

**TUC (GHANA)/WIEGO INFORMAL ECONOMY LEGAL PROJECT  
REPORT FROM SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS  
HELD ON FRIDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT YWCA CONFERENCE CENTRE, ACCRA**

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## **1. Background**

The Ghana TUC/WIEGO Informal Sector Project seeks to identify and address laws impacting on the work of informal sector workers. It focuses on street vendors, kayayei and domestic workers. The first phase of the project began in 2011 with research and consultation with the workers. The research identified legal provisions and practices which impact negatively on the working conditions of the workers. Phases two and three focused on policy advocacy to elicit stakeholders' responsiveness in addressing challenges faced by the workers. A stakeholder conference was held in 2012 to share findings of the research and engage policymakers and law enforcers on issues that emanated from the research. The project has also used evidence from consultation and research to engage targeted institutions such as the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and Magistrates in the Magistrate Court, Community Centre in Accra; to influence existing laws and structures in favour of the selected informal sector workers.

The fourth phase of the project aimed at building the capacity of the leadership of the workers' association (who are predominantly women). This is a report from a sensitization workshop held for domestic workers on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014 in Accra, Ghana.

## **2. Participants at the Workshop**

The workshop was attended by 30 participants made up of 26 domestic workers, two (2) employers of domestic workers (a recruitment agent and a private employer) and two (2) staff members from TUC. Eighty-four per cent (84%) of the participants were women.

## **3. Methodology and Key Issues**

Speeches, presentations and discussions were employed during the meeting. The workshop was divided into 5 sessions as follows:

*Session 1:* This was an introductory session which afforded participants the opportunity to get to know each other. Participants introduced themselves and mentioned their

occupation. It was followed by a welcome address from Togbe Adom Drayi II, the head of the Organisation Department of TUC.

*Session 2:* Ms. Clara Osei-Boateng gave a presentation on the project background and the purpose of the workshop. The core of Ms. Osei-Boateng's presentation followed, highlighting issues of domestic workers' rights and responsibilities and how they can mobilize to engage policymakers on issues affecting them. The presentation highlighted key provisions in the Act protecting every worker in Ghana. However, it brought to the attention of participants provisions which leave room for the violation of their rights. For instance, Section 44 exempts task workers and domestic workers in private homes from provisions of sections 33 and 34. Section 33 and 34 of Ghana's labour law, Act 651(2003) provide standard working hours of forty (40) per week. This translates into eight (8) hours of work per day. Any extra hours worked must be paid for as overtime. It provides thirty minute breaks for every worker in between continuous work; a daily rest of not less than 12 hours and a rest period of 48 consecutive hours every seven days.

The presentation also drew participants' attention to the responsibilities of workers as stipulated in the Act. The participants were made aware that domestic workers, like any other workers, are required to give notice of termination of employment, keep their working environment clean and respect other contractual agreements, among others.

The third part of the presentation focused on how the workers can mobilize and engage their employers or policymakers to influence decisions that affect them. The importance of trade unionism/association was highlighted, noting that the collective voice is stronger. The participants were also introduced to lobbying and advocacy strategies for engagement.

*Session 3:* The second session involved a presentation from the Desk Officer for Domestic Workers at TUC, Ms. Cynthia Amanoo. The presentation gave impetus to the first presentation, highlighting provisions in the Domestic Workers' Convention (2011). Participants were given copies of an abridged version of the Convention and were advised to make the copies available to their employers. Both employers present at the workshop showed keen interest in the document. The recruitment agent requested additional copies to be supplied to the agency for distribution to employers who seek their services.

*Session 4:* The third session engaged participants in discussion to generate themes and messages for the campaign. The discussion noted messages as follows:

- *Pay us well*
- *Equal pay for domestic workers*
- *We want mutual respect*
- *Give us rest periods*
- *Better accommodation*
- *Don't insult us*
- *Stop physical abuse*
- *Feed us well*
- *Treat us when we are ill*
- *Provide medical care*
- *We need motivation like any other worker*

These messages would be used to develop the posters, flyers and T-shirts for the campaign.

*Session 5:* The last session focused on evaluating the workshop. Participants were asked to give feedback on the workshop. Generally, participants mentioned the workshop raised awareness of their rights and enlightened them on how to engage employers and policymakers. Some statements captured from participants were as follows:

*"The workshop has been an eye opener"*

*"We have learnt a lot today; I didn't even know we are entitled to social security"*

*"I am very happy for partaking in this, I have learnt a lot today"*

*"I didn't know recruitment agents are not supposed to take half of our first salary as payment of their services"*

#### **4. Conclusion and Way Forward**

A closing remark was given by Togbe Adom Drayi, noting the importance of collective voice. He mentioned the TUC's readiness to provide support to the association. The two employers were also grateful for the extension of programme invitation to them and committed to work with the TUC for the protection of the workers' rights. The private employer mentioned plans to

register a recruitment agency that would make training and protection of the rights of domestic workers key.

Workers showed enthusiasm for joining the upcoming campaign which would, among other things, advocate for the protection of the rights of domestic workers. The campaign is scheduled to take place in the last week of September.

**Appendix : PICTURES**