

Project Title: **FORMALISING THE INFORMAL AND INFORMALISING THE  
FORMAL? ANALYSING CHANGES IN WOMEN'S WORK IN  
DOMESTIC SERVICE AND THE BANKING SECTOR IN GHANA**

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## 1. SYNTHESIS

This was a three year research project on the changing character of women's work in Ghana and its implications for women's livelihood security as an aspect of their citizenship rights. The study examines women's work in two sectors-- banking and paid domestic work. These sectors, one in the formal and the other in the informal economy, are illustrative of some of the important developments in the character of women's work. Both sectors have seen significant changes since the 1990s when economic liberalization policies began to take hold. Domestic work is increasingly being procured through agents and agencies. On the other hand, the banking sector, traditionally seen as the bastion of formality and long term employment is changing with the introduction of employment agencies into the sector. These changes are taking place in a general context of labour market liberalisation and the informalization of work in both developed and developing countries. Policy interest in informalization has tended to focus on enterprise formalization and ignores the conditions of workers. And yet this is an important issue in national development. This research and the policy interventions envisaged would contribute to correcting this policy bias and fulfil CEGENSA's core mandates of generating information and policy advocacy on critical matters of gender equity and building the capacity of staff and students for gender analysis.

## 2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In spite of the existence of several studies pointing to the far reaching implications of economic liberalisation for livelihoods, recent policy interest has focused more on the expansion of the revenue base of governments and improving market access for enterprises than on their labour relations. Changes in employment regimes and labour relations such as the mediation of employment relations by agencies have not received much attention. This is not surprising given the wider policy neglect of employment issues since the early 1980s. Employment statistics are hopelessly out of date and census data does not provide important information about the labour force. The Ghana Living Standards Surveys have therefore become the main source of information about

**Commentaire [N1]:** Given that this is a research project that has handed, do we need to change the tense – in some places, should we be talkig about what the study has achieved, as well as what further we hope it will achieve? (This is done in at the bottom of page 4 - 'all the objects were met' – but is not consistent in the rest of the report).

employment. There is a crying need to begin to understand what changes three decades of economic liberalisation have made to the structure of the labour force and women's place within it and on employment relations. Further, poverty studies have argued that while a broader definition of poverty beyond the income based approach is necessary, the quality of employment and livelihoods remains a central determinant of poverty. Thus, gendered poverty, which is an important barrier to women's full enjoyment of their economic citizenship, cannot be fully understood and tackled without attention to employment issues. This research project's focus on labour relations contributes to correcting this bias by producing information to deepen policy understanding of how women's work is changing, the directions in which this change is going, and how to address some of the problematic developments in women's work in order to enhance their livelihood security and their citizenship rights.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the project is to influence policy processes towards the creation of an employment regime that is gender equitable and promotes sustainable livelihoods. Also, the Project has as its specific objectives:

1. To produce knowledge about women's work in the banking and domestic sectors of the economy as a contribution to research on employment issues from a women's rights and economic citizenship perspective;
2. To disseminate knowledge from the research to policymakers, primarily, and to women and workers; advocacy groups, in order to promote policy dialogue and policy change; and,
3. To build the capacity of researchers and their assistants to conduct research into employment from a gendered perspective, and to build the capacity of the recipient institution for managing and conducting research of such nature.

All the objectives were met. The research produced knowledge about women's work in the two sectors which highlighted some of the major changes in the world of work in Ghana and their implications for the economic rights of workers, particularly women. We also disseminated this information to a range of local and international stakeholders. In

particular, the national dialogue with policy makers, activists and researchers provided the basis for future work around policy change. Finally, the project built the research capacities of the researchers and research assistants, and also built CEGENSA's capacity to manage research projects of this nature.

#### **4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

##### **4.1 Research Sites**

The study was undertaken in three urban centres: Accra, the capital, and Kumasi are the two largest urban centres in Ghana, and are both in the southern part of the country. The third city, Tamale, is the largest in northern Ghana. The choice of these three sites allowed us to achieve a rough geographic coverage of the country, with the socio-cultural variation that this implies. We focused on urban rather than rural areas because it is in the former that banks and employment agencies are concentrated, and in which are located domestics who are placed by agencies and those employed through other channels. Thus, urban centres give us both the opportunity to observe the operations of the institutions of interest and afford us a concentrated and diverse pool of respondents from which to sample.

##### **4.2 Methods**

The study employed multiple methods of data collection to answer its research questions:

- reconnaissance of research sites
- mapping exercise of banks and employment agencies
- inception workshop
- survey of bank and domestic workers
- in-depth interviews with bank and domestic workers; Human Resource managers and union leaders of banks; and employers of domestics

The use of multiple research methods was critical to this project. The surveys enabled us gain some insight into the prevalence of certain labour practices, their impacts on workers and the responses of workers. The mapping of banks and employment agencies also gave us a sense of what kinds of banks and employment agencies are operating in Ghana, their philosophies and employment practices and differences among them. The in depth studies allowed us access to the viewpoints of certain stakeholders often ignored in policy studies. For example, we spoke to employers of domestic workers, the human resource officers and union leaders in some banks, the relevant state institutions and also spoke to a few domestic and bank workers about their experiences of the changes in the world of work.

We recorded all the steps in our studies, particularly the innovations we had to make to enable the research to go on. These include our use of snowballing techniques to map employment agencies and criteria we generated for selecting respondents for the in-depth interviews. Hopefully, this detailed account would serve future researchers of labour relations and reinforce the message that multiple methods are useful for research which aims to reach multiple stakeholders.

## **5. PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

The main project activities were research and knowledge dissemination. These three elements are discussed in more detail below.

### **5.1. Research**

We describe below the processes of data collection and analyses using the outlined methods.

#### *5.2 Reconnaissance*

In 2008, the research team of researchers, project administrator and assistants undertook reconnaissance trips to the three research sites to meet key members of the banks and agencies whose members would be the surveyed and interviewed, and to elicit their participation in the project.

### *5.3 Mapping Exercise*

A mapping exercise was carried out in Year 1, between December 2008 and February 2009, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of the numbers and locations of banks and agencies within the two sectors, and further to gain a gendered profile of the sectors. Given the lack of information on these two sectors in Ghana, the mapping required direct contact with the institutions for data collection.

In regards to banks, six research assistants administered questionnaires to the headquarters of the 23 banks registered at the time, all of which are located in Accra. The questionnaires were completed by individuals at managerial level, commonly by the human resource departments at the banks' head offices. Challenges to data collection included the relevant bank managers claiming not to have time to fill the questionnaires; their caution about giving out information; and information not being available in the sex disaggregated figures we requested. Thus, despite persistent visits to the banks and an extension of the survey period from two weeks to three months, we received responses from only 13 out of the 23 banks, made up of eight local (Ghanaian) banks and five foreign banks. Three of the 13 respondent banks made use of agencies.

Three methods were used to map employment agencies in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale during the month of February 2009. First, four research assistants spent a number of days driving through the various communities in the three cities identifying and noting the information on signboards for the various agencies. Once the information was collated, phone calls were made to the various agencies to identify their exact locations. The research assistants then went to each of these locations to have representatives of the agencies (usually managers) fill out a questionnaire. A second method of locating the agencies was through listings on the internet site [www.yellowpagesghana.com](http://www.yellowpagesghana.com); representatives of the agencies thus identified filled out questionnaires. At each location, we also requested that the agents direct us to other agencies they knew of; this snowball

method also yielded some new contacts. Agency representatives were generally willing to provide information. Overall, 33 agencies were interviewed; their locations and areas of work are indicated in;

Table 1---: Location of employment agencies

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Accra</b>	<b>Kumasi</b>	<b>Tamale</b>
only domestic	9	4	0
only bank	5	5	2
banks and domestic	7	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Fieldwork 2009

The mapping exercises yielded mainly qualitative data about the history and operations of the banks and agencies, and quantitative data on the numbers and backgrounds of employees of banks and agencies at various levels and locations.

#### *5.4 Inception workshop*

Following the reconnaissance and mapping exercises, the project organised an inception workshop on 7 April 2009 in Accra, to which were invited selected researchers, policymakers, employment agencies, workers and their employers, the trade union congress, and civil society advocates. The workshop sought to inform participants about the research, to seek their assistance in validating the research questions, and promote their commitment to use the findings of the research in their own advocacy work.

The researchers presented the objectives of the project, the preliminary findings from the reconnaissance and mapping, and the proposed research instruments to be used in the survey and in-depth interviews. Discussants then commented on the presentations and facilitated general discussions. The discussions at the workshop informed the design of the study, specifically the development of the survey questionnaire and interview guidelines.

### *5.5 Survey of bank and domestic workers*

We describe below the methods of data collection and analysis for the survey of workers in the banking and domestic work sectors in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale, which was administered from 2 June to 30 July 2009.

#### *a. Design and pre-test of research instruments*

The researchers met and decided on the themes and sections to be covered by the questionnaires, based on the research objectives. The draft questionnaires went through a two-stage review process: first, the questionnaire for domestic workers was sent to Prof. Adelle Blackett, a labour law professor and the Convenor of the Labour Law and Development Research Network(LLDRN), for her comments. This questionnaire was then revised. Second, a sub-set of the participants of the inception work, including labour researchers and activists, was invited to a round table on 28 April 2009 to discuss the draft questionnaires, which had been sent them beforehand for their perusal. The instrument was further refined based on discussions at that meeting.

Twelve field assistants and 3 supervisors were hired and attended a training workshop from 18 to 22 May, 2009 during which they were taken through the project, trained on interview skills and research ethics, and introduced to the questionnaires. The questionnaires were further revised for clarity based on the comments of the field assistants (many of whom had previous experience in survey administration). The final questionnaires were then translated into four languages at the workshop, and some questions of translation were referred to researchers in linguistics for advice. The questionnaires were pre-tested in two neighbourhoods in Accra on 21 and 22 May, 2009. The researchers and research assistants met on 25 May to debrief and to further refine the instruments; the main change was to the sequence of questions.

*b. Sampling and data collection for bank workers*

Six of the 13 banks that participated in the mapping exercise were purposively chosen as sites of the survey on the basis of size, ownership (whether Ghanaian or foreign), length of operation in Ghana, numbers of women they employ, with the main goal to obtain a diverse set of banking institutions. The six banks were made up of a partly state-owned bank, one older private bank, and four newer private banks.

Reconnaissance trips were undertaken to the various offices and branches of the six banks in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale, to inform them of the study and to solicit their participation. The survey of some individual banks was delayed by the process of receiving official approval from the head offices. Once we obtained this approval, we discussed with the head offices the selection of branches that would give us the required number of respondents across different levels of the bank hierarchy and an adequate number of agency workers. We included in our sample branches that varied in size and in location (that is, we included both branches in business centres as well as those in quieter areas of the city, with the assumption that these differences in location might affect questions of placement, organization of work, and work culture and conditions).

The supervisors liaised with the individual branch managers to determine the days and times that would be convenient for the interviews to be carried out. The branch managers also assisted the field supervisors in selecting workers to be interviewed, based on the selection criteria already mentioned (that is, position within the bank, sex and affiliation with employment agency).

In each of the selected banks, a sample of both male and female workers were surveyed at various levels and positions in the organisation, including those who have and have not had dealings with employment agencies in their work careers. The number of employees to be interviewed in each category was predetermined, but the actual individuals eventually selected depended on their availability and willingness to participate in the survey. The

structured questionnaires were administered to these respondents by research assistants at the respondents' work sites. In all, 301 bank workers were surveyed.

*c. Sampling and data collection for domestic workers*

The survey phase began with reconnaissance trips by the researchers and field supervisors of the three cities. We mapped out three neighbourhoods as representing high income, middle income and low income residential areas. In each of these neighbourhoods, we demarcated the area within which the survey would be administered. The research assistants interviewed available and willing domestic workers. They were guided by a set of criteria aimed at eliciting respondents across the residential areas, sexes, and from different types of domestics.

The survey of domestic workers had a few challenges. Some domestics were unwilling or unavailable to take part in the survey, although this was less of a challenge in the high income areas where employers were often out of the house during the day and domestics were alone and more at liberty to spend time on an interview. In low income neighbourhoods, other household members (including employers) were often at home and therefore respondents may have felt more inhibited.

*d. Data management and analysis of surveys*

The questionnaires were reviewed in the field by the supervisors. We further hired an individual to check through the returned questionnaires for errors so that these could be corrected by the research assistants. After the data was analysed, several meetings were held by the research team to discuss the emerging findings of the survey and to decide on further analyses to be conducted. The team also coded open-ended questions and these were entered into the database and underwent statistical analysis. These activities took several months to complete. Subsequently, the team has produced two reports from the survey; one from the survey of bank workers and the other from the survey of domestic workers.

### *In-depth Interviews*

In-depth interviews were conducted to explore changes in labour conditions in the two sectors, and the ways in which workers have experienced these in terms of employment, social security and family life. In-depth interviews were conducted for four categories of respondents: bank workers and domestic workers from the first year survey selected; union leaders and human resource heads in banks; employers of domestic workers; and formal and employment agencies.

#### *a. Instrument design*

Several meetings and one residential workshop were organised to complete the design of six interview guidelines, one each for bank workers, domestic workers, union leaders of bank workers, human resources heads of banks, employers of domestics, and employment agencies. The design was guided by the research questions overall, and also by lines of enquiries raised by the analysis of the survey.

#### *b. Sampling and data collection*

Life history interviews were carried out with a sub-sample of the surveyed bank and domestic workers to elicit details about and contexts of people's situations, and also to have a sense of variability in individual situations, and also of chronology and context.

The main selection criterion for the in-depth interviews for bank and domestic workers and employers of domestic workers was that they belong to some of our categories of interest. The following were the categories for bank and domestic workers and their employers:

Categories for bank workers

- have agency work to permanent work and vice versa
- have used different agencies (at least two)
- have been promoted from clerical to supervisory/managerial grades

- have worked in the sector long enough to discuss changes (10 or more)
- are interested in being interviewed further

#### Categories for domestic workers and their employers

- have used different employment avenues (at least two out of the ff: informal, formal, family relations)
- with unusual working relations and arrangements (e.g. multiple employers, solely in commercial work, etc.)
- with very positive and negative experiences as workers and employers
- have progressed from one level/type of domestic work to another (e.g. general domestic to nanny)
- highly educated domestics (SSS and higher – JSS is basic education)
- are interested in being interviewed further

One of the supervisors of the survey was hired to go through the survey responses for bank and domestic workers, and pick cases of interest based on these criteria. A sample of potential interviewees was selected from the list with considerations for diversity in gender, age, location and position at work. The selected respondents were contacted and those who were unavailable or were otherwise unable to take part in the interview were replaced with other names off the initial list of cases of interest.

The in-depth interviews were carried out over a period of several months because of the challenge of finding available respondents and of scheduling convenient times for busy bank and domestic workers. The interviews were conducted by the four researchers. The interviews with workers of banks were conducted in English either at the respondent's place of work or residence. Interviews with domestics were done in Ghanaian languages, and in situations where the researchers did not speak the relevant language, interviews were conducted with the help of an interpreter. The following numbers of workers and employers were interviewed.

Table 2: Selection of bank workers for in-depth interviews

Bank workers		Accra	Kumasi	Tamale
	Agency	4	1	0
	Non-Agency	1	3	2

Interviews were also conducted with the HR managers of all six selected banks and with three union leaders (two of the banks did not have unions and the fourth union leader was unavailable during the time of the interviews). The interviews were conducted in the respondents' places of work.

The selection for domestic workers and their employers is as follows:

Table 3: Selection of domestic workers for in-depth interviews

Domestic workers	City		
	Accra	Kumasi	Tamale
	2	4	2

Table 4: Selection of employers of domestic workers for in-depth interviews

Employers	City		
	Accra	Kumasi	Tamale
	1	2	1

*c. Analysis*

The life history interviews were used to gain details about workers' situations, in order to explore the possible and less obvious factors and variables affecting their work circumstances and labour conditions over time. The interviews with workers and

employers of domestics were recorded and transcribed; in the case of interviews conducted in languages other than in English, was simultaneously translated. The interviews with bank human resource and union heads were not recorded because of the general concern that these individuals had about confidentiality and anonymity. Instead detailed field notes were taken. The transcripts and field-notes were coded thematically.

## **6. PROJECT OUTPUTS**

**The project produced several outputs from its activities. These include research reports, draft papers and powerpoints presented at dissemination engagements. The following are attached to the report as appendixes.**

- Summary report on research findings and policy recommendations -appendix 1
- Conference Brochure with policy recommendations- appendix 2

### **Another set of outputs involved capacity opportunities**

Members of the research team improved their knowledge about the conditions of domestics and bank workers. As well, team members refreshed and strengthened in methods including life history techniques and survey design and implementation. Also, researchers deepened their policy interests and improved their policy influencing competencies. In addition, members of the research team improved their knowledge about the use of employment agencies by banks and in the domestic sector. Finally, they gained more insight into the involvement of women in the banking sector.

A member of the research team, Nana Akua Anyidoho, received an IDRC scholarship to attend the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) from 7 June to 2 July 2010 in Ottawa, Canada. She participated in two weeks of foundational course work and two weeks of workshops. Although the IPDET course is designed primarily for evaluations of development programs, the knowledge and tools acquired was applied to improving the approach to our research study.

Professor Tsikata's membership of the **Labour Law and Development Research Network**(LLDRN), which is based at McGill University in Canada, was very helpful to the research project. The Network Convenor and labour law expert, Prof. Adelle Blackett, whose areas of specialisation include domestic work, was invited to review the questionnaire. Her comments were very helpful in revising the questionnaire. Through this link, Prof. Tsikata was commissioned by the ILO to do a report on domestic work and workers in Ghana, focusing on the legal and institutional regime. The report will be of assistance in framing some of the publications which are expected from this research.

Research assistants were trained in interviewing techniques and ethical issues and were able to practise what they learned during data collection. Two of the research assistants had written theses, one on work and the other on employment agencies, and were thus able to contribute insights from their studies to the training exercise, review of research instruments and to actual data collection. Researchers at the inception workshop and during the review of the questionnaire provided the research team with many insights into the work of domestic workers and the banking sector.

The project acquired several computers and a photocopier which have enhanced its activities.

Members of the research team have embarked on independent research that will draw on the knowledge acquired through this project. Akosua Darkwah is leading a team at CEGENSA to write a research proposal on a value chain analysis of the shea butter industry which seeks to assess the extent to which the commercialisation of shea has improved conditions of work for shea butter processors who are mostly women. We are hopeful that the IDRC would be interested in supporting this study.

Nana Akua Anyidoho is engaged in research on the extent to which the working conditions in the agricultural sector serve as a disincentive to the involvement of young people in

Ghana in agriculture. As well, she is engaged in a study of the work aspirations and expectations of young people.

### **Knowledge Dissemination**

Under the project, there were a few opportunities for knowledge dissemination. These were the inception workshop, workshops with particular stakeholders to discuss research findings, attendance at an international conference and the project closing workshop. Other occasions provided unplanned opportunities for dissemination. Each of these was considered welcome as they provided the space to discuss the implications of the research for policy. Dissemination activities are as follows:

1. Dzodzi Tsikata attended the Women's Worlds Conference in Ottawa and made a presentation on the findings of the study in an IDRC organised panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. Other speakers were Daniele Belanger from the University of Western Ontario, a member of the research team working on an IDRC-supported research project on the migration of Vietnamese women in Asia and Rhonda Douglas, based in Ottawa and working with [Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing \(WIEGO\)](#), a global network of activists, researchers and policymakers concerned with improving the status of women in the informal economy. The panel was very well patronized and well received.
2. The entire research team of four researchers participated in the 54<sup>th</sup> African Studies Association Annual Meeting in Washington DC between 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The team had proposed a panel to the Ghana Studies Association on the theme of work, titled, **"the Changing World of Work in Ghana: What Prospects for Decent Work in the next 50 years"?** The demand for participation had been so high that two sessions of the panel were composed. The team presented an overview of the study, and two papers in one panel, one on the banking sector and other on domestic work. Other presenters were Sara Berry, Johns Hopkins University, Michael Kpessah, University of Ghana, Gracia Clark, Indiana University

and Gabriel Klaeger of the Goethe University. The two sessions produced lively discussion on the findings of the IDRC study.

3. Dzodzi Tsikata was advisor to the Global Forum on Migration and Development and UN Women's regional workshop on the theme "Domestic Care Workers at the Interface of Migration & Development: Action to Expand Good Practice, Accra, Ghana 21 – 22 September 2011. Originally tapped to write the background paper for the workshop, she recommended Adelle Blackett, who was hired to write the paper.
4. The national dissemination workshop was attended by 150 persons from the research sites- respondents, policy makers, civil society activists and academics. The one-day event which was held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at Coconut Grove Regency saw the active participation of the Labour Commission, Ministry of Employment, the Trades Union Congress and several civil society organisations. Many of the policy recommendations from the study, which were included in the conference brochure were discussed at length and positively received.

## **PROJECT OUTCOMES**

There have been a number of positive outcomes from this project. These include the strengthening of scientific knowledge, the building of research relationships and networks, building of capacities of researchers and users, and building of capacity for policy influence.

In terms of scientific knowledge, the study made some critical findings which, with sustained dissemination, can influence policy. The space here allows only a few of these findings to be mentioned; more details are available in the summary of research findings.

In relation to the banks:

1. The liberalisation of the financial sector opened the door for private banks to operate in the country. By 2008, 25 banks had entered the market, mainly from Nigeria and South Africa. The intense competition among banks for clients has transformed Ghana's banking sector. The study found that conditions of work and job security have been severely affected by the changes in the labour market resulting from the economic liberalisation. In an attempt to reduce costs, banks are increasingly acquiring workers through employment agencies. One out of every four workers interviewed in the study is an agency worker, and therefore have no direct agreement with the bank for which they worked.
2. There is mounting pressure on workers to increase performance and play new roles. Opening hours have been extended, including weekends, and now two thirds of bank workers work weekends. These conditions of work are particularly difficult for women workers, who bear the larger burden for home and family care responsibilities.

In relation to domestic workers:

3. Domestic work has received little attention in the labour laws of Ghana, although this line of work provides the livelihood for a sizeable proportion of informal sector workers. In practice, the Labour Act is generally not applied to informal workers such as domestic employees. This leaves domestic workers — more than 90% of whom are women — without the protection of labour regulations; and most face poor conditions of work, including being paid below the minimum wage if paid at all and denied benefits such as sick and annual leave. Underage children who are denied schooling are often used as domestic workers.
4. Although domestic workers are sometimes procured from employment agencies, 80% of respondents in the study found work through informal arrangements like

family and friends. Conditions of work are at the discretion of individual employers who may add new tasks, extend work hours or even stop paying the employee. One fourth of those interviewed received no cash payments, and many were paid below the minimum wage. About 70% start working under age 18. Such conditions fall short of ILO standards of decent work and calls for specific provisions in Ghana's Labour Act to protect domestic workers and serve as a guide for employers and employment agencies. Employment Agencies as currently structured, far from helping to formalise employment relations in domestic work, are institutionalising informality.

Another positive outcome was the engagement of researchers with domestic workers and their employers as well as employment agencies, bank workers and their employers through in depth interviews. This has resulted in increased awareness of stake holders of some of the issues of changing conditions of work and informalisation raised in the interviews. For instance, discussing the conditions of domestic workers set in motion a process in which employers began to reflect on the conditions of domestic workers. It is interesting that many employers confirmed that many domestic workers suffered abuses at the hands of employers, but sought to distance themselves from some of the more obvious forms of maltreatment of domestic workers. Again, many employers were amenable to a stronger regulation regime for domestic work. We believe that through these discussions, one has raised awareness about the need to improve conditions of both domestic and bank workers. Hopefully, it will influence the way employers treat informal workers in the future even before any legislation has been passed. Also given the support by many employers for the regulation of domestic work, it is hoped that this finding from the study can convince policy makers of the need for such regulation, and also imply that, if it should come to pass, people might be more amenable to respecting the regulations.

In relation to employment agencies, our discussions provided them with the opportunity to think about some of the challenges of their trade and their relationships with banks and domestic workers. We hope that this growing awareness means that the effects of any future regulation will be widely accepted and beneficial.

The capacity of the team for policy influence has been greatly enhanced. Team members have spoken to and been reported in the media about the study and its findings. The innovation of drawing up a communication strategy proved very helpful in re-energising the researchers and also enabled a more systematic and thorough planning of policy influencing. While the research itself provided the budget of only limited policy engagement, the team plans to continue knowledge dissemination and policy advocacy beyond the life of the project

That representatives of the Labour Commission and the Ministry of Employment officer overseeing the planned reform of domestic work attended the dissemination meeting and participated actively- providing additional information, confirming some of the findings and learning new issues. Hopefully, some of the civil society groups who participated in the project from its inception phase will take up future advocacy on this matter.

The main limitation to our policy influencing activities was budgetary. We made efforts to stretch those resources through careful planning with the aid of communication consultants. Hopefully the policy briefs, press statements and fact sheets, when finalised would strengthen significantly the potential for policy change in the world of work.

#### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The research project was money well spent. In addition to its numerous outputs, there are planned publications -- technical publications, journal articles and a monograph. In addition, the team is committed to continuing research and advocacy on the conditions of women's work.

Various partnerships and networks in Ghana and elsewhere contributed to the success of the project. The lead researcher's participation in the LLDRN and the Labour Observatory based at McGill University in Montreal provided numerous learning and networking

opportunities. LLDRN meetings in Montreal provided the occasion to discuss some of the preliminary findings of the study with a remarkable group of labour lawyers from the UK, the Caribbean, the USA and Canada. Some of the insights from those discussions were very valuable to the project. Through this network, Dzodzi Tsikata has published articles on domestic work and informal work in Ghana (work which preceded this research project), and has participated in two important initiatives -- a meeting in Onati, Spain on informal work at which she presented a paper on domestic work and another in Montreal on the theme of dignity at which she and Prof. Adelle Blackett contributed a chapter on precarious work. These linkages with Canadian scholars such as Adelle Blackett are set to continue. Blackett and Tsikata are about to embark on a research project on assessing innovations in the regulation of domestic work. This study is funded by the IDRC.

The research also provided the opportunity for strengthening local networking with the Trade Unions and civil society organisations such as LAWA Ghana who have done pioneering work on domestic work. Without these networks, the study would have been possible but would not have been so enriched and would certainly not have had the continuities it is enjoying. Unfortunately, networks of similar strength and value around the banking industry have not been easy to identify and join.

The project matured at a very opportune time in employment policy making in Ghana. There is a renewed interest in generating employment and improving the conditions of work. Even more relevant, the government has recently signed on to the new ILO Convention on decent work for domestic workers and has established a task force to oversee the development of policy on domestic workers. The task force has plans to hire a group of consultants to lead the process of policy making. There are two teams being considered for this task; one team is from CEGENSA, with two of the research team participating in trying to secure the contract. If this does not happen, we will share our findings on domestic work with the team which wins the contract.

Thus while it cannot yet be said that the project has contributed substantially to development, it has built capacities of policy makers, researchers and activists to enable them tackle diligently some of the key policy recommendations.

The time frame for the project was not adequate for full completion of the study. The team had originally asked for four years and been advised to do this in three in order to keep the interest in the project alive and ensure its completion. This contributed to slippages in the time table, although most of the project's planned outputs have been successfully implemented. As the years have passed, the research team's interest has grown rather than waned and this suggests that the research remains highly relevant to policy making. For future research projects, it would be useful to consider four year programmes.

The main lesson learned was the validation of the broad approach to the study and to stakeholders and their involvement from the inception workshop to the closing workshop. Their interest in the project was sustained by dissemination activities. In future, the project budget needs to make more serious provision for dissemination activities in order to strengthen the project's ability to influence policy.

The project still has a lot of life left in it and it is hoped that the remaining funds will be released to enable the team to implement its communication strategy more fully than it has been possible to do as at now. It has been a most rewarding experience to present up to date scientific information about evidenced based policy recommendations.