strengths as well as what the

individual is willing to gain from employment” (M2). Other respondents mentioned “entertainment” as an alternative to employment and a respondent said “there has been quite a number of successful persons with disabilities who have done well for themselves and their various countries in the show business and are still enjoying the benefits they accrued from the entertainment industry even up [until] today” (G1).

Discussion

The discussion section will start with an analysis of policies/legislation in Ghana and in Ontario that will then be tied to the interviews described in the results section. As has been explained in the literature review and other sections of this study, there exist international and national policies/legislation that address the rights of persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities. These policies include the Ghana Disability Act and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II in Ghana. In Ontario, there are the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act and the Public Service Employment Act.

Results from the interviews indicate that despite the existence of international legislation and conventions, unemployment for persons with intellectual disabilities is a real concern both at the national and international levels for respondents in both Ghana and Ontario. Hence governments in both study jurisdictions have enacted policies that are enshrined in their national legislation, aimed at the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in the labour market to address this human rights issue. However, in spite of the measures and conventions that have been put in place, there still exists a huge gap between persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, and persons with no disabilities when it comes to employment.

Policy Analysis: Ontario and Ghana

Ontario.

According to 2006 Statistics Canada data, national employment rates for persons with all disabilities were 53.5% while Ontario was below that at 51.8%. Ontario has a total population of 9,777,220, out of which persons with disabilities stand at 1,770,760 with a percentage at 18.1 % (Statistics Canada PALS 2006). This suggests that at 54.9% Ontario is somewhat below the national participation rate of persons with disabilities that is 56.2%. In 2006, Ontarians with disabilities had a 51.8% unemployment rate.

This calls for governments to better target programs and policies that will improve the participation of persons with intellectual disabilities in the employment sector to align with international conventions especially the UNCRPD. There also needs to be effective and practical employment equity and human rights legislation that will be backed by action through incentives such as tax rebates, and awarding of government contracts based on employment of persons with intellectual disabilities. These incentives will ensure that employment barriers such as work discrimination practices that will marginalise and exclude persons with intellectual disabilities are minimised if not completely eradicated in the near future. This will ultimately be beneficial to both countries looking at the fact that both countries have a huge aging population that will drastically affect their various economies if persons with disabilities are not included in the workforce (Statistics Canada Report, 2008).

At the international level, using the UNCRPD and the UNDHR as major legislative instruments, it was revealed from both documents that the right to employment is a human rights issue and, hence, every citizen does have the right to work or to engage in employment. Every citizen

has the right to work without discrimination in terms of creed, race, colour, gender or disability as enshrined in the UNDHR, 1948. This was reiterated in the UNCRPFDD in 2006. However, despite the existence of these international documents, the unemployment situation of this population in these jurisdictions still remains at low levels. Historically, persons with intellectual disabilities have not been treated fairly and equally, and although measures have been put in place currently including national policies and legislations by both jurisdictions to champion the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, there is still more room for equality especially in the area of employment.

Upon various investigations and discussions surrounding the inadequacies of the UNDHR especially when it comes to rights and treatment of persons with disabilities, the United Nations agreed with its member States for the adoption of the UNCRPD which was specifically designed for and geared towards the rights of persons with disabilities. This came into effect in 2006. This is almost 65 years after the ratification of the UNDHR.

These international documents culminated in national policies to help realise the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in various UN member states. This was because it is believed that countries that respect the rule of law tend to respect the rights of their citizens, hence they are more likely to benefit from development. Moreover, it is believed that these countries are much less likely to experience crises requiring peacekeeping, emergency assistance or refugee resettlement missions (Trade and Development Canada, n.d).

It is worthy to note that Canada “is a party to seven major international human rights conventions” (Trade and Development Canada, n.d). As a result, the federal government came up with broad policy legislation including the Canadian Charter on the Rights and Freedoms, the Employment Equity Act, Canadian Human Rights Act, and the Public Service Employment Act in part to help address human rights challenges that this population faces especially in the field of

employment. This legislation has done much to contribute to the education of its citizenry that rights cannot be absolute and have no hierarchy and that all citizens have equal rights and are all to be seen as equal. In that light, the issues of power imbalance and stigma that marginalize individuals were also addressed in these human rights documents.

In Ontario, following up on the giant step that the federal government initiated with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the government came up with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA to support persons with intellectual disabilities, and all Ontarians, to support especially those who might have difficulty getting back into mainstream employment.

Although these national and international policies have served and acted as a positive guide for, close scrutiny of the national policies of the two case study countries concerning persons with disabilities, and comparing with the international conventions brings to attention more questions that need to be addressed in order to ensure the total inclusion of person with disabilities in advancing their economic prospects.

Ghana.

In Ghana, the situation that persons with disabilities face is not different from their counterparts in Ontario. The Constitution of Ghana affords all of its citizens the right to work and the commitment to fostering provision of employment opportunities are enshrined in Article 34 Clause 31 of the 1992 Constitution. Ghana developed the National Disability Act. This Act was joined with the aged society in Ghana. This implies that under the Act, there also exist the aged society (65 years and older) apart from persons with disabilities. Although some may argue that the combination of persons with disabilities and the aged society could be a result of so many factors chiefly amongst

them being finance/funds, from the policy perspective, it would have been ideal to have separated these two vulnerable groups as they are two different populations with different needs and wants. There is also the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II which outlines the legal steps those persons with disabilities can take to ensure the respect and protection of their full citizenship status.

In spite of legislative and policy protections, the unemployment plight of persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana is still the same. Persons with disabilities have difficulty finding employment because the general rate of unemployment for all persons in Ghana is high. Ghana's unemployment rate stood at 20 percent in 2008. The figure, according to the World Fact book (2012), was 11 percent in 2000. Today, unemployment seems to be the most serious development challenge confronting the nation, so much so that it has become, according to the Afrobarometer, the number one concern of Ghanaians that they want the government to address (World Fact book, 2012). As a result, the Ghana government targeted a number of policy initiatives to address the unemployment situation. These include the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (GPRSP) whose main focus is to speed up economic growth and poverty reduction by assisting the private sector to grow and generate employment for youth. This initiative reflects government cognizance of the corresponding objectives and targets of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, this programme has not changed the unemployment situation either. There is a massive youth unemployment situation in Ghana. It must be said that among the youth who are unemployed in Ghana are also persons with intellectual disabilities.

Comparing Ghana and Ontario.

Although both jurisdictions are signatories to most of the international human rights documents pledging their support for fairness and equality for every citizen, internal factors including gross domestic product, population, human and capital resource availability, and national literacy rate are all factors that affect how policies that relate to ensuring the delivery of quality human rights to every citizen are enacted. For example, while it seems the issue of unemployment for persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities in Ghana has more to do with inadequate jobs to satisfy the growing population that has reached the working age, the situation in Ontario is different, especially when one compares the unemployment rates in both jurisdictions. There are jobs in Ontario for persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities; however, issues such as reduction in monthly social support payments, inadequate infrastructure and accessibility for persons with disabilities amongst others that have been discussed above are reasons why persons with disabilities are unemployed. As noted by researchers in the employment field, job creation is a prerequisite for reducing poverty and for bridging the gap among equity, growth and development and, more importantly, job creation provides one of the main escape routes for reducing vulnerability and poverty on a more permanent basis (DFID 1997; Fields, 2005a, ILO 2003, McKay, 1997; World Bank 2005, Amankrah 2006).

In both Ontario and Ghana, employment is seen as a right of every citizen. Hence every citizen has the same right to apply for positions without fear or favour. The Ontario government has continued with the Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Programme (ODSP) to serve as a relief to persons with disability who are deemed to be unfit to work In Ontario. This continuous support (OW and ODSP) by the Ontario government is in line with the UNCRPD which stipulates a “right to work” by all citizens. However, as one of the policies of the ODSP, 50% over a

specified base amount that is guaranteed will be deducted from any income that a person with intellectual disabilities will gain while receiving ODSP benefits. Functionally, this means that a person on ODSP can earn only \$200 per month without paying this penalty. This is not the same in Ghana as there are no welfare services for persons with or without disabilities. There is no disability support programme except for disability resulting from a workplace injury or special contributions that are made by parents of persons with disabilities that guarantee some income to these individuals until the age of 18 years.

Enactment of Employment Rights in Ghana and Ontario

Employment rates of persons with disabilities.

According to the Institute for Research on Inclusion and Society (Crawford, 2011) persons with disabilities have been shown to experience low rates of employment (24.9%) and high rates of marginalization in the mainstream sector (Hall, 2004). In fact, "people with intellectual disabilities are much more likely (at 39%) ... to indicate that they have never worked in their lives" (Crawford, 2011, p. 11). From the results of the present study, it was apparent that employment is the area where there is a challenge for persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, concerning what and how they can contribute towards the development of themselves and the society. As one of the study participants explained, "Challenge in the sense that there is {an} element of discrimination in employment as far [as] persons with disabilities are involved and/or concerned" (G1). The estimated rate of employee discrimination (being refused a job interview, a job and a promotion are common problems for people with intellectual disabilities, as are being given less responsibility than other workers and being paid less for similar work) experienced by this population was noted to be 50.6% for those who are active in the labour force (Crawford, 2011).

Perceptions and misconceptions.

This situation has been made more difficult based on inaccurate perceptions and misconceptions by employers about the abilities and capabilities of persons with disabilities, including those with including intellectual disabilities, such as the perception that persons with disabilities take more time to perform an assignment than their non-disabled colleagues or that they call in sick more often. These misconceptions that have contributed immensely to the unemployment situation of this population (especially in Ontario) do not reflect the exact picture that the interviews in this study revealed. Instead, participants described good reports from employers about the positive abilities and capabilities that persons with intellectual disabilities bring to bear on their jobs including coming to work early without being late, rarely calling in sick, being willing to work any and every shift given, and exhibiting very responsible conduct.

Employment situation in Ghana.

Meanwhile, in Ghana recent statistics show that there is high rate of unemployment in the country and everyone, including for persons with intellectual and other disabilities, is struggling to get employed. Although the government has put in a policy which includes at least a 10% quota reserved for persons with disabilities in public institutions, the policy is not being achieved and enforced. So the mainstreaming as far as employment is concerned for persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, is largely limited. However, depending on the background of the parents of persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, and their social status, these parents create the environment for this population to engage in entrepreneurial activities such as basketery, weaving, fish and snail farming and bead making. According to one participant, this entrepreneurial training has led to quite a sizeable number of persons with disabilities, including

intellectual disabilities, who are now independent and making a living from their profession (G1). This development has put less pressure on the government in providing employment, as competition by both persons with and without disabilities for government jobs has somehow minimized.

Employment situation in Ontario.

This situation is different in Ontario. Although there is a push for more entrepreneurial ventures for persons with intellectual and other disabilities, the focus is not entirely on entrepreneurial training for this population. The normal practice by most support organizations is to assist the persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, to draw a “person-centered plan” that will address the employment needs of the individual. Based on this plan, recommendations are made as to which employment areas will fit the status of the individual and then professional workshops are arranged to facilitate the process.

Meanwhile, there has been a push from the United Nations, through its conventions and protocols, to ensure equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for every citizen, including the right to work. These principles have been embraced by member countries via the ratification and signing of treaties/conventions including the UNCRPD and the ILO. As suggested by Jehoda et al. (2009), employment comes with many benefits including more purposeful lives and increased social status. These views were corroborated by Flores, Jenaro, Orgaz and Martín (2011) who also found that meaningful employment for persons with intellectual disabilities increases their social status, social inclusion, and quality of life. Work is essential to an individual's economic security and is important to achieving social inclusion. Employment contributes to physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and a sense of identity (Kober & Eggleton, 2005).

Right to equal treatment.

Meanwhile, persons with intellectual and other disabilities may accept that they have limitations but restrictions must not exclude them from enjoying their basic rights, such as the right to employment. In any case, despite article 27 of the UNCRPD, as well as the various policies, legislation, codes and Acts of most UN member countries making mention of equal treatment of every citizen in every sector including work/employment, the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities still remains limited in these jurisdictions. Similar to the finding of the Health and Limitation survey in 1991, the results of the current research also indicate that these commitments are not being universally enacted in practice.

Barriers to employment.

As stated by Varela (1983), unemployment of persons with intellectual disabilities is compounded by "social, political and intellectual obstacles, as well as physical ones" (Varela, 1983, p. 37) that persons with intellectual disabilities are faced with in society. These obstacles include public attitudes (and those of employers), perceptions and misconceptions about persons with disabilities as illustrated in the interviews with staff in Ghana and Ontario. There is also a lack of accessible accommodations to ensure easy movement of persons with disabilities, governmental policies and legislation which still need to incorporate more sections on realizing the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the psychological, emotional and intellectual obstacles that persons with intellectual disabilities may face when they are, in fact, employed. These include fear, discomfort, and feeling devalued. The question remains whether the removal of these obstacles can lead to or guarantee the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the provision to them of the same opportunities that are available to other persons without disabilities in the economic development of

these jurisdictions (Hall, 2010). This is suggested as a first step in ensuring the employability of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Unequal engagement in workforce.

The results of the present study support the initial literature review that persons with intellectual disabilities are still not equally engaged in the workforce in spite of all the international and national legislation and policies on the right to work and the employment rights of persons with disabilities. According to study participants, this is a result of obstacles that make it difficult for persons with intellectual disabilities to “first and foremost has a good start in the employment search area, and moving on further to getting an interview and then a position” (M1). Difficulty in gaining employment is similar for this population in both jurisdictions as social, physical, intellectual and political obstacles either prevent them from accessing jobs that represent their abilities or facilitate their under-performance on the job due to fear, discomfort or their colleagues devaluing their contributions.

Successes and barriers facing support organisations.

One major focus of this research was to examine some of the successes as well as the barriers that organisations that support persons with intellectual disabilities face in their bid to provide employment support for this population. The results reflected inequality and unfair representation perpetuated by man-made obstacles that can be undone through a change in attitude and behaviour by employers and the public. However, the push for these organisations is not for equality, but for fair representation with limited or no obstacles to employment. This would provide a fair playing field for all citizens of each jurisdiction with employment based on merit and skills and

not on disabilities. As noted by one of the participants, “we do not only support people in the employment aspects; we do support people in volunteer jobs as well. We also help to connect them to employment service in the community and help them make choices that align their interest be it paid employment or voluntary work” (M2). The participants recounting of their experience in helping to support the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities indicated some of the challenges and difficulties that their clients had in submitting initial applications which were all to be completed online with difficult response options such as “sometimes,” “all the time,” “most of the time,” etc. Moreover, participants recounted how some of their clients have had difficulties in maintaining employment, whether voluntary and or paid work. These were due largely to social, intellectual and physical obstacles for which accommodations were sometimes provided. These kinds of barriers, despite human rights legislation and policies in both jurisdictions, according to one of the participants, are what await persons with intellectual disabilities in settings that would usually be identified as inclusive. These have usually prevented persons with intellectual and other disabilities from developing the interest to be part of mainstream employment.

Maintenance of employment status.

The second focus of this study was to consider some of the viewpoints of participants in these support organisations with particular reference to success stories in their support for persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities. The focus was on how long individuals who were supported previously by these organisations have maintained their employment status and the support systems that contributed to the maintenance of this employment status by persons with intellectual disabilities. The maintenance of the employment status by persons with intellectual disabilities could be facilitated by adequate training on rights, responsibilities, expectations and respect prior to

employment, the development and implementation of a proper employment support plan so persons with disabilities are placed in employment settings where they will be successful and not just any employment setting. It is also necessary to make available all the resources and tools the employee needs including making the workplace accessible and providing electronic and other aides that this population will need in order to be successful on the job.

Commitment to human rights by study organisations.

The essential emergent outcome of this study's findings is the fact that international and national legislation and policies that the two focus jurisdictions have ratified as their commitment to support the human rights of persons with intellectual and other disabilities, especially in the area of employment, are not being universally enacted in practice. These international policies and conventions create the structure of the vehicle, national policies and legislation, if they become more enforceable, become the fuel. For as much as the commitments that these jurisdictions have made are not fully enforced to the letter, and hence are honoured arbitrarily, the talk about equality and fairness especially in the field of employment remains largely a mirage for the time being.

Role of employment support organisations.

There is evidence that governments alone cannot be relied upon to provide employment to the growing large number of the working population. Through the examination of the participants' responses, it was evident that in Ghana for example, persons with intellectual disabilities are supported by employment support organisation. This support comes through participation in an entrepreneurial program that promotes a process of learning meaningful entrepreneurial skill/tasks. These skills/tasks are in basketry, weaving, farming etc with the view of developing a large repertoire

of entrepreneurial skills that could assist in creating a means of livelihood for the individual. The entrepreneurial program was aimed to teach persons with persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, as many entrepreneurial skills as possible in one or two particular professions with some initial human resource support from the organisation until the individuals feels more independent in running the business by him/herself. A study participant advised how some persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, have been doing very well so far with the assistance of their parents who have provided them with the initial start-up capital.

Empowering persons with disabilities.

However, as reported by one of the participants, “they do not know much about their rights and so their rights are trampled upon haphazardly in their bid to be in business. For example, there was complain some members of the public getting the products and running off with them without making payment” (G1). Participants advised more training for persons with intellectual disabilities and education on the rights and responsibilities that persons with disabilities have as well, especially in Ghana. The issue of rights, respect and responsibilities is different in Ghana as compared to Ontario. An Ontario participant reported that prior to the start of any meaningful search for employment, be it paid or voluntary, one of the few workshops that is mandatory for every participant to attend is the workshop on rights, respect and responsibilities. This, according to the participants, enables the individual to become aware of his/her rights under the law as well as his/her obligation to the employer. Respect is also taught and one participant advised she “observed very easy exchanges between one of our trained entrepreneur/individuals with a customer and there was at no point in time when an undue attention was drawn to the partner’s disability or difference” (M2). As reported by this participant, there have been no complaints about employers trampling on the

rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, as they have become aware of their rights in the workplace and express the ability to exercise those rights including the right to obtain and maintain a job in the larger community. However, as noted by Verela (1983), the intellectual obstacles (obstacles created through actions of individuals) are very difficult to know, hence it is very difficult to assess whether rights related to intellectual obstacles have been violated or not. More especially, those obstacles may lead to fear and discomfort and being devalued due to exclusion from job-related activities or discussions. The fear and discomfort and feeling of devalued may eventually result in the loss of the sense of belongingness in the organisation by the individual. Clearly, the notion of equality and fairness must be shifted from merely providing legislation and policies that support the employment rights of persons with intellectual and other disabilities to more practical and enforceable policies that will ensure a fair number of persons are represented in the workforce. The right to employment is a right to inclusive employment. Inclusion recognizes the obligation to eliminate barriers/obstacles that restrict or ban participation, and the need to change culture, policy and practice of mainstream employment to accommodate the needs of all persons regardless of disabilities.

Willingness to hire a person with disability.

In sum, looking at the current rate of employed persons with disabilities in general, some key findings of this research are that both jurisdictions still have more work to do especially when it comes to debates and discussions involving the employment rights for persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities. The study also revealed the larger picture of the systemic challenges/obstacles including issues related to funding, employers' unwillingness to hire persons with intellectual disabilities, lengthy and cumbersome employment application processes and

procedures, and the perceptions and misconceptions by the public that affect assistance given to persons with disabilities amongst others that support organisations face in their bid to assist with the employability of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Despite the existence of both national and international human rights documents that preach equality and fairness, this study shows that barriers exist still that hinder the employment of persons with disabilities. Moreover, even when they are employed, barriers within the workplace may hinder their performance of their duties preventing them from performing as they would wish. Hence, the question is what will both the provincial and federal governments in both jurisdictions do in an attempt to improve the employment support for persons with intellectual disabilities. Moreover, questions on how to ensure the effective facilitation/support to organisations that support employment of this population will be raised. Furthermore, the employment for persons with intellectual disabilities in these jurisdictions and other jurisdictions was discussed.

Public education and awareness creation.

Intensifying public education and creating more awareness that “disability is not inability”(G1) are the first and the most important steps in improving the employment situation of persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities. This must be followed by inclusive and accessible communities and workplaces that will facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities including intellectual disabilities when hired. Thirdly there is the need for existing human rights policies and legislation to be made more enforceable especially in relation to the employment rights of persons with disabilities, to ensure that rights of this population are protected. Enforcing these rights does not mean giving any preferential treatment to this population but, instead, ensuring that the abilities and capabilities of every individual are looked at equally and fairly when there is a

competition. An individual must not be disqualified based only on his/her disability. Moreover, offering persons with disabilities the opportunity to learn and improve their skills through further education and/or vocational training will alleviate the low employment rate of this population as persons with disabilities will acquire skills and knowledge that will be in high demand by employers. According to one participant, “wage subsidies must be designed to encourage employers to employ persons with intellectual disabilities, as being practised in Alberta” (M2). This, according to the Ontario participant, can be adopted by both jurisdictions if possible given both governments’ budgets. The subsidies vary in terms of the financial benefit and duration of that benefit. The highest subsidies are paid in relation to job seekers with disabilities who have been on income support for two years or more.

Incentives for employers.

There is also the need to have/develop more effective and practical employment equity and human rights legislation that will be backed by action through incentives such as tax rebates for employers who hire persons with intellectual disabilities and the awarding of government contracts based on employment of persons with persons with disabilities. These strategies may reduce or even eradicate employment barriers such as work discrimination practices that marginalise and exclude persons with persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities. This will ultimately be beneficial to both countries looking at the fact that both countries have a huge aging population that will drastically affect their various economies if persons with intellectual and other disabilities are not included in the workforce (Statistics Canada Report, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

It is imperative to consider the strengths and weaknesses of this study when interpreting the results. Examining the weaknesses of the study, the issue of the sample size was one of the many limitations of this study. Although the initial plan was to have at most five participants from each jurisdiction as well as a possible focus group, this did not materialise as it was quite a challenge getting participants to respond to my invitation to participate in the study. This is a weakness of the study that limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the interviews. These limited conclusions reflect only the information shared by the participants and cannot be considered to reflect all issues that are present in either jurisdiction.

Moreover, the study compared a country to a province, and although the reasons for this were discussed in the methodology section, this is still a limitation as it is always important to consider comparing variables at the same level. However, the study brought to light the fact that the size of a country or province and its economic development do not necessarily predict how well persons with disabilities in that country are treated especially in terms of employment.

Another limitation of the study is the fact that the focus of the interviews was with only front line staff. Meanwhile it must also be acknowledged that this was envisaged in the study pre-planning stages as a pragmatic necessity; however, a recommendation for further research in the area would be that it should include a larger sample size including the views of the consumers of the services rendered by these organisations. A larger sample size would provide the occasion for an inclusive examination of the broader perspectives of all staff and could provide insight into the experience of the front line staff and other personnel in offering quality employment support services to persons with intellectual disabilities in the future. Although the people who were interviewed are seen as the decision makers and the front line staff in the two organisations, the researcher's inability

to include the persons with intellectual disabilities who are the consumers of their services is an unavoidably partial view, and that further research is needed to fill in the other details.

Although a mix of focus group and individual interviews in the administration of the interview questions was the initial plan in completing the research, the study was not able to utilise the focus group aspect because conducting focus groups long distance in Ghana was just impracticable.

Finally, the researcher was not able to complete a member check for the Ghana participant due to technical difficulties with email transmission from Canada to Ghana. As a result, confirmation of overall themes and outcomes was not established for the Ghana interview based on the email problem which is another limitation of the study.

Conclusion

The two case study organisations explored in this study were excellent examples of employment support agencies that are involved in ensuring that the legislation, codes and treaties signed by their respective countries on the protection and provision of employment rights of persons with disabilities are enacted. Mainstream and VOICE Ghana participants recounted some of the successes they have experienced in assisting persons with intellectual disabilities to break away from historic stigma and stereotypes (Grant, 2008) about their capabilities in the labour force. However, despite the hard work that these organisations are putting into their effort to provide employment support for this population, they are still faced with a myriad of challenges and barriers/obstacles in meeting these objectives. As noted by one of the participants “people are not willing to give people with disabilities a chance. They don’t take the time to see how a person might fit into their

organization. They are making a lot of assumptions about people with disabilities which are not true” (M1).

These barriers have impeded the fortunes of persons with intellectual disabilities in the employment field as the International Labour Organisation still pegs the unemployment rate among persons with disabilities at 80 per cent (International Labour Organization Report, 2010). The front line staff in these organisations noted that they are motivated to continue in their profession of providing employment support to the clients despite these issues. As noted by one of the staff, “I am always happy and feel satisfied when I am able to support a client to get the type of employment s/he wants” (M1).

With the conventions, codes, strategies and charters that Ontario and Ghana have enacted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, it is believed that persons with disabilities in this province and country respectively will also have equal employment opportunities as employment is deemed to be one of the important benefits associated with social inclusion. However, as has been described above, the rates of employment for persons with disabilities are far lower than the workforce abilities and capabilities of this population. Although the governments of both Ontario and Ghana have made some gains with regards to the employment of persons with disabilities, promoting employment must still be a priority for both the Ontario and Ghana governments.

To compliment this study three recommendations are put forth. First, future research would be encouraged to include a qualitative study involving the direct recipients of the services (persons with intellectual disabilities) from these employment support organisations to compare and possibly replicate these results.

Secondly, future research may consider examining a broader and larger data sample of people with intellectual disabilities in competitive (voluntary and/or paid) jobs and take into account

the political, social, intellectual and physical barriers as identified by Verela (1983) and compare if persons without disabilities face similar obstacles or how persons without disabilities contribute to these obstacles at the workplace. .

Thirdly, future research may consider examining the "social, political and intellectual obstacles, as well as physical ones" (Varela, 1983, p. 37) in more detail to ascertain how these obstacles to employment of persons with disabilities can be removed.

Fourthly, future research may consider examining how to make international legislation like the UNCRPD and other national legislation more enforceable to serve the best interests of persons with intellectual disabilities.

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Appendix A

Initial Recruitment

Cover email to Executive Directors concerning recruitment:

Dear.....

Thank you for allowing me to conduct my master's research project in your organization. I appreciate your distributing the attached cover note and Invitation to participate to your staff members. As we have discussed, this invitation extends to you as well as to managers and staff in your organization. Anyone who is interested in participating can contact me by email (rr08tt@brocku.ca).

Sincerely,

Ferdinand Reimmer

Cover note from organization's Executive Director to accompany the e-mail Invitation to Participate:

I have been asked to distribute this invitation to those who are involved in employment support. All of us who are involved in employment supports in any way are welcome to participate if we so choose. Participation in this research is voluntary; your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your employment in any way. If you choose to participate you may do so during work hours.

Dear Sir/Madam,

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

You are invited to participate in a master's thesis research project "Creating and Enabling a Sustainable Livelihood for Persons (Adults) with Intellectual Disabilities (ID): Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward. A Comparative Study of Ghana and Canada"

The purpose of this research project is to help evaluate how to create and enable a sustainable livelihood for persons with intellectual disabilities in Ontario and Ghana. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the discourse on the right to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana and Ontario. Please note that you will be volunteering approximately 1-1.5 hours for a focus group or an interview in person or on

the phone (for participants in Ontario) or 1- 1.5 hours for a phone interview (for participants in Ghana).

The interview will revolve mainly around questions about barriers and facilitators to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities including a request for description of anonymous "success" and "failure" cases as well as recommendations that might lead to a positive change in the employment rights discourse of persons with disabilities.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board [13-048].

If you would like to participate in this research or would like more information about it please email Ferdinand Reimmer at: rr08tt@brocku.ca.

Thank you,

Ferdinand Reimmer
Graduate Student
Center for Applied Disability Studies, Brock University

Dr. Frances Owen
Associate Professor
Department of Child & Youth Studies
and
Centre for Applied Disability Studies
Brock University
fowen@brocku.ca
Telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807

Appendix B

BROCK UNIVERSITY Invitation for Interview and Focus Group Participants from Ontario

Creating and Enabling a Sustainable Livelihood for Persons (Adults) with Intellectual Disabilities (ID): Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward. A comparative study of Ghana and Canada

Principal Student Investigator: Ferdinand Reimmer, M.A. (Political Science), Student, Center for Applied Disability Studies, Brock University

Faculty Supervisor: Frances Owen, Ph.D., C. Psych., Dept. of Child and Youth Studies and Centre for Applied Disability Studies, Brock University. Telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807

Thesis Committee Members: Donato Tarulli, Ph.D., and Dorothy Griffiths, C.M., O. Ont., Ph.D.

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: *Creating and Enabling a Sustainable Livelihood for Persons (Adults) with Intellectual Disabilities (ID): Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward. A Comparative Study of Ghana and Canada (Ontario)*.

The purpose of this research project is to help evaluate how to create and enable a sustainable livelihood for persons with intellectual disabilities in Ontario and Ghana. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to answer some questions about issues such as the nature of existing policies and practices related to employment support for persons with intellectual disabilities and how these could be strengthened.

You may choose to participate in an interview in person or on the phone, or to participate in a focus group with colleagues from Mainstream. The expected duration of your participation will be between 1 and 1.5 hours. The Mainstream focus group will be held in person. If you choose to participate in an interview instead of the focus group, interviews will be in person or on the phone, depending on your location and your preference.

Please email Ferdinand Reimmer, (rr08tt@brocku.ca) to indicate your preference for an individual interview or participation in the focus group at Mainstream.

This research may benefit you as through the answers to the interview/focus group questions, you will be contributing to the discourse on the right to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana and Ontario.

Although this project is not being funded by any organization, it is a multi-centered project as the same interview questions will be used with participants in one organization that supports persons with intellectual disabilities in Ontario, Canada and one in Ghana.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board [13-048].

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact, Ferdinand Reimmer, (rr08tt@brocku.ca) or Dr. Frances Owen (fowen@brocku.ca; Telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807) or Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext 3035, reb@brocku.ca)

BROCK UNIVERSITY

Invitation for Interview Participants in Ghana

Creating and Enabling a Sustainable Livelihood for Persons (Adults) with Intellectual Disabilities (ID): Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward. A comparative study of Ghana and Canada

Principal Student Investigator: Ferdinand Reimmer, M.A. (Political Science), Student, Center for Applied Disability Studies, Brock University

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Frances Owen, Ph.D., C. Psych., Dept. of Child and Youth Studies and Centre for Applied Disability Studies, Brock University. Telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807

Thesis Committee Members: Dr. Donato Tarulli, Dept. of Child & Youth Studies and Dr. Dorothy Griffiths, C.M., O. Ont., Dept of Child & Youth Studies and Centre for Applied Disability Studies

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: *Creating and Enabling a Sustainable Livelihood for Persons (Adults) with Intellectual Disabilities (ID): Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward. A Comparative Study of Ghana and Canada (Ontario)*.

The purpose of this research project is to help evaluate how to create and enable a sustainable livelihood for persons with intellectual disability in Ontario and Ghana. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to answer some questions about issues such as the nature of existing policies and practices related to employment support for persons with intellectual disabilities and how these could be strengthened.

Participants in Ghana will be interviewed on the phone. The expected duration of your participation will be between 1 and 1.5 hours.

You will be contacted by email to arrange an interview appointment at a time that is convenient for you.

This research may benefit you as through the answers to the questions, you will be contributing to the discourse on the right to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities in Ghana and Ontario.

Although this project is not being funded by any organization, it is a multi-centered project as the same interview questions will be used with participants in organizations that provide supports for persons with intellectual disabilities in Ontario, Canada and one in Ghana.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board [13-048].

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ferdinand Reimmer at (rr08tt@brocku.ca) or Dr. Frances Owen (fowen@brocku.ca; Telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807) or Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext 3035, reb@brocku.ca)

**APPENDIX C
BROCK UNIVERSITY**

Consent for Interview and Focus Group Participants

Creating and Enabling a Sustainable Livelihood for Persons (Adults) with Intellectual Disabilities (ID): Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward. A comparative study of Ghana and Canada

Principal Student Researcher: Ferdinand Reimmer, Centre for Applied Disability Studies

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Frances Owen, C. Psych., Dept. of Child & Youth Studies and Centre for Applied Disability Studies, Brock University; Telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807

Thesis Committee Members: Dr. Donato Tarulli, Dept. of Child & Youth Studies; Dr. Dorothy Griffiths, C.M., O. Ont., Dept. of Child & Youth Studies and Centre for Applied Disability Studies

Name of Participant: (Optional) _____

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN THIS RESEARCH?

I understand that the purpose of the research project in which I have agreed to participate is to help evaluate how to create and enable a sustainable livelihood for persons with intellectual disabilities in Ontario and Ghana. I understand that this research is a graduate student thesis project. I understand that my participation includes being interviewed about the promotion of employment rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The interview will be conducted on the phone for participants in Ghana. In Ontario the focus group will be conducted in person or if I wish to participate but the focus group cannot be scheduled at a time that is convenient for me I can request an interview that can be conducted in person or on the phone depending on my preference. I understand that the student researcher will send me a brief summary of his findings and will ask me to comment on the accuracy of his report and to suggest changes to it. The purpose of this step is to ensure that he captures information that is important to me.

(FOR ONTARIO) I understand that the interviews and focus group will be audio taped and transcribed at a later date. In addition, a note taker will be present to take notes during the focus group. The in-person interviews and focus group in Ontario will be conducted in a private location at my workplace or at Brock University to avoid conversations being overheard.

(FOR GHANA) For participants from Ghana, phone interviews will be conducted and audio recorded. The recordings will be transcribed at a later date. The student researcher will conduct the phone interviews in a private location that cannot be overheard.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and there will be no payment for my participation in this study. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without penalty. I may also decline to answer any questions. In the event that I choose to withdraw from the study, I understand that all my data (audiotaped interviews and transcriptions) will be completely destroyed. I do understand that it may not be possible to erase audio portions of my contribution to the focus group discussion. However, any focus group transcriptions and focus group notes that can be attributed to me will be destroyed. Participants may communicate their decision to withdraw from the study until the time that results have been written in Ferdinand Reimmer's master's thesis. Participants may contact the researcher via email at rr08tt@brocku.ca or the faculty supervisor at fowen@brocku.ca; telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

I understand that my participation in this study may benefit other persons, since any information that is gathered will be used to learn about barriers and facilitators to employment of persons with intellectual disabilities. I also may benefit by contributing to the discourse on employment rights of persons with intellectual disabilities.

I understand that, for myself, the risks involved in participating in this study are only minimal (e.g., feeling stressed and embarrassed if I feel that my organization is not achieving goals that we wish for our clients or I may feel frustration about legislative, funding and other barriers that we may wish to have changed.). However, I am aware that all information disclosed will remain confidential. Names and specific position titles of participants will not be reported in the study findings, although the names of the two organizations will be used and a general description of participants' roles will be included in reports of study findings (i.e., managers/supervisors, staff members) as well as the range and average number of years that participants have worked in their respective organizations and in the field of supporting persons with intellectual disabilities. Aggregate information will be reported for Ontario, for Ghana and for both focus areas together.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I understand that all my personal data will be kept strictly confidential except that my personal information will have to be given to the courts if the law requires it. I also understand that while focus group participants will be asked to keep the information shared in the group confidential the researchers cannot guarantee that all participants will follow this request.

I understand that only the researchers named above and their research assistants/note-takers (if any) will have access to the information I give throughout my participation in the study.

In reporting on the results of the study my name will not be used. With your permission, anonymous quotations will be used to illustrate the results of the interviews; however, no identifying information (e.g., name, specific job title) will be used in relation to any of these quotations. Participants will be identified as managers or staff, unique position titles will not be included. Quotations taken from the interview and focus group data will be identified by a code that includes a letter for the organization, a letter for the general position category of the participant (i.e., manager/supervisor or staff), and a number for each participant.

During this study I will not disclose identifying information related to any of the persons I support.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

I understand that the researchers may publish articles and/or books/chapters in books, and they may make academic, professional and/or public presentations using the information that all the people who helped in the study provide.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If I wish to receive a summary of the final findings from the study I can email Ferdinand Reimmer (rr08tt@brocku.ca) or Frances Owen (fowen@brocku.ca); telephone 905-688-5550 ext 4807 in April 2014.

[] Yes, I understand the nature of this study and my involvement in it. I agree to participate in this study and I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I give permission for you to contact me after the study is over to ask me if I would be willing to answer some more questions or be in a new study.

Participant Signature _____ Date: _____

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board (file #13-048). If I have any questions or concerns about my participation in the study, I may contact Ferdinand Reimmer, (rr08tt@brocku.ca) or Frances Owen (fowen@brocku.ca) or the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905) 688-5550, 3035.

Thank you for your help! Please take one copy of this form with you for further reference

Student Researcher Signature _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Participant Interviews

Participant Number (Country):

Participant Number:

Participant's position in the organization: Manager/supervisor (included Executive Director)

Direct care staff:

Number of years working at this organization:

Number of years working in the field of supports for persons with intellectual disabilities:

Description of Agencies: Goals/Objectives:

1. What is Voice Ghana/Mainstream (Ontario)?
 - a. How was it started?
 - b. How is it funded?
 - c. How is it governed?
 - i. What is the role of the board of directors
 - ii. What is the role of government in your organization
 1. Prompt-In administrative decisions?
 2. Oversight/evaluation
2. What are the vision and mission statements of Voice Ghana/Mainstream? How would you describe the work of Voice Ghana/ Mainstream?
3. What role does Voice Ghana/Mainstream perform in supporting persons with intellectual disability?
 - a. Specifically with regard to employment of persons with intellectual disability?
 - i. Do you help people to find and/or support different kinds of employment? How do you define employment? What kinds of activities do you consider to be employment?
 - ii. locations?

- b. What do you as a manager/supervisor/staff member do to support persons with intellectual disability in your everyday work?
 - i. With regard to employment specifically
- 4. In terms of supporting the employment of persons with intellectual disability how does your organization measure its success and/or failures?
 - a. How are failures or limitations addressed?
- 5. Can you give an example (no identifiers) where your organization was able to successfully support a person with intellectual disability in gaining meaningful employment?
 - a. What factors facilitated this success?
- 6. Can you give an example of a time when your organization was not able to support a person in gaining meaningful employment?
 - a. What barriers contributed to this problem

Process, Procedures and Advocacy

- b. What guides your decision making process about how to support employment for persons with intellectual disability? What is the role of government policy?
 - c. To what extent do human rights documents guide your decision making?
 - i. What specific rights materials guide your employment support decision making?
 - ii. What is the role of the UNCRPD?
- 7. Are there times when the practicality of providing employment supports conflicts with government policies? With the UNCRPD? And what did you do or what have you done to prevent this conflict from arising?
 - a. If yes what do you do?
 - b. Please describe a situation (no identifiers) when this kind of conflict arose. How did you handle it? What did you do next? Can you tell me more about that?
 - c. If no, as a manager/supervisor/staff member what have you done to prevent this kind of conflict from arising?

8. In your opinion, are there adequate government policies and legislation in place on employment rights for persons with intellectual disability? If yes, what are some of the policies that support your everyday work? (Support and funding, infrastructure, etc.) If no, what other policies and legislation would you recommend?
 - a. In your opinion, what support systems does your government currently have in place for persons with intellectual disability that facilitate your work in providing employment supports?
 - b. In your opinion, what additional systems (government and other) are needed to facilitate your work in providing employment supports for persons with intellectual disability? What is your organisation doing to advocate for these changes? Has your organisation ever received any feedback from its peers, competitors or even government with regards to its performance in the employment support of persons with intellectual disability?
 - c. How often do you receive this feedback (every time, once a month, etc.)?

B: Recommendations for Change

1. What can you and your governments do to ensure the employability of persons with intellectual disability?
2. What is your motivation (reinforcement) for supporting the employment of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities?
 - a. What are some examples of supports you would like to receive In order to assist you in supporting the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities?
3. What are some factors/barriers that inhibit you and your organization from performing at your best in supporting the employment of persons with intellectual disability?
4. What do you suggest as an alternative to meaningful employment for persons with intellectual disability that will contribute to their socio-economic development?

