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**"Transforming Lives: Unraveling Stakeholders' Dynamics and Coordination
Strategies in Intervention Programs for the Empowerment of Kayayei in Ghana"**

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper delves into the complexities of the coordination of intervention for Kayayei, a marginalized group of women and girls hailing predominantly from Northern Ghana. Kayayei migrate to urban cities to often seek economic opportunities but face numerous challenges, including exploitation, discrimination, and limited access to basic services. This paper uses a multifaceted approach, incorporating agency and empowerment, intersectionality, hegemonic masculinity, and the concept of modern-day slavery to expound on the contextual complexities of their experiences.

The research centers on an exploration of the roles and interactions of diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, international development partners, community leaders and the Kayayei themselves. It aims to identify underlying factors, systemic barriers, and institutional challenges that hinder effective coordination of intervention programs for the Kayayei. The paper underscores the significance of holistic, short-term and long-term strategies for sustainable change, recognizing that the transformation of the Kayayei's lives extends beyond economic empowerment to encompass issues of gender justice, cultural schemas, institutional leadership, stereotypes, modern day slavery, and systems coordination.

Findings revealed that the absence of government-led coordination, communication barriers, inter-ethnic conflicts, influence of gatekeepers, lack of an updated and efficient database on the Kayayei and a dearth of data-sharing mechanisms impede effective stakeholder collaborations. The influence of hegemonic masculinity and stereotypes reinforces gender disparities, contributing to the vulnerabilities of the Kayayei. Furthermore, the research identifies links to modern-day slavery, specifically in cases of forced labor and human trafficking, underscoring the urgency of comprehensive intervention programs and policy reforms for their protection.

It concludes with a set of pragmatic recommendations, advocating for the continuous momentum in intervention programs, cultural sensitivity, tailored approaches, and a collective effort in combating the various barriers encountered by the Kayayei. It emphasizes the need for concerted action in addressing the complex issues these women and girls face, underscoring that their empowerment hinges on the transformative coordination of all stakeholders.

RELEVANCE TO DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The research explores the challenges faced by the Kayayei. It investigates the dynamics of stakeholder collaboration, coordination and partnership SDG 17, touching on issues of gender inequality, vulnerability, and intersectionality. It also addresses the relevance of human rights, social justice, and the potential for policy reforms.

The study directly contributes to the goal of addressing gender inequalities and promoting gender justice in the SDGs 1, 3, 5 and 8. It focuses on a vulnerable population, the Kayayei, who come from marginalized backgrounds. By examining stakeholder collaboration and coordination, the research offers insights into effective development strategies. It also incorporates the concept of intersectionality, agency, reflecting contemporary perspectives in Development Studies. Moreover, it delves into issues related to modern-day slavery, human trafficking, and exploitative labor conditions, which are fundamental concerns in the field.

This paper contributes significantly to Development Studies by highlighting the challenges faced by the Kayayei and provides recommendations for policy and program reforms aligning with the core objectives of the field including gender equality, the welfare of vulnerable populations, effective partnerships, and social justice perspectives.

KEYWORDS:

Kayayei, Coordination, Interventions, Social protection policies, Internal migration, Multistakeholders' effort, Gender justice, Empowerment, Livelihood skills, Collective action.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
PAYDP	Purim Africa Youth Development Program
CSOs	Civil society Organizations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
IDPs	International Development Partners
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NYEP	National Youth Employment Program
OSC	Orange Support Center

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

1.0 Urban canvas of dreams and struggle: a glimpse into the Kayayei narratives

According to Ratha et al., (2016), most migrants from developing countries have historically used migration as a means to generate livelihood and sustenance. This is true for the women and girls migrating from northern Ghana to work as Kayayei (Kyei-Gyamfi, et al., 2021). This is accounted due to the social and economic disparities in the destination and original locations (Ratha, et al., 2016). Rural-urban migration in Ghana is common because of developmental policies pre-dating the colonial and post-colonial era (Abdul-Korah, 2011; Mabogunje, 1990; Pickbourn, 2011). (Nabila, 1975; Kwankye et al 2007; Songsore, 2009; Van der Geest, 2011), stated that government policies during that period were focused on industrialization of southern cities like Accra, Takoradi and Kumasi and they imported labor from the rural communities to work on cash crops, the mines, etc.

They also made significant investments in the development of the south of the country, neglecting the north because the south was considered to be more economically viable for cash crops such as cocoa, rubber, timber, etc. The north also experienced periods of conflict and instability. This influenced allocation of resources and infrastructure investment for development which has contributed to the growing disparities between the two regions (Nabila, 1975; Kwankye et al., 2007; Songsore, 2009; Van der Geest, 2011). Kyei-Gyamfi et al., (2021, p.109) attribute internal migration to the inequalities which were indirectly created which coerced households to move for better social services, decent livelihoods, infrastructure, among others. The pattern was described by (IOM, 2014; GSS, 2014) as a trend for the differing urban-rural poverty in Ghana.

Again, the landscapes between the south and north varies mainly because of their geographical locations. According to the profile of Northern Ghana by the Ghana Health Service (2023), the region is much drier than the South due to its closeness to the Sahel and Sahara and it is one of the regions with shortest period of rainfalls.

These environmental conditions shape different aspect of the lives of the kayayei including economic activities, agriculture and migration patterns. Moreover, their location also hinders their income as they are far from the major transportations such as the ports, railways, bigger markets, industrial cities, and fertile farms lands which stimulates economic activities. This leads to a high cost of transportation of crops to the south.

The unfavorable climate conditions, lack of opportunities , family support and unfavorable practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) practices has compelled a lot of people to independently or forcefully migrate for greener pastures, a large proportion being

women and girls from the recently created 4 Northern regions (Upper West, Upper East, North-East and Savannah Regions) reported by the MoGCSP (2014) who migrate to the southern cities to engage in informal ventures such as head potters popularly known as Kayayei or petty traders in the major local markets (Kwankye. et al., 2007: MoGCSP, 2014).

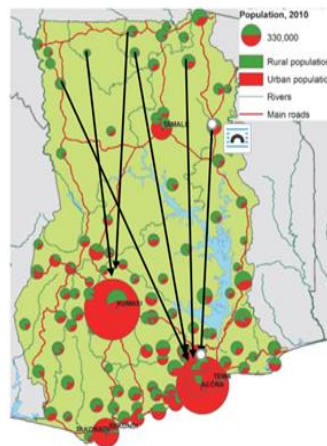
The name kayayei according to (Awumbila and Schandorf, 2008:171) is derived from two languages which are Hausa and Ga, largely spoken in the major markets. ‘*Kaya*’ means load or g in Hausa while ‘*Yoo*’ means woman singularly in the Ga language and the plural is ‘*Yei*’. The combination of the two words ‘*kayayei*’ or ‘*kayayoo*’ means women/girls who carry peoples’ loads usually at a fee. Due to the prevalence rate of these women and girls in the cities of southern Ghana, the terms ‘*kayayoo*’ and or ‘*kayayei*’ have become a household name in the Ghanaian commercial vocabulary (Opare, 2003). They are sometimes alternatively referred to as “*Paa-oo-paa*” (meaning cheap labour in the Akan language) which is popularly known to be used for the girls from different parts of the regions or male workers especially Akans'. This has created a common trend for young girls to migrate from economically deprived communities to the commercial city centers where they mostly have some sort of social networks (Adul-Korah, 2011). These girls have some sort of formal education or no education and mostly work in the informal sector as unskilled laborers with low economic benefits and are also usually from agricultural communities (Kyei-Gyamfi, 2021, p.110). Not all ‘Kayayei’ are from the Northern regions (Opare, 2003) as a small proportion are from other parts of the country Kwankye et al (2009). They are not a homogenous group but organized based on different tribes, language and region. Boateng, (2018, p.1) states that “*Migration is seen by the female porters as a means to gain autonomy in their lives, a means of livelihood diversification*”. Huijsmans (2012), also states that they move in search of jobs to support their families and improve their living.

Internal migration constitutes around 90 percent of migration in Ghana according to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2014), and approximately half of the internal migrants are women as reported by per statistics from the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS 5, 2008) and reports from the 2010 population and housing census making this a gendered problem (Ghana Statistical Services, 2013).

Map 1. Map of Ghana



Source: <https://www.ghanamissionun.org/map-regions-in-ghana/>



Map 2. Map of Ghana showing the north-south migration flows

(Source: africanlegalstudies.blog 2022)

1.1 Nature of the problem

Kayayei are predominantly young girls and women who migrate from the northern part of Ghana and other rural areas who come into the urban centers to engage in informal employment and street trading by carrying loads for their customers in the major markets or do petty trading (Kyei Gyamfi, 2021). They play an important role in Ghana's informal economy and contribute a significant portion to the country's GDP. However, their problems are complex and multifaceted. They face various forms of discrimination, exploitation, limited access to social protection, and all forms of abuse and violence. Children, women and girls who migrate to engage in this sector keep increasing each year (Opare, 2003, Kyei-Gyamfi, 2020, MoGCSP, 2014) and they are younger compared to the earliest wave of migrants who were mostly adolescents (Kyei Gyamfi, 2021 in Kwankye, 2009). Studies have shown that the internal migration of young women will exponentially increase so far as the root causes are unattended to. (IOM, 2014). The

total number of these kayayei workers is not exactly known although the phenomenon is on the rise (FORWARD, ACDEP and PAYDP, 2018). This has been attributed to the mobile nature of the kayayei (MoGCSP, 2014). There is therefore an inconsistency in the projections for the number of people involved for interventions. Despite the rise in this pattern of migration, it has not received any policy framework recognition on its own for the phenomenon as other forms of migration (Adepoju, 2011).

Nevertheless, efforts made by the government and non-governmental organizations to curb the issue has not proven futile and continues to be on a rise. According to a report by Kyei-Gyamfi et al., (2021, pp.112-113), MoGCSP with support from UNICEF in 2002 made an attempt to address the phenomenon by introducing '*operation end child kayayei*' and also records from MoGCSP, (2014) with intentions of improving documentation of the kayayei through registration to easily identify, monitor and provide them with assistance. This includes skills in dressmaking, bead-making, hairdressing, Batik tie & dye making, school re-enrolment, etc.

However, these two interventions failed to achieve their intended purposes of empowering the girls to generate incomes for themselves and create ventures in their communities to remain there. Follow up research showed that the girls returned to the cities because of lack of opportunities to utilize their skills in their localities, pressure from family members etc. There is also an increase of organizations and individuals trying to provide assistance without any checks and laid down procedures making them intrusive, fragmented and duplicating efforts which yields little results. The absence of a cohesive and coordinated effort to support the kayayei has resulted in fragmented efforts and insufficient impact in improving their lives to promote gender justice. This prevents a comprehensive understanding to the needs of the kayayei which in turn limits the development of sustainable and tailored solutions. This research aims to identify the challenges and gaps in coordination of efforts by stakeholders, and propose recommendations for a more coordinated approach.

1.2 Justification and relevance of this research

While there is recognition of the plights of kayayei in Ghana because various initiatives have been developed by CSOs, government and development partners to address them, there is also a significant gap in efficient coordination efforts which are fragmented (Kyei Gyamfi, 2021). Therefore, there is the need to understand the underlying factors and systematic barriers which hinders successful implementations for livelihood empowerments.

This research aims to delve into the coordination challenges and dynamics of stakeholders involved in intervention programs for the kayayei as to enhance effectiveness and impact. It will also focus on understanding the various perspectives, needs and experiences of the

stakeholders involved including the government, IDPS, CSOs, NGOs, community-based, organizations and the Kayayei themselves. The research findings hopes to fill the gap and to find constructive perspectives to promote and expedite solutions for the myriad of kayayei problems through accelerated efforts and a synergy of stakeholders' comparative advantages.

1.3 Research Objectives

- ❖ To identify and examine the underlying factors, systematic barriers, institutional and policy-related challenges which impedes the effective coordination and implementation of intervention programs for kayayei.
- ❖ To understand the experiences, perspectives, motivations and needs of the stakeholders involved including government agencies, CSOs, IDPs, community leaders and the Kayayei.
- ❖ To explore the impact of the intervention programs from the Kayayei beneficiaries perspectives, assessing their perception on the livelihood empowerment assistance programs and their leadership.

1.4 Research Questions

Main question

What are the underlying factors and systemic barriers which hinder the successful coordination of intervention programs for Kayayei?

Sub-questions

- ✓ How can interagency collaborations and coordination mechanisms be strengthened to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges faced by Kayayei?
- ✓ How do the kayayei organize and mobilize to support themselves?
- ✓ What strategies are being used to strengthen the leadership and organizational capacity of the Kayayei to enable them advocate for their rights and access to services?
- ✓ How can coordination barriers be effectively addressed to improve outcomes?

1.5 Research Methodology

Primary data for the kayayei was collected by a research assistant on the field because there was poor internet connectivity and/or lack of electronic devices by the Kayayei to engage virtually. I occasionally joined virtually through the assistant's connection. I also collected data from the selected organizations virtually. This research also used desk reviews of secondary data and a

mixture of qualitative methods including semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and life history to collect data. Official government documents and stakeholders' reports were reviewed. The research focused on and compared two major projects by organizations who have executed some intervention implementation programs for the kayayei thus the Livelihood Empowerment Skills project by a Civil Society Organization known as Purim Africa Youth Development Platform (PAYDP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) and IDPs and the Kayayei Assistance Project (KASPRO) by UNFPA Ghana as a response during the COVID-19 lockdown. These projects were selected because of their nature of short and long term emergences and to understand the dynamics of planning implementation and how experiences affect coordination prior and post COVID-19 lockdowns. Whiles PAYDP had been working long before the lockdown, KASPRO emerged during COVID-19 response.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for the facilitators of PAYDP, MoGCSP social welfare department, department of gender, department of policy and planning and with project coordinator for the KASPRO project and a program analyst from a development partner. The methods for data collection were conducted in a mixture of the local (Twi) and English language for the kayayei. This was because most of them expressed themselves better in the local language and English was preferred to those who had some sort of Higher education.

The analysis of data was based on themes from the data findings in relation to the objectives and research questions. The instruments for the data collection were question guides for the interviews, a jotter, a voice recorder, google meet, whatsapp, phone calls and a journal. Interviews recorded was transcribed manually.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling and snowball techniques were used to get targeted participants. Kayayei participants referred some other beneficiaries for the interviews. The kayayei were sourced from three major markets in Accra namely the Agbogbloshe, Tema station and Madina markets. They were mainly beneficiaries of intervention programs by PAYDP and UNFPA. 3 Stakeholders: - PAYDP, UNFPA and MoGCSP were interviewed. In total, 21 participants participated in this research with 6 people from the 3 selected organizations including a government ministry, a CSO, and an International Development Partner Agency. A total of 15 Kayayei beneficiaries also participated in this research.

Life History

This approach was used to gain valuable insights and in-depth understanding of the individual kayayei experiences and unravel the dynamic narratives of the participants as well as socio-cultural contexts shaping their roles as 'kayayei'. This methods allowed participants to shed more details on the lives focusing on important events transitions and decision-making processes which shaped their experiences and work as kayayei. A diverse group of 15 girls who have benefitted from intervention programs were selected to ensure representation across 3 different major markets. An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to delve into their upbringing, work experiences, coping strategies, reasons for becoming a kayayo, challenges encountered, aspirations and future goals. To establish trust and rapport with them, a game was introduced by the research assistant to create a safe space in order for them to be comfortable in sharing their authentic stories. This approach empowered the kayayei to exercise their agency in one local language (Twi) by giving them space to reflect on their lives which led to an inclusive and participatory research.

In-depth interview

This method was used to gather insights from stakeholders who are involved in the intervention programs for the empowerment of kayayei. This was to help understand the perspectives and challenges faced by the stakeholder in their coordinating efforts towards the improvement of the quality of life of the kayayei. The interview allowed for the exploration of their roles, strategies and interactions in understanding the dynamics at play in the context of these interventions.

Focus group discussion.

FGD emerged later in the process of collecting the data with semi-structured interview guide because most of the Kayayei shared similar experiences therefore this method was adapted to save as they were time constrained and they needed to go back to work.. The research assistant therefore decided to adopt this method for a group discussion because of their similar demography.



Figure 1. Image of some Kayayei participants during field work.

Source: Sallah, a Kayayei Interviewee participant

1.6 Ethical considerations

Bryman (2004) asserts that ethical considerations discusses values of how participants are treated during the research process. Ethical considerations for this research included informed consent by participants, permission to record and review data, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity for research purpose, respect for cultural differences and time and emotional support for the participants. Participants were compensated with incentives and food and location accessibility consideration for participants. They were allowed to choose their own times for meeting and propose locations.

1.7 Positionality

My positionality as a researcher is shaped by my previous experiences working along with vulnerable and marginalized groups who are internally displaced in Ghana and with stakeholders providing interventions for Kayayei. Working with them in various capacities has enriched my understanding of the complexities of the work of the Kayayei and the problems they faced in the sector gaining a valuable insight into their daily struggles likewise my research assistant who is a youth leaders working with them on SRHR services and information. The previous relationship created trust and a safe space to share their stories. However, this research recognizes this and centers solely on data collected from the perspectives of the stakeholders without any interference. Therefore analyzing findings holistically from an objective point of view.

1.8 Limitations

There were factors that impacted the scope of the research. This included time constraints as most of the participants could not make it on time or scheduled dates because of their work. The research assistant had to join them on their daily morning routines to obtain the data. Shy participants were paired to feel more comfortable which resulted in a better expression of their views. Issues of language barrier was solved using some of the Kayayei as translators alongside side usage of the local languages. Therefore transcription was done manually to avoid missing information. There were issues with internet connectivity, hence the need for a research assistant for data collection of data. Incentives were provided to the Kayayei and research assistant to compensate for the time and mobilization. This was compensated with the SJP Zaaier grant. Some missed interviews because of location accessibility, therefore they were allowed to choose a convenient location and time themselves. Pseudonyms names were given to participants who did not want to reveal their identities. The bureaucratic nature and nonchalant attitudes of public servants was also a big hurdle as there were no-clear cut department responsible to conduct the interviews.

1.9 Chapter Outline

This research is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research paper and provides an overview of the study. It describes the methodology and sampling techniques used including the research design. Ethical considerations, positionality and limitations are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter 2 discusses the conceptual frameworks for the research. The third chapter reviews contextual literature on the phenomenon. It examines the current situation of the Kayayei and the different interventions that have been made to improve their working conditions and address issues of exploitation and gender injustice. Findings, implications and analysis are discussed in chapter four and five using thematic tools. The final chapter six, discusses the conclusion recommendations and next steps. It highlights the implications of the research findings for policy and practice.

CHAPTER 2

UNLOCKING POTENTIALS: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

2.0 Introduction

The empowerment of minority, vulnerable and marginalized groups to improve their standard of living has emerged as a critical and pressing issue in contemporary societies as they strive to pursue social justice and gender equality. The kayayei phenomenon in Ghana poses as a complex challenge which necessitates multifaceted remedies. To navigate the complex environment and devise effective strategies and solutions, this study employs different conceptual frameworks which amalgamate different principles. These frameworks offer a comprehensive lens through which interaction of relationships, influences and institutional dynamics of stakeholders can be examined to shed light on the phenomenon to empower the kayayei community.

2.1 Embodied worries

Grounded in empowerment and feminist theories, the phenomenon emphasizes the dynamic interaction between individual agency, structural limitations and the empowerment processes. This framework provides a lens through which the goals, and experiences to the empowerment of kayayei are conducted and explored. It also considers factors including access to legal rights, education, income-generating opportunities and social support (Kabeer, 2001). This framework will investigate the outcomes of empowerment to affect social change.

Agency as the locus of empowerment

According to Kabeer (2001), agency reflects the capacity of individuals to take action, and make choices which influences their circumstances. It serves as the foundation to empower the kayayei assert their rights, voice their opinions and to engage in transformative actions which they are capable of (Sen, 1999). Through this agency, they can navigate the challenging circumstances and actively participate in processes which shapes their lives.

However, due to the complex web of structural constraints and power dynamics which agency operates on (Fraser, 1998), the kayayei face systematic barriers from social norms, economic disparities and discriminatory practices (Awumbila & Schandorf, 2008). The relationship between structural constraints and agency is important in understanding how the actions of the kayayei are influenced by broader societal forces. Also, recognizing power dynamics is important in identifying who holds the decision-making power in empowerment processes (Kabeer, 2001). Empowerment is not solely an individual pursuit but involves a collective action which challenges systematic inequalities.

2.2 Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognizes that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination or privilege simultaneously due to their intersecting identities. Crenshaw, (1991, p.1244) stipulated that, race and gender interact to shape different dimensions of black women employment experiences. According to her, people hold multiple social identities which intersects and interacts to influence their opportunities, experiences and access to resources. These resources form privileges or oppressions based on the combination of identities. The kayayei phenomenon presents a multifaceted challenge rooted in the intersection of various social categories, including identities such as gender, socioeconomic status, class, education, gender, ethnicity, language, rural-urban distinctions, and power dynamics.

According to Appiah, (2018, pp.10-11), identities are used as symbolic hierarchies of status to show respect or power. Based on this, people decide how they want to treat you depending on whether you are in a dominant or subordinate group. It gives people reasons to do things to you and justify it. He also posits that ethnic or racial groups who regard their members' superior to others assume the right to be treated better than others. This framework will guide the analysis of the kayayei's experiences and vulnerabilities through an intersectional lens, highlighting how these intersecting factors shape their lives. The key components of intersectionality affecting the kayayei include gender as the central axis in their lives. Hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2014, p.8) which idealizes and reinforces the dominant masculinities in a society by describing social norms and expectations associated with being a man characterized with attributes such as strength, power, dominance, emotional restraint and financial success. It involves the subordination of other forms of weaker masculinities and the marginalization of femininity. In Ghana, there are sixteen regions (16) with different tribes. Each region and tribe have different variations on how masculinity is expressed and reinforced. Kinship in Ghana is based on unilineal descent groups where membership is transmitted through an ancestor of one gender (Ferrara & Milazzo, 2017, p. 170). They form the basis for social organizations in many developing countries. Patrilineal societies pass kin membership through the father and the reverse is true for matrilineal kinship. In Ghana, the Akans practice matrilineal system and the relationship between the child and father is somewhat weaker (Ferrara & Milazzo, 2017, p. 170) unlike in patrilineal societies. Both systems transmit properties differently. The right to inheritance is gender-linked as male-to-male and female-to-female. Properties in the father's system is given to his sons while the man's children do not belong to his kin group in the matrilineal system and not entitled to properties. Properties especially land of a man without male heir are preferably transferred to the other male members of the man's family such as the man's brother, the son of his sister, etc. there is therefore a high son preference and the men

have greater decision making powers. These social reproductions of stereotypes, gender roles and hegemonic masculinity practices in the North affects decisions and outcomes of the kayayei who are patrilineal kinsmen. According to Barry (2015, p.27), belief systems in a society are created by those in power particularly by the elderly who run dominant institutions in the society and women are often put in subordinate positions.

In addition, Nukunya (2003) posits that ethnic groups provoke emotions for nation building and modernization. There are five major ethnic groups in Ghana namely the Akan, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Guan and Mole-Dagbon. These groups have many other sub-groups (Ayaaba, Bekoe, Odumah, Ofosu-Kusi & Quashigah, 2008). Ethnic stereotyping in Ghana has become persistent and pervasive (Odumah and Golo, 2016, p.47) and the lack of a peaceful existence prevents the harnessing of resources for development. (Blege, 2001) affirms that ethnic stereotypes are common in Ghana. These characteristics are often not objective although some attributes may contain some truth which can be debatable (Lee, Jussim, McCauley, 1995). These can lead to discriminatory attitudes and human rights violations. Kukubour (2006), listed some common ethnic stereotypes attributes in Ghana which includes, Northerners as watchmen (security), aggressive, maids, hardworking, Fantes as comedians, Ewes of which I belong, as black magic practitioners, Kwahus' as money ritualists, Asantes as proud and short, etc. They therefore get disrespected and treated poorly based on their class and social status, language and ethnicity. These shapes attitudes and social behaviors (Blege, 2001) and depending on how we stereotype people, it is likely to create suspicion, hatred, disrespect, contempt, and anger. These behaviors once formed are resistant to change (Odumah and Golo, 2016, p.48)

Durante and Fiske, (2017), state that social interactions are shaped by social class and it can be seen in many ways including clothes, manners, dialect, accents, etc. and people read these signals to hang behaviors and response. The Kayayei's socioeconomic status is characterized by poverty and informality, low income, lack of job security, and challenging living conditions. Their socioeconomic status intersects with gender, as these women often occupy the lowest economic status. Again, due to the Kayayei diverse ethnic backgrounds across Ghana, their ethnicity can influence their experiences in urban centers, affecting social networks, cultural practices, and how they are perceived within broader society in the south. Power dynamics within the Kayayei community and in their interactions with traders, market authorities, and other stakeholders play a pivotal role. These dynamics influence their agency, decision-making, and overall well-being. According to Awaworyi Churchill. (2017), ethnic diversity in labor force perpetuates discrimination and financial loss. According to him, inherent hierarchical structures which have been conserved within society norms overtime, which projects one ethnic group superior over others induces categorization of ethnic minority and majority. This causes labor

market disadvantages leaving minorities discriminated against, lacking opportunities which affects wages and productivity. Becker (1957), argues that discrimination lowers profits and influences employment choices. These inequalities endangers anger, frustration and antisocial behaviors which can result in crime and conflict and this creates an uncondusive and disincentive environment for business and growth (Awaworyi Churchill & Laryea, 2019).

1.3 Modern-Day slavery

Modern-day slavery also known as human trafficking or contemporary slavery encompasses a wide range of exploitative practices where individuals are coerced into working under conditions akin to slavery. They are forced into labor, human trafficking, sexual abuse, debt bondage, child labor (Bale, 2012) etc. it involves systematic deprivation of one's freedom where they are deceived or coerced into servitude through physical or psychological means. (Bales, 2012, p.3), argues that slavery continues to exist in the world which is increasing and not consigned to the past. Slaves work to build and suffer. He argues that people get rich using slaves. The new slavery focuses on profits and cheap lives and using people as disposal tools for making money and dumping them. He asserts that modern day slavery is about controlling and held under threats of violence to maintain it and not the traditional sense of owning (p.4).

According to him, slavery as a term continues to be used as a metaphor to mean all sort of things including low wages, debt bondage and child labor. Slaveholders have the benefits of ownership without responsibilities. They control slaves for economic exploitation. The slaves are used for non-technological and traditional work aimed at local sales and consumptions but reaches far (Bale, p.10). Modern day slave holders use the reality of economic disparity, weaknesses, gullibility and deprivation to lure and recruit their victims. They are drawn from rural areas with the promise of work but have to provide their own subsistence to feed. Modern day slavery fosters inequality and it is against human rights (Gresens, 2010). It goes beyond the individual and affects societies (Gallagher and David, 2014).

Domestic trafficking in Ghana has become prevalent than transnational with the majority of victims originating from poor areas and most reported victims being children (Sertich and Heemskerk, 2011, p. 1). Reports of domestic child trafficking include for street hawing, begging, working at good stands selling fish by the Volta Lake, etc.



Figure. 2 A kayayei carrying a bale of second-hand clothes at Kantamanto Market

Source: George Koranteng photo journal



Figure 3. A kayayei mother carrying her baby at her back balancing a bale of second hand clothes on her head by a pole.

Source Georg Koranteng photo journal

1.4 Social System's Theory

There is no operations without systems (Baraldi, et al., 2021, p.221). They assert that social systems do not operate in isolation but in connection between other elements for double contingency which is processed through communication. A system can only exist if it reproduces its operations through networks of other systems. The theory introduces a holistic approach and understanding to interconnected systems stakeholders share in intervention programs for kayayei. It provides a lens through which we scrutinize the relationships, loops, and other characteristics within these intervention programs. The concept encourages us to see coordination by stakeholders as a whole rather than in isolation. It acknowledges that for programs to be effective, it will be determined by their interdependencies and collaborations

between the various components and stakeholders including the government, development partners, community leaders, beneficiaries themselves, donor, CSOs and NGOs, etc. The concept helps identify communication loops especially in coordination processes and how it evolves overtime. This helps stakeholders to understand how information and projects flow and inform appropriate adjustments to changes in time. Usually within a complex network emergent changes to new approaches and discoveries may occur. In the context of intervention programs, unanticipated outcomes and results may emerge thereby making programs effective or ineffective which may hamper coordination efforts. This is because systems evolve overtime and it is necessary to adapt to new approaches to solve challenges, and learn from experiences.

This not only helps to understand current state of coordination but as well as its historical trajectories and make documentations and projection for future strategies. Leveraging on this, it can have a significant impact by identifying changes that can help programmers and policymakers to focus efforts on what is most needed comprehensively to improve coordination through evidence-based recommendations as it recognizes that a change in one part can have a far reaching effect when it is not performing.



Figure 4. Stakeholders in intervention programs of Kayayei in Ghana.

Source: Author's Data

CHAPTER 3

POLICY PERSPECTIVES: ADDRESSING THE LABYRINTH OF KAYAYEI CHALLENGES

3.0 Introduction

Characterized by migration of young girls and women, the kayayei phenomenon reflects a complex interplay of gender and socio-economic issues. As these girls engage in arduous and hazardous labor, frequently experiencing prejudice, exploitation and discrimination, there has been the emergence of different interventions to address their plights by various stakeholders.

This literature review assesses existing bodies of knowledge currently available about the coordination of intervention programs by throwing light on stakeholders' dynamics. The review highlights the dimension of the phenomenon by emphasizing on socio-economic and cultural factors which drives their migration and the distinct challenges they face in the urban centers. It transitions to examine the empowerment of the kayayei from a collaborative perspective by stakeholders engaged in tackling the issues in order to better understand the various roles played by the government, CSOs, NGOs and International Development Partners.

It also examines frameworks set up to alleviate the vulnerabilities and improve the kayayei conditions by assessing the degree to which they address their needs. The review helps to create a foundation for the investigation on how activities are coordinated and how the kayayei are effectively empowered by synthesizing information gathered.

3.1 Factors for migration

Communities in the North engage in seasonal subsistence farming which is usually not enough to support their families. The women therefore tend to move to the bigger cities for greener pastures and to send remittances home as the north has limited resources compared to the south (Huijsmans, 2012). The development of the economy of Ghana has been mostly biased towards the southern parts. Pre-dating colonial times, southerners have benefitted more in development projects such as schools, roads, railways, infrastructures, healthcare among others which leaves the north deprived of basic amenities (Shamsu-Deen, 2014). There are multifaceted pull and push factors which causes and trigger the migration of these women and girls. These could be short or long term (FORWARD, ACDEP and PAYDP, 2018, p.19). Opare (2003) opines that, there are four factors which causes people to migrate: these are environmental, socio-political, economic and cultural factors. Some of the reasons given by scholars include children fleeing

from early or forced marriage by their families or parents mostly to older men, rural poverty, declining cost of living (MoGCSP, 2013), sexual and gender-based violence, raising capital to start alternative business, inadequate opportunities in North or to buy things for their marriage (Kyei-Gyamfi et al., 2021, p. 112), raising funds to pay their school fees and continuous education, lack of parental support, fleeing from tribal conflicts in certain parts of the North, lack of market for agricultural produce, inadequate scale production, lack of economic opportunities, peer influence, need to support other dependent family members, harsh climate conditions, perceived urban luxurious lifestyle, the passion to be a change-maker, manage others, support other family members and siblings, personal aspirations, re-enrolment to school or trade to move up the social ladder, amongst others.

Migration into the cities opens up opportunities and challenges for the kayayei (Awumbila and Schandorf, 2008). The kayayei see migration as their means to gain freedom and bodily autonomy in their lives and to have livelihood diversification (Boateng, 2018, p.16). According to Opare (2003) most of these women are the breadwinners in the house and they must ensure that the children and husband are taken care of as well as ensure feeding. However, they have no reliable jobs that give enough income except farming mostly. Another reason they migrate to the Southern parts of Ghana is because the international neighboring countries are Francophone speakers including Burkina Faso to the North, La Cote D'Ivoire to the West, Togo to the East, and the Gulf of Guinea to the South.

3.2 Conditions and vulnerabilities

The work of the 'kayayei' is tedious with underlying hazardous conditions. They carry heavy loads on their heads for traders and shopkeepers in the markets, on the streets and other public places. Some of them are also adolescent mothers who carry their babies alongside the heavy loads on their head, risking the safety of both the baby and themselves as they walk for long distances, carrying goods or scouting for clients. The services they provide are most often exploited as they are underpaid (MoGCSP, 2014). They face verbal, physical, sexual abuse such as rape, harassment, robbery, discrimination and prejudice from negative tribal/cultural stereotypes etc.

Their shift usually starts at early dawn when the shops start opening till extremely late in the evening (Kyei-Gyamfi, 2020). They live in deplorable, dangerous, and unhygienic states, sleep on the streets, uncompleted buildings and if lucky, in kiosks of their mistresses or masters (MoGCSP, 2014). They are prone to sexual assaults and harsh weather conditions, communicable and non-communicable diseases such as the COVID-19, HIV/AIDS, STIs, improper diet, indecent sanitation, which eventually affects their health, and most cannot afford over the counter medical services or have access to the National Health Insurance (Kyei-Gyamfi,

2020) because they cannot afford the registration fee. They also face occasional evictions from the government, market task forces and other intermediaries and they lose their livelihoods (Kyei-Gyamfi et al., 2021, p.113).

3.3 The Kayayei and youth employment

As discussed in the background of this paper, the Kayayei are groups of heterogeneous girls Kwankye et al (2009) who migrate from rural societies especially in the Northern parts of Ghana to urban southern centers in such of sustainable livelihoods and greener pastures. The motivations and drivers for the migration of the girls varies from socio-economic, and cultural practices which could be long or short term (FORWARD, ACDEP and PAYDP, 2018). There are pull and push factors which includes but are not limited to the alluring attractions of urban centers.

The girls are exposed to precarious environmental and harsh climatic conditions because they live in the streets and in the slums. They are exposed to various contagious diseases and STIs, sexual harassment, rape, verbal abuse, SGBV, etc. (Opare, 2003, Kyei-Gyamfi, 2020, MoGCSP, 2014). Although some may know about these conditions and dangers of coming to the urban centers without housing, the phenomenon has still increased in recent times because they feel they will get more money and maybe it is better than where they come from (Agana, 2018, p.10).

The phenomenon also exposes the system issues of youth unemployment which contributes to the rural-urban migration and the proliferation of the informal sector. The phenomenon epitomizes the informal employment sectors' prevalence of youth engagement dangerous low-paying and exploitative jobs. This reflects the trend of the kayayei and youth being disproportionately affected by the lack of job security, underemployment and inadequate social protection policies. The pull and push factors which motivates kayayei to migrate mirrors the complex forces underlying unemployment in developing nations which includes disparities in the economy, limited access to resources, healthcare, education, equal access to opportunities, etc.

The north is predominantly known for its agricultural activities. With the youth increasingly migrating from the rural areas (White, 2012), there is less people to work on the farms (Juma, 2007) which could have an implication on food security for the whole nation given the importance of small-hold agriculture in developing economies. Rural youth have on average gotten more access to education than previous generation (Muwi, 2012) but still find it difficult to secure a stable job especially the one in the rural areas or end up in unfulfilling or underpaid jobs. The youth and kayayei still play a vital role in rural agriculture even when they migrate to

other urban centers for alternate livelihoods. They continue to send remittances to support their families and younger siblings back home. Also, they go back during clearing the lands and harvesting seasons to assist collecting of crops. (Leavey & Smith, 2010). According to a report by FORWARD, ACDEP, PAYDP, (2018), there is seasonal peak of girls migrating twice a year. Thus the dry season when there is little farming in the north and during the peak festive market season in Accra for the Christmas holiday.

It is important to also note that women play a vital role in labor on the farm and agriculture in rural Ghana. They form 52% of the labor force in agriculture and produce 70% of the food crops. They make up 90% of the marketing of farm produce (Duncan, 2004). Despite this, there is the question of access to land as a woman. According to Alidu (2015), women's access to land in the North is linked to marital status, widowhood, and motherhood. And women who inherit natal lands are only active by divorce or widowhood. Men have more preference over inheritance or access to land where as most women only have access through family lands or marriage (Muwi, 2012: Cooper, 2010). Despite this, young girls and women from northern Ghana work more on the lands. The males are prioritized over girls because of their patriarchal nature in laws of succession, son preference and ultimate decision-makers. The women are housewives, workers on the farm, doing both the reproductive chores, caring for the family and unpaid labor work. Young girls and women continue to move to settle in the urban centers due to its attributes of more opportunities, high income, lucrative standard of living, freedom and autonomy. They move in order to create their own identities and success on their own in the views of their family and peers and or run away from outmoded harmful practices. This has resulted in the transformation and migration of the youth in the rural social set up and economy although they may anticipate the uncertainties and risk of the precarious living conditions in the urban centers.

3.4 Social Protection Policy

Ghana has implemented several social protection policies over the years aimed at addressing the kayayaei although not limited to it. These policies are designed to provide empowerment, support and improve the living conditions of the kayayaei. However, despite these beautiful laws and policies, implementation, enforcement and its execution is challenging.

Labor Laws

Labor laws in Ghana provide a legal framework for protecting the rights of workers. These laws cover issues related to minimum wage, working conditions, occupational safety, and health. Ensuring that the rights of kayayaei are upheld under these laws can be a critical aspect of their

social protection. However, due to the informal nature of the Kayayei work not being recognized as a formal employment most of these laws do not apply to protect them. Also, according to Ghana's labor law, children under the age of 16 not allowed to work but this is seen in the case of the kayayei where younger children participate in the trade without any repercussions to their guardians (ILO, 2011).

Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the Free Senior High School (SHS) policies.

The government of Ghana implemented the Free SHS policy in September, 2017 (Ministry of Education, (2020) in line with the current now ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) manifesto promise to provide free education at the senior high school level. This initiative benefits not only the kayayei but also disadvantaged youths in general, offering them an opportunity to access education and improve their future employment prospects. It was a complement to FCUBE policy which was introduced in 1995 but its implementation started in 2005 (Akyeampong, 2009). Reports from the World Bank indicates that increased access to primary education because of FCUBE in turn increased demand for free SHS. Another factor for the demand of SHS education was because of the increased number of people who moved from agrarian communities to urban centers to search for employment such as the kayayei (Hazelwood, 2015).

However, these policies did not take into consideration other factors of schooling such as hidden costs of providing books, uniforms, and other expenses. The executive director of Eduwatch, Mr. Kofi Asare bemoaned that FCUBE and free education were not truly universally accessible nor compulsory to all as there are still issues of inadequate infrastructure, low resources, poverty, maintenance, hygiene and sanitation in schools, hidden costs and allocations to the commitment to the policies by government (Etefe, 2022). This attributes to one of the factors why the girls migrate to look for money to further their education or drop out of school.

Re-entry into school

Together with development partners and stakeholders, the Ghana Education Service (GES) in 2016 formulated the re-entry education policy to enable pregnant students go back to school during pregnancy or after childbirth provided they are strong and capable to do so. The initiatives aimed at facilitating the re-entry of adolescent girls and kayayei who had previously dropped out of school due to pregnancy go back into the education system. It is supposed to include support mechanisms and incentives to encourage them to continue their education. It is also against the expulsion of any pregnant student (Baa-Poku, 2016). The policy however fails

to address the conditions of support structures, economic, physical and social impacts of the pregnancy and their health and other factors which may shape their decision on re-entry into schools. It also lacks the intersectional approach of institutional and social barriers which hinders their return to school (Adomako Baafi, 2020). In the case of the kayayei, they barely have a support system to care for the child or money to go back to school. Therefore, they do the trade with their children carried on their backs.

National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)

The NHIS is an important healthcare provision for all Ghanaians. It is designed to ensure that residents have access to essential health services including the kayayei who face many health challenges because of their work. Despite its intentions, the kayayei still encounters challenges in accessing the full coverage. Most kayayei who are new lack information and awareness about the NHIS and may not know how to enroll on it. Some kayayei still struggle to pay for the registration, and transportation to the healthcare facilities or afford medications for treatment. Also, due to their experiences of stigmatization because of their occupation or living conditions, it sometimes discourage them from seeking medical care as well as language barrier. Organizations and individuals volunteer to do free registration exercises for them (Wiego, 2012). However, only a few benefit because of the lack of funds for continuation. (Boateng, et al., 2017) states that retail offices are not well equipped to ensure the enrolment of the NHIS. And there is a long waiting time for renewal processes. This discourages the kayayei to enroll in, or renew their NHIS. They also postulated that *'age and income significantly increases the probability of the NHIS enrolment, renewal and utilization'*.

Orange Support Center (OSC)

The Orange Support Center was established by UNFPA in collaboration with MoGCSP in 2021 after the alarming increase in sexual and gender based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic (UNFPA, 2021). It was established to provide information, support Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) survivors and other vulnerable groups, including the kayayei. The centers often provide various services, counseling, legal advice, and referral services to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the police, social welfare, medical, etc. through the use of their volunteers. The challenge was that, most of these girls did not own a phone to call although it was a toll free.

National Youth Employment Program (NYEP)

The NYEP, now known as the Youth Employment Agency (YEA), was established in 2015 to address youth unemployment and provide employment opportunities for young people through skills training (Youth Employment Agency, 2023). The agency offers various modules such as the Community Police, Health Extension Workers, and Youth in Fire Service, among others, to provide skills training and employment opportunities. While the program is designed for all youth across the country, there are challenges when it comes to kayayei. The eligibility criteria serves as a barrier to the kayayei because of specific educational qualifications or identification documents which they may not have. There is also lack of awareness about the existence of the program or how to apply for them (Foli and Ohemeng, 2022, p.221).

Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP)

LEAP is a cash transfer program that targets extremely poor and vulnerable households in Ghana particularly orphaned and vulnerable children, persons with severe disabilities without any productive capacity and persons who are 65 years or older. It was introduced by the government in 2008 (Foli and Ohemeng, 2022, p.222) to help reduce poverty and increase consumption and promote access to opportunities and services for the poor and vulnerable. While not exclusively for the kayayei, it provides financial assistance to some of them who meet the eligibility criteria. The program offers regular cash transfers to beneficiaries to alleviate poverty and enhance their livelihoods. Nonetheless, these girls mostly do not benefit because of their location or not qualified under a household. (Dadzie and Raju, 2020).

3.5 Stakeholders Interventions

Within the context of the complex Kayayei issues, stakeholders have taken on a paramount and significant role. These stakeholders including government agencies who acts as the lead in a country, community leaders, NGOs, CSOs, advocacy groups, international development partners/donors, local authorities, beneficiaries and public individual, represents the multidimensional interests, expertise, experiences and influences which shapes the impact of interventions. This research acknowledges the indispensable role of stakeholders in the pursuit of changing lives of vulnerable minority in the society and in improving the lives of the kayayei, Each stakeholder brings a unique strength to the table and their interventions are pivotal in shaping the direction and consequently the intervention of programs for the Kayayei as they form a network of voices and drive social change towards livelihood improvement, social justice and greater empowerment.

Government and Local authorities

Government and local authorities play an essential role in addressing the welfare of their citizens. Their role encompasses a wide range of responsibilities and accountability. The government is responsible in formulating and implementing policies for social protection and labor laws and regulating these laws to protect the rights of the kayayei including gender equality and anti-discrimination policies to ensure fair wages and safe working environments. They have the power to enact and amend laws to protect as well. As the general overseers of the country, they are responsible to allocate resources for programs aimed at empowering the kayayei including funding, education and healthcare. The local authorities are an extension of the government agencies, they are responsible for the urban planning and development of infrastructure. Their role entails providing a safe and hygienic living conditions for the kayayei in the urban centers. They regulate market operations and must ensure fair market prices and safety of the workers. However, this is hardly the case as the kayayei are taxed in some of these markets but do not enjoy any protection against exploitation. These local authorities also collaborate with NGOs, CSOs and advocacy groups to create sensitization programs and also provide social services.

International Development Partners/Donors

The involvement of IDPs is often in the form of financial and technical support. These is true for Ghana as IDPs such as UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP etc. fund most of these programs through the government. These covers trainings, capacity-building, resource mobilization, infrastructure development, guidance on program design, and share best practices to strengthen the capabilities of local and government organizations. They also engage in monitoring and evaluation to assess the progress and impact of interventions programs ensuring it meets the intended objectives. On a global scale, they influence and raise awareness on the challenges of the Kayayei to advocate for policy changes. Beyond the programs, they support advocacy efforts for policy reforms and legal changes. These partners also bring on board cross-learning from other regions with similar experiences in context of the kayayei and these lessons can be applied to benefit the Kayayei. They also facilitate coordination between other stakeholders involved in kayayei intervention programs to create a network and connections to create an integrated approach. In recent years, these IDPs sometimes implement directly.

CSOs, NGOs, Advocacy Groups

CSOs are indispensable stakeholders in intervention programs for kayayei. They serve as implementing agent for intervention programs. Woodley and Gilsonan (2019, p.189) define CSOs as non-profit organizations who work and aim to achieve social justice, promote poverty reduction, and break barriers to social cohesion, economic, health, and environmental well-being. They promote the rights of individuals from vulnerable conditions and social exclusion. They fill in the existing gaps and execute projects in local communities due to (Woodley & Gilsonan, 2019) and their work meets are meant to meet the needs of the community. CSOs support migrants Alcalde & Portos (2018) and vulnerable groups in various capacities such as providing relief items, dignity kits, food, skills training, raising awareness and advocate for their rights. They translate program objectives into actions.

They play a significant role in the interventions for kayayei by advocating for the rights and needs. Their expertise help to address challenges faced by the Kayayei and work towards improving their well-being. They also bridge the gap in accessing essential services by providing services such as vocational skills training, legal support, healthcare and education. These programs empowers the kayayei to acquire new skills and gain economic independence. They often conduct research to understand the needs and experiences of the kayayei. The data informs program designs and advocacy efforts. These organizations also mobilize communities to form collectives, support networks and self-help groups. Often time, they mobilize resources including relief items and donations to support the Kayayei. The goal of the CSOs for interventions programs is to equip the Kayayei with a dignified and sustainable livelihood.

CHAPTER 4

BETWEEN HOPE AND DESPAIR: VOICES OF RESILIENCE

4.0 Introduction

Coordination is the harmonization of processes and integration of efforts to achieve a common goal by individuals or a group (Robbins and Judge, 2013). It is the silent force that transforms chaos into a symphony of progress, seamlessly blending diverse talents towards a shared crescendo of achievements. Coordination involves the synchronization of tasks, resources and communication. Understanding the dynamics of coordination is not only essential for optimizing outcomes by stakeholders but also a connective tissue for identifying opportunities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

In this chapter, I present the data findings derived from the stakeholders and selected kayayei beneficiaries focused on the coordination efforts within intervention programs. This research delves into their web of interactions, processes, and challenges that underlie coordination mechanisms in intervention programs for kayayei. The aim is to shed light on the factors that contribute to the success or shortcomings of these initiatives. The data presented here explores real-world intervention programs by PAYDP and KASPRO projects, spanning a variety of contexts. The investigation goes beyond the surface to reveal the complexities of coordination, the power dynamics that influence decision-making, the barriers that hinder seamless collaboration, and the strategies that propel stakeholder efforts toward achieving their intended impact. These findings are instrumental in advancing the understanding of how coordination operates in practice.

Furthermore, it highlights the experiences of those most affected by these intervention programs – the kayayei communities they aim to support. Their voices provide invaluable insights into the lived realities of coordinated efforts and the tangible outcomes that emerge from such endeavors.

4.1 Trading spaces: Perceptions of the kayayei through the lens of others

One factor that stood out during the data collection was how individuals and communities have different perceptions of the kayayei. While some individuals may have positive views about them and acknowledge their resilience and determination even in the face of their challenges, others hold negative perceptions for various reasons. They treat them poorly or refuse to purchase their wares. This has discouraged many of them who benefitted from the skills training

to continue to pursue that vocation because irrespective of that alternative livelihood, people continue to have the negative perception about their situation and see them as unclean and so try to exploit.

I started another job with what I learnt but I stopped because I was not earning much and customers were rude and will insult me. Sometimes they called me dirty. So I went back to kaya'.
(Participant 3, focus group discussion, August, 2023)

These perceptions are deeply rooted in the socioeconomic and ethnic stereotypes that often come from people from marginalized backgrounds who may be engaged in informal labor-intensive work. Therefore the public sometimes stigmatizes such work associating it with poverty and low social status.

Myths about rural-urban distinctions also reproduces discriminative social hierarchies (Hodžić, 2023, p.358). Northern Ghana since the advent of the colonial rule have been the largest internal migrants' workers in Ghana. They have been misrecognized as rural and isolated with stake of misclassification. Structural unity of rural and urban is misrepresented by opposing identities (Mills 2001, p.181). Due to this, some individuals view them as individuals lacking agency and empowerment which reinforces the stereotype of helplessness. The issue of ethnocentrism where other groups feel superior to others serves as a driver to conflicts. In the case of the Kayayei, they face these because they mostly come from one of the ethnic groups in the north which is looked down upon. They therefore face double jeopardy because they are in the minority group as well as coming from one of the least developed parts of the country. Institutional discrimination also reinforces negative stereotypes. For instance, a CSO partner recalled how they were abysmally treated at a workshop. This also affects the market for their products due to stereotyping.

...I remember in the past we went for a workshop with them and when the others realized that they were kayayei, they were treated differently even at the hotel. (Aku, interviewee-PAYDP, Founder, 2023).

Ethnic stereotyping prevents the harnessing of resources for development (Odumah and Golo, 2016, p.47) and peaceful co-existence. These interaction shape the social class putting the girls at a disadvantaged position, financial loss and limited employment choices (Durante and Fiske, 2017: Awaworyi Churchill, 2017: Becker, 1957). These symbolic hierarchies of status and identities (Appiah, 2018), are used by dominant groups to justify and label others.

This affects productivity, wages, stifles the labor market and opportunities for growth (Awaworyi Churchill, 2017). With its persistence, interventions will not be able to see transformation nor produce quality services which in turn worsens the phenomenon. This

inequalities will also endanger conflicts and uncondusive working environments (Awaworyi Churchill & Laryea, 2019).

4.2 Kayayei self-organization and leadership

Recently, the kayayei are taking more actions by speaking out for their rights and forming advocacy groups in the market through their collective action and agency, challenging systematic inequalities (Kabeer, 2001: Millward, et al., 2019). They have been engaging in advocacy efforts to alleviate their working conditions, raise awareness for better treatment and demanding protection for their human rights and fair resource redistribution (Fraser, 1998) through the state's cosmopolitan responsibility (Heilinger, 2019, p.1). They recently joined in the 'OccupyBoGProtest' street protest in Ghana in October, 2023, joining hundreds of other Ghanaian youth to protest against the government's failure in economic mismanagement, corruption scandals, ineffective health systems, human rights abuse and abuse of power. This also included the failure to address their needs and deliver on their promise to provide housing for them in the 2012 election campaign (Modern Ghana, 2012). Biekart and Fowler (2012, p.181), argue that civic driven change occurs when groups, associations, movements, etc. mobilize through charismatic leadership with a drive to have a different future and improve the conditions in which they live. They become political-shapers whiles results may not necessarily be immediate. This is manifested in the protest. A Kayayei in the protest had this to say to the United Television (UTV, October, 3, 2023) a popular local station in Ghana.

'We voted for them. But they came to lie to us and we voted for them. They said they will build a hostel for us, they came to do sod cutting at Nzema market but up till now nothing has been done. It is just lies. The next election year we are not going to vote for them. Let the current vice president, Bawamia bear this. We came from the North together but we will not vote.'

It is noted that the current vice president, who is also a northerner, is a 2024 presidential flagbearer the New Patriotic Party (NPP). This shows the use of their agency and power as decision makers to vote or not for a leader. The outstanding challenge noticed from the interviews conducted was the issue of accommodation.

We do not have a place to sleep, mosquitoes keep biting us (Idi, Kayayei interviewee, August, 2023)

In the manifesto of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 2012 and 2016, they promised to build hostels when they assume power into office.

Additionally, the kayayei with the help of some CSOs are forming alliance in the markets although not yet officially registered. These girls are mostly beneficiaries of some sort of

intervention program and they are becoming trainers of trainees through their empowerment. This is helping with the sustainability and cost which does not require new trainings altogether for new beneficiaries. These groups also act as advocacy groups creating awareness about the conditions through their empowerment and agency.

Additionally, the sects they form amongst themselves in the market are headed by intergenerational community leaders who are usually the elders in the group from their tribes. Some of these leaders are voted for. These leaders who are mostly elderly women in the group, offer guidance, settle disputes, and have access to other social networks. Aside the leaders, there are chiefs and gatekeepers who volunteer and represent the kayayei. Also, each market nominates the people they want to be part of their executive board.

... aside the gatekeepers and the chiefs, the rest of the leaders (mostly older women in the group) only facilitate when necessary. Either than that, they control'. (Sallah, kayayoi interviewee, August, 2023).

It is recalled from the interview (*IDP interviewee, October, 2023, DoG interviewee & Aku, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023*), that the kayayei gatekeepers are benefitting more from the interventions than the girls and the men come to programs meant for the women. These gatekeepers who are usually men, despite the kayayei being women and girls, have more control and power over the decisions of the girls. The girls listen to them more and usually act only on their instructions.

'...their issue is quite complicated because now, there are some cartels in there, it has become more like human trafficking, one thing I realized working with them was that the gatekeepers are too powerful. Because for instance when you even go and want to do an activity with them or mobilize them, until you go through the gatekeepers most of which are the men, they will not even mind you'. (IDP national program analyst, UNFPA, October, 2023).

This was reinforced by a kayayei interviewee.

'you cannot join a program without passing through them'..they also provide recommendations and approach NGOs for help (Sallah, Kayayei interviewee, August, 2023).

Some of these gate keepers also recruit and lure the girls into the cities to work with the promise of a good and better life. Only for them to bring them to the cities to use them to generate an income by taking them to shop owners who need people to work with. Some of these girls are not properly compensated and they sometimes have to refund their sponsors. This forces them to exchange sexual favors for shelters. Due to this some of them also get into prostitution as a result of the trafficking from their masters or mistresses who demand that they pay back for bring them to the cities, they either willingly or unwillingly engage in the act which

in turn make them prone to sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. This happens either ways when they also do not have a place to stay and are prone to sexual harassment and rape when they sleep on the streets or in front of shops. Most do not know who impregnated them because they have no idea about who raped them. It appears that cultural schemas such as intergenerational concept for respect for the elderly, gender performativity roles and hegemonic masculinity are contributing factors. Although they are out of their region they still carry on their cultural laws of succession making the men the ultimate decision makers even in advocacy for themselves.

It is reported by Sertich and Heemskerk (2011, p.1), that domestic trafficking in Ghana is more rampant than transnational trafficking and this often involves children as victims. Recruiters often target the north attracting innocent girls to work as kayayei in the urban centers. Working long hours with low wages and harsh conditions attributing to modern day slavery.

The Human Trafficking Act of Ghana 2005, defines ‘human trafficking as the recruitment ...of persons within or across national borders by the use of...fraud...deception, the abuse of power or exploitation of vulnerability. It further clarifies that where children are trafficked, the consent of the child, parents or guardian of the child cannot be used as a defense, regardless of evidence of abuse of power, fraud or deception on the part of the trafficker or whether the vulnerability of the child was taken advantage of Sertich and Heemskerk (2011).

This means that whether parents or the girls give consent, it remains irrelevant when it involves children in the act and the consent does not negate the illegality of that migration Sertich and Heemskerk (2011, p. 2). Despite this, the gatekeepers who bring this children are not held accountable thereby perpetuating the phenomenon.

Surprisingly, most of the kayayei groups/sects do not see eye to eye. This is due to their tribal or inter-ethnic conflicts. It must be noted that there has been inter-ethnic conflicts amongst them such as the Konkomba-Nanumba conflicts due to chieftaincy, land, trade, political interests, etc. (Jönsson, 2007, p.). This in turn affects intervention, implementation and delivery of programs for the kayayei.

Sometimes it is difficult to get them and hotels do not want to take them because, one time, a fight broke out among the factions, between the Kukumba-Nanumba, during the discussions. They thought that one faction was being favored than the other so they fought and broke things and we incurred more cost after the final payment so they became a bit expensive to work with (IDP National program analyst interviewee, October 2023).

The kayayei in the programs are also given leadership trainings through mentorships such as the chief justice mentorship program, fairs like the Kayayei leadership and business fair, workshops, etc.to strengthen and share capacities as well as have access to some sort of human

resources support.

4.3 Recursive realities

The cycle of poverty and vulnerability that the kayayei face can be attributed to a complex interplay of socioeconomic, structural, and systemic factors. Although the dynamic have changed and a lot of the girls are educated compared to the previous cohort, they fall back into this vicious cycle because of different elements including limited opportunities in the north and lack of money to continue their education. They come back to look for money so they can continue their education.

I just completed JHS then I came here, I wanted to help my mother so that she would not be suffering that much. So, I came here to do the kayayo to help me further my education since when you are to go to SHS you have to buy some items such as mattress, chop box etc' (Fuseina, Kayayei interviewee, August, 2023).

Also, though some have the desire to go back to the north or received vocational skills, it is hardly feasible as the north is not very lucrative or offers limited opportunities thereby hindering their ability to use their skills or get a sustainable income and stable employment.

What will stop them from coming has not changed. Some of the communities we work with in the north has nothing lucrative to do and climate change has even made things worse. So the situation that made them run down has not changed', (Akeu, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023).

The absence of viable economic and alternative opportunities in their places of origin is another driver why they fall back because they tend to return to the urban centers to look for employment even if it means working under those harsh conditions.

Furthermore, the lack of job security, low-paying labor means their income is insufficient and unpredictable to meet their needs. Most of these girls have become the breadwinners of their families where they have to send remittance back home to support their families and siblings (Winters, 2017, p. 175). They therefore become trapped in this cycle to provide for themselves and others as they may even borrow money for immediate needs which can lead to long-term financial instability. There are also culture underpinnings where the girls want to buy things for themselves because they are going to get married. Their limited access to healthcare services further exacerbates their vulnerability as not all of them have the National Health Insurance. Health problems can result in missed work days and increased medical expenses.

'...You just take medicine or you would go to the hospital, that is if you have health insurance but some of us if you are not having health insurance you would be feeling lazy

to go to the hospital, because if you go, they may charge you an amount of money you can't afford' (Aruna, kayayei interviewee, August, 2023).

Again, the absence of a robust social protection framework and insufficient government policies that targets their needs leaves the Kayayei vulnerable to economic shocks and human rights crises. Without access to safety nets and labor laws protecting them (ILO, 2011), they struggle to recover from setbacks and exploitations.

'There is no framework. We are all working under the child marriage program policy by UNFPA. At the national level there is no social protection policy for the kayayei directly'. (Aku, interviewee-PAYDP, August, 2023).

The living conditions of Kayayei are often substandard, with inadequate housing and sanitation facilities. These conditions negatively affect their health and well-being, perpetuating the cycle of vulnerability.

'...Some of my colleagues are being raped and so get effected by diseases such as cholera, malaria and so on' (Aruna, kayayei interviewee, August, 2023).

Furthermore, the root causes of their migration are not being adequately tackled (FORWARD, ACDEP and PAYDP, 2018). These girls also abandon the vocational skills training because majority of them are doing the same things and it becomes unprofitable.

'...they left their sewing machines and came back because they used up their capital, people were owing them and they were not also getting clients'. (Aku, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023).

Interventions are not adequately tailored to cater for community needs. Therefore, they go back into the trade. Being in the trade has also made them use to a certain lifestyle and income. Therefore, going into an alternative trade or training which does not bring daily wage or more than what they are used to, tends them to go back into 'kaya' because they want more money and consistency. The trade is a form of financial empowerment and autonomy for them. There has been challenges keeping up with providing incentives for them by stakeholders. Some of these kayayei also bully their customers for more money which is lucrative for them.

Another interesting finding was the impact of the Kayayei Leadership Development and Business fair organized 3 days annually by PAYDP in collaboration with development partners and government agencies. It is an avenue where they bring some of these beneficiary girls together to provide mentorship, invite organizations for support, exhibit items produced by the kayayei, solicit for support, etc. it was initiated in 2019. There has however been an unintended consequences which is serving as a driver for migration because of the benefits the girls derive. It is usually a sponsored residential event.

'the advocacy fairs were question because the girls, keeping them in hotels, giving skills and trainings were attracting others, people talk and once they get to tell others when you come you can get, TnT (stipend) etc. it becomes attractive for people to come' (IDP national program analyst, UNFPA, October, 2023).

4.4 Kayayei mobilization in urban collective cadence

During the data collection, it was realized that the kayayei girls leveraged on their resourcefulness and agency using various strategies to navigate and support themselves through their challenges. This is borne out of necessity and resilience. Most admitted that they anticipated some of the challenges, however, it was better to be employment or have something doing than nothing at all. They also stated that others have been through similar situations and made it therefore they were also motivated to make the sacrifice. Often times, their decision to move to a particular location is dependent on their social networks. They may go to a particular market because they know someone there who will help them navigate their way around. In the markets, they form collectives with others from their tribes, ethnicity or communities. These networks provide mutual support emotionally and economically. They pull resources together for emergencies. They also have an informal savings and lending cycle where members can borrow in times of need such as health crisis or invest in income-generating activities in addition to the head portorage such as selling food, clothes, and vegetables. Or other street vending or hairdressing from their skills training. This diversification helps them to mitigate income fluctuations. They may contribute to rent stalls, or kiosk to sleep in. This shared practices helps to lower their living expense otherwise, they sleep on the streets.

4.5 Inter-agency collaborations and coordination mechanisms

COVID-19 response

Prior to the pandemic, interventions were executed in the past since 2002/2003 (MoGSCP, 2014). The last was recalled in 2017 by the government with assistance from a development partner.

'the last program we did was in 2017 and 2020 during the lockdown' (Agnes, Social welfare department interviewee, September, 2023).

Usually, development partners deliver projects based on their integrated strategic frameworks based on particular programs or emergency response (UNFPA, 2021). For instance, PAYDP uses the integrated framework approach for the joint global program to end child

marriage by UNFPA and UNICEF (*Aku, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023*). There is no local policy or strategic framework for short and long term goals which guides stakeholders in implementation of programs for the Kayayei. The government of Ghana, has no indigenous policy, or strategic legal frameworks tackling this situation so interventions are determined and funded based on integrated programs by development partners. The lack of a focused short and long-term intervention approaches and a one size fit all does not help to have a clear-cut of the issues for a robust approach.

Mostly, the government only reacts when there is a crisis and leave the programs hanging until another crisis before going back on it. There is little to no momentum which leaves programs hanging and it is not strengthened to its full capacity for sustainability and the back and forth makes the programs weak. For instance during the COVID-19 pandemic when they provided food items and with the support of development partners including provision of dignity kits for their hygiene and assisted those who wanted to return home.

'because of COVID-19 in 2020, they became one of the major points of focus because everyone knew they were one of the most affected and could contact and spread the COVID, as they are also daily wage earners. That was when the ministry decided to provide them with some food. After that, there has been nothing done again'. (IDP interviewee, October 2023).

This form of tokenism appears to be solving the problem initially but in a minimal form as it continues to persist. Post COVID-19, nothing substantially has been implemented which is keeping this tokenism in a cycle.



Figure 5. A UNFPA Youth Leader Fellow (YoLe) conducting a mapping, registration and needs assessment exercise for Kayayei at Tema Station market in Accra during the COVID-19 lockdown

Source: UNFPA Ghana.

Again, there is competition amongst the agencies for funding because they dig in one pot which strikes a competition amongst them to outdo each other.

'Coordination is not as easy as it is amongst us. When someone is doing the work, they are interested to come and see what the other person is doing in terms of competition rising and if they can outdo them'. (Aku, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023)

There is little to no communication amongst all the stakeholders because there is no coordination mechanism, government agency or coalition responsible for that. They all do their work in silos therefore leading to some duplication of projects. The ministry tried establishing a department to register all stakeholders working with the kayayei but the facilities are not functional (*MoGCSP, interviewee, Department of Policy and Planning, August, 2023*). There are a lot of stakeholders now tackling the issue of kayayei and it is important to have a coordination mechanism for accountability, control and a data-base for references and information (*IDP National program analyst interviewee, October 2023*). There is no clear cut department in the ministry who are responsible for that. During my data collection, I experienced this as there was no clear department and I kept moving in cycle. This experience was also similar to the complaints of the IDPs. The nonchalant attitudes of public employees also hinders for effective communication and collaborations as they kept postponing or assigning someone for the interviews.

Despite this, PAYDP had no problem with collaboration because they have established relationship with local government agencies and IDPs for support (*Aku, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023*). PAYDP as a stakeholder has work in this field for years and have expertise and experience. They were recruited by development partners in 2015 to support the pilot of an intervention program for the kayayei. According to PAYDP, they have established that relationship and rapport with other stakeholders and the government, therefore they are able to navigate through relying on their networks. They also get support with human resource from the government

4.5 Road blocks to harmony: Systematic stumbling blocks

The major underlying factor hindering the successful implementation of programs has been insufficient funding which has implications on intervention effectiveness. A lot of stakeholders compete for limited resources leading to fragmented efforts, truncation of projects and other challenges to address the needs of kayayei comprehensively. The government especially has

budget constraints to support stakeholders. But usually, they provide human resources in terms of health personnel's and other government agencies when requested.

Again, due to the lack of funding, experts, lack of a data-base, transfer of workers, inefficient project management along with the discontinuation or delays in ongoing projects and the absence of a robust communication, institutional memory, information systems, monitoring and evaluation and inefficient evaluation, programs suffers as a consequence. This leads to truncation of programs and questions of viability of the alternate livelihood training. The absence of a designated coordinating agency to facilitate collaborations, oversee, guide and monitor activities of stakeholders to be accountable results in duplication of efforts because the interventions are not aligned. This is because the boards namely the *Inter-sectorial Government Technical Committee and the Sector Working Group (responsible to coordinate partners)* who are tasked by the government with such responsibility lacks funding, personel and adequate facilities (*MoGCSP, interviewee, Department of Policy and Planning, August, 2023*) to see to the day-to-day administrative task ensuring that stakeholders are duly registered and abide by rules.

The discontinuity and delays of interventions disrupts progress initially made as it has to be started all over again which kills morale, momentum and causes agitation and fatigue for both beneficiaries and stakeholders and consequently, the total buy-ins on the part of kayayei. Achieving a sustained impact therefore requires a long-term and continuous efforts and a holistic integration of the social systems which cannot operate in a vacuum (Baraldi, et al., 2021, p.221) for effective results are to be achieved. Working and communicating together will help identify gaps and mobilize pragmatic solutions.

It was noticed that, there was a big difference on how each stakeholder-the government, the kayayei, CSOs and IDPs viewed program outcomes. Whiles the government saw it in positive light, the latter acknowledged continuous challenges. The former assumes effectiveness without adequate test and rely on past programs which worked or discontinued due to factors such as funding. It is however to take into account the changing dynamics for tailored actions.

Furthermore, the frequent changes in leadership, management roles and internal conflicts of interest has resulted in inconsistent strategies and shifted priorities. Both IDPs and the government agencies recorded internal conflicts of interest hindering continuation of ongoing projects, change in leadership of program coordinators, government appointees, and incumbent government and the nonchalant attitudes of workers. A classic scenario was the intention to create a database for Kayayei in 2019 (IDP interviewee, October, 2023) but unfortunately did not see the light of day because of internal conflict. Having a stable leadership and promoting unity is important for effective coordination. It is therefore necessary for all the systems to work harmoniously together.

Also, Inter-ethnic conflicts has also been posing as a treat and impeding successful collaborations sometimes leading to social tensions which disrupts the collective effort.

There have been quite a number of researches done on the kayayei (*IDP National program analyst interviewee, October 2023*), but it has mostly been external rather than the government themselves. This sometimes led to a lack of ownership and relevance in program design and implementation especially by the government. The buy-ins of the government and participatory and inclusive process of involving the kayayei in researches and decision-making is progressive in addressing the issues.

Another finding was that, although there are ongoing interventions, they have not really addressed the root causes of the problem in the north (FORWARD, ACDEP and PAYDP, 2018, p.10: *Aku, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023*) nor met the girls exactly at the point of their needs as most of the interventions by the government are not tailored but generic. These drives such as economic disparities and limited opportunities are not being adequately addressed in the north to make the systems better. For programs to be effective and see more results, the north itself must be highly targeted and make living standards better to attract the girls to stay back since it has been the least to see development projects since the pre-colonial and post-colonial era (Abdul-Korah, 2011; Mabogunje, 1990; Pickbourn, 2011). PAYDP has recently adopted to provide robust specific tailored approaches to cater for the needs of their beneficiaries and communities which is yielding and creating local ownerships (*Aku, PAYDP interviewee, August, 2023*). This can be adopted by other stakeholders and a database system where best practices are shared could be useful. It is no doubt that the phenomenon has gained traction in the country and caught the attention of government. It must however be depoliticized and focused more on evidence-based solutions, and not rely on quick results because for transformation to truly occur, a long term approach and consistency must be adopted rather than using it for political agenda to score points. Resources should be mobilized to improve their wellbeing. Interagency learning and communication (Baraldi, et al., 2021) must be encouraged to share best practices from experts in the sector for the systems to work together.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted several important factors which shapes the realities of the kayayei and the dynamics of the intervention programs. It provides an insight into the complexities of the phenomenon and the need to provide a more sustainable and coordinated approach to address the situation comprehensively. It highlighted that adhoc interventions cause fragmentation and

lack of momentum, tribal differences, gatekeeper's impacts, power and leadership imbalances, ethnic stereotypes, contrasting perspectives, and lack of a coalition to monitor coordination for coherent results. It highlighted the need to address pre and post- colonial imbalances in development across the country and also the need to have long and short term strategies and the need to create and encourage local ownerships and buy-ins of projects through tailored interventions.

CHAPTER 5

EMPOWERMENT AND COORDINATION MOSAIC: PIECING TOGETHER THE PUZZLE

5.0 Introduction

Having examined the multidimensional layers of coordination through inquiry in this research, this chapter stands at the threshold of conceptual application and implications. It is imperative to ask the fundamental central question guiding the exploration of this research which is what are the barriers impeding effective coordination of intervention programs for kayayei? What happened to sustain the continuous phenomenon of kayayei? And how can theoretical frameworks shed light on understanding the limitations embedded in the support for intervention programs? This chapter unravels not only the ‘what’ and ‘why’ but ‘how’? Going beyond the descriptive exploration in chapter four, the goal is to engage with the conceptual frameworks of this research allowing them act as tools for examining the layers of causation and consequences surrounding coordination and to gain understanding of the inherent approaches for assisting the kayayei. The intent is to extract actionable knowledge which will inform the design and implementation of future interventions for a positive change and enhance sustainability.

5.1 Harmonizing patterns

Social actions have intended and unintended consequences which is described by sociologist Merton (1968) as manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are recognized and have explicit existence of social actions or institutions which contributes to specific goals achievement. On the other hand, latent functions may be or not be apparent immediately but may still have significant impacts which could be positive, negative or neutral. From the findings there is no single explanation for the outcome of lack of coordination for intervention programs for the Kayayei. It consists of a cocktail of things both intended and unintended. Initially in the research, my focus was on stakeholders who implement intervention programs especially the role of government in coordinating all other stakeholders for a more effective coordination. I quickly adjusted my position on this based on my findings and acknowledge it is a myriad of things. As someone who worked briefly with the Kayayei, a lot of things have provoked me on the outcome of the findings. This helps me to critically reflect on the conceptual implication. The theoretical lens coming from this are hegemonic masculinity, system dynamics of donors and I, modern day slavery or human trafficking and agency.

The ambivalent impact of programs such as the ‘Operationsendthehome’ and the annual kayayei leadership and business fair can be analyzed as both positive and negative. They are designed to increase visibility, provide mentorship, promotes inclusivity, raise awareness of challenges and potentially generate income and partnerships for the goods and products created by the kayayei which are exhibited and sold during the fairs (GNA, 2023). The initiative fosters a sense of community and solidarity by bring together kayayei from various markets across the country and stakeholders to join efforts together. However, it inadvertently perpetuates dependency on external aid, undermining the kayayei efforts towards their self-sufficiency, agency and empowerment so as other programs. It also reinforces stereotypes which contributes to their commodification which will potentially overshadow the broader systemic issues. For instance, the lack of communication (Baraldi, et al., 2021, p.221) and collaborations among stakeholders could further exploit than empower them as there may be competing interests and priorities among the stakeholders for funding creating a poor connection. They may have trade-offs for short-term benefits through the fair to get funding from donors or limited resources and this fair and other similar programs may not necessarily address the root causes of the challenges. It is therefore important to balance perspectives and analyze help to avoid nuances surrounding such programs. It is important to note that not all well intended initiatives may have no negative implications (Boudon, 1982). For instance, the unintended consequences of the fair lures more girls to come into the cities because of the goodies they get during the annual event. Stakeholders must therefore be analytical and have a pragmatic approach of their interventions to identify such trade-offs. The programs can possibly be sent into their communities rather than congregating them in the city thereby promoting the localization agenda. This will give the opportunity for more girls to participate and save residential cost.

Furthermore, stakeholders’ dynamics of providing incentives coupled with the entitled sense of ‘donor sweetheart’ mentality significantly impacts the effectiveness of interventions. This makes over reliance on external support (Shah, 2009). For instance, the kayayei may drop out of programs because incentives stop coming in or implementers halt because of lack of cash flow. Their motivation for joining or implementing a program may not be genuine but rather for the immediate benefits they will derive and not long term impacts. Therefore the moment the incentives and funds seizes, they opt out because unrealistic expectations were formed. The inconsistency, lack of connections and lack of momentum to keep programs running also affects buy-ins as programs may end abruptly. This makes beneficiaries lose trust for certain interventions as well as insufficient benefits of livelihood skills which does not bring in regular income as they are used to the daily wages.

Again, programs which lack community ownership (JCL, 2021) and buy-in quickly fizzle out

because donors and stakeholders may dominate the decision-making process which lacks inputs from the communities it seeks to serve. This further marginalizes their agency because they are not fully participating and being included in finding shared solutions. For stakeholders who are seeking immediate results to showcase for funding usually have short-term priorities which undermines the pursuit of a sustainable and long-term solution. When these stakeholders dictate the terms of interventions (Patel and Brabant, 2017), they may prioritize only strategies that align with their expectations rather than addressing the root causes which does not align with the needs and preferences of the beneficiaries. This mismatch leads to disconnected realities which hinders the sustainability and coordination of interventions at the local level. Hence there is the need to have local strategic frameworks and policies for short and long term plans to guide stakeholders. This also makes them totally dependent on external assistance.

To mitigate this dynamic and foster collaborations, open dialogues between stakeholders and local communities and the perspectives of the girls is crucial. It is very important to include their voice to fully participate in the whole design process and decisions to set realistic expectations and ownership to promote sustainability. This involves recognizing their expertise, creating spaces for meaningful engagement, and shifting the power-balance away from donor and stakeholder-driven to community or beneficiary driven by using indigenous knowledge and acknowledging their agency to foster leadership and capacity sharing thereby promoting decoloniality (Tossounian, 2014) and optimizing partnership (Fabre, 2017, p. 8). Decoloniality also involves deconstructing and reframing historical colonial narratives and influence in the regional development disparities between the north and the south (Abdul-Korah, 2011; Mabogunje, 1990; Pickbourn, 2011) to make it attractive for them to stay. This will bridge the gap between marginalized voices, inequality and inclusive governance as well as encourage the Kayayei to own the coordination and programs evaluation rather than not caring because they do not associate with the interventions which may be a disadvantage to the stakeholders because it will be a lost investment and outcome. For the stakeholders systems to be collaborative, there must be constant communication and not working in silos (Baraldi, et al., 2021, p.221). A database for sharing information will be useful to avoid layering of projects but have enough data on the new realities and changing profiles in order to provide tailored support.

There are traditional hierarchies in the communities of the kayayei. This is apparent in their leadership structure. They collaborate to form collectives based on shared experiences. Intergenerational leaders preserve traditions and maintain cultural identity. They pass down expertise through informal mechanisms to the younger generation and transfer knowledge. Their collective action leads to social change and influence policies which impact their community. However, their ethnic diversity pose a challenge to the realization of the full

capacity of this collective agency. These ethnic barriers intersecting with stereotypes and inter-ethnic conflicts affect their unity (Blege, 2001).

5.2 Breaking the mold

The Kayayei phenomenon can be viewed as a form of empowerment, using their agency as resistance against dominant traditional gender norms challenging hegemonic masculinity, and bodily autonomy often necessitated by economic circumstance reflecting their complex choices in a restrained environment. By participating in this economic activity, they disrupt restrictive gender roles to reclaim control over their bodies by defying stereotypes and resisting practices such as child marriage. They exercise agency by challenging societal expectations that prescribes to them how they should navigate their lives based on their identities, status and ethnicity (Appiah, 2018). Therefore, not every kayayoo is marginalized and needs support. The tendency to miss migrants' agency due to their intersectionality rather than an achievement or empowerment is high (Winters, 2020, p.243). They may therefore resist the programs and go back into the trade because they make daily income there than the alternative livelihood skills. They may also resist because of stereotypes of superiority complex from stakeholders. This solidarity contributes to collective efforts which reshape societal norms.

Conversely, cultural schemas still perpetuates traditional gender roles of hegemonic masculinity in the leadership of the kayayei as gatekeepers, who are mostly men take the ultimate decisions and have a powerful influence on intervention programs and coordination. This continues to emphasize the traditional male dominance of power and reinforcement of gender hierarchies. This is mostly due to their traditional laws of succession and patriarchy. Although they may be out of their region, they still practice the culture legitimizing the males as protectors. This has led to establishing the male gatekeepers to wield power and control over the female workers giving them a significant influence over their working conditions and benefiting from intervention programs. This has set a stage for exploitation and manipulation over economic resources meant for the Kayayei beneficiaries. As these gatekeepers may decide who can participate in a program because they are the mobilizers. International donors, development partners and national aid programs have also indirectly encouraged some form of modern day slavery through the use of the roles of the gatekeepers. It therefore gives them the opportunity to dictate to the conditions of work to these women potentially subjecting them to poor treatments resembling aspects of modern day slavery, such as fines, determining where to sleep, long working hours, doing unwanted sexual favors, etc. This association of masculinity contributes to normalizing of exploitative behaviors, making it difficult for the women to

challenge such conditions due to entrenched social norms. Intersecting factors such as economic status and class further shapes the extent of the exploitation and deepens the challenges these girls face. Efforts must be made to minimize the influence of these male gatekeepers to shift the power dynamics and reduce vulnerability to exploitation, abuse and trafficking.

Fraser's (1998), theory on gender justice: - redistribution and recognition also provides a valuable lens and highlights the relevance of addressing disparities holistically. The framework emphasize the significance of social and cultural recognition. The kayayei often face economic disparities, with men often wielding power and control and even benefiting financially on some of the programs which can advert resources from the targeted beneficiaries. Cultural schemas, stereotypes, intergenerational influence and the intersectionality nature of the phenomenon plays a significant impact in the lives of the kayayei, coordination, products and services. These perceptions have ripple effects how they are treated and the opportunities available to them. Therefore promoting an economically, inclusive and respectful society is important for gender justice and equality. Programs designed must directly and significantly benefit the kayayei and improve their financial well-being and independence. Recognizing the kayayei trade as formal will also help to regulate, provide legal protection, social benefits, which contributes to redistributive justice.

The interconnected dimensions of empowerment, resources, agency and achievement by Kabeer (2001) and Fraser's (1998) emphasizes economic empowerment as a resource central to improving the autonomy and well-being of the kayayei as well as social resources such as social capital and social networks. This is seen in their group/sect where they organize themselves for support. The dimension of agency for Kabeer includes the ability of the kayayei making decisions and choices for themselves. Interventions and research programs must prioritize and provide an enabling environment to exercise their agency and how they want to be treated. Intervention programs must be tangible in improving the lives of these girls. These achievements must then be assessed from their viewpoint. Short-term intervention programs have not been very effective and just touch on the problem as a token. These interventions must not be limited to short-term gains but make strategic plans and encourage continuous approach for a long-term impact.

Stakeholders are interconnected elements whose interactions have implications on the programs delivery because they are not isolated but part of a whole and their actions impacts the overall success of intervention programs. Communication is an important element for the success of every program. However, from the findings, it is apparent there is a feedback loophole disrupting the flow of information among stakeholders such as the lack of an

information management and data base system which they can use as a reference to make informed decisions and adapt strategies. This has led to unintended consequences like misunderstandings, duplications and conflict. Without a database and information management system, stakeholders operate in information deficit environments. This lacking component inhibits the ability of stakeholders to adapt, learn and adjust although the sum of stakeholders' behavior could be different from each other. Example, coordination mechanisms by the government, CSOs can produce different outcomes which affects the kayayei differently.

Furthermore, the absence of an agency or coalition by the government to monitor and coordinate activities shows lack of boundary. Without defining boundaries and a clear-cut roles and responsibilities, interventions become blurred, and their needs are not addressed comprehensively. Attitudes and behaviors can influence outcomes and the nonchalant attitudes of public employees creates negative system behaviors such as causing delays, poor service delivery, lack of motivation etc.

One integral part for an effective coordination is absence of a social protection policy and strategic framework to address the phenomena. This makes overreliance on external and foreign policies which could have negative impacts when the programs end. This incomplete element compromises the empowerment and protection of the girls. Understanding that the phenomenon has evolved is important to create and adjust strategies for interventions based on their changing profiles.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Reframing discussions from vulnerability to resilience

In our quest to unravel the nuance and dynamics of coordination strategies within intervention programs aimed at empowering kayayei in Ghana, this research asked the fundamental question: ‘what are the underlying factors and systematic barriers which hinders the successful coordination of intervention programs for kayayei? The question emerged from the recognition of fragmentation of programs which impeded effectiveness to maximize results. The research delved into the experiences of the Kayayei and stakeholders at various levels to scrutinize coordination strategies used. This unearthed a tapestry of awareness both promising aspects of the intervention initiatives and barriers which impedes its success.

It was found that the pervasive influence of systematic barriers such as socio-economic inequalities and cultural norms of gender dynamics and policy shortcoming are ingrained into the fabric of the phenomenon which is multifaceted and poses a challenge for a holistic solution.

The findings underscored complexities in coordination which undermined interventions often included lack of systems communication, database for information, conflicting interests, lack of beneficiary and community ownership of projects, inadequate funding, lack of continuation momentum, leadership crisis among others which influences the outcome of empowerment programs and transformation. Other emerging pivotal influences include the intersectionality of hegemonic masculinities, identities, stereotypes, inter-ethnic conflicts, mentality of donor ‘sweethearts’, the public’s attitudes towards the phenomenon, influence of gatekeepers and aspects of modern-day slavery.

Amidst these hindrances, this research sheds light on the kayayei remarkable strength, resourcefulness, resilience, agency and commitment in transforming their lives despite the systematic barriers in their communities this research identified. It further identified some strategies for effective coordination which emphasize the relevance of inclusivity, community ownership, addressing root causes, providing tailored needs, building momentum, social relationships, building local strategic frameworks and systems networks for knowledge sharing and guidance. Collaborative efforts must be made to bridge the gap between stakeholders and leveraging on local knowledge to make informed decisions on initiatives to foster effective interventions.

To sum up, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on providing a comprehensive understanding of the nuances hindering intervention programs in the context of the Kayayei in Ghana. It throws light on the barriers and potential ways for a transformative change for more sustainable interventions. The findings call for a robust reevaluation of the approaches in

interventions and advocates for community and beneficiary centered initiatives tailored to needs for local ownership, culturally sensitive and attention to new emerging trends. Stakeholders must address the unmet need to have strong negotiation with kayayei gatekeepers to mitigate the phenomenon or most importantly, develop robust programs to drive sustainability to reduce their influence on beneficiaries. As this research concludes, the imperative becomes clearer for intervention programs to maximize result. It demands a holistic collaborative effort which transcends traditional boundaries and embraces the voices within the resilient communities it seeks to serve.

6.2 Charting the path forward: Recommendations for change

These recommendations have been derived from the findings and suggestions by the research participants. They provide a critical step towards addressing the challenges encountered by the kayayei and improving effectiveness of coordination strategies. These emphasizes the need for a sustainable, culturally sensitive and a comprehensive approach.

Recognizing kayayei as a legal form of work and providing legal protection and better working conditions can transform the outlook of the trade and prevent inequalities and exploitation. By regulating and formalizing it, they can have pension plans, access to loans, labor laws protection, etc. it can also be an opportunity to get an accurate database on them and prevent and protect underage age children from the hazards associated with the work. Registration can be limited to 18 years and above. Also by doing this the influence of gatekeepers will be minimized or eliminated to ensure that resources and opportunities directly goes to the beneficiaries as intended.

It is important to adopt a holistic and strategic short and long term approach to address the challenges for a more effect result. Intervention programs should be designed to work consistently and continuously, avoiding breaks and disruptions in services to keep up the momentum for sustainable impact.

Programs should be culturally sensitive, accommodating and respecting the cultural norms of the beneficiaries they work for and with. This will prevent clashes and encourage buy-ins. To create a more inclusive and supportive environment, efforts should be made to change and the negative perception and stereotype. Mindsets must be desensitized and conscientize including that of the kayayei themselves.

Developing a comprehensive state policy for short and long terms plans will help to guide coordination and implementation of programs. Feasibility studies must also be conducted to

understand the dynamics on what kind of interventions work best in specific areas in order for tailored made programs to address the unique needs of each group. It is important to acknowledge the agency of the kayayei and allow them to make informed decisions and choices on their exact need. This will make them to own projects and buy-in. Implementers must adapt interventions that meet the evolving needs of the kayayei as their profiles also changes. This includes providing loans, hostels, and other tailored support.

Collaborating, partnership and advocacy efforts must continue to be established with relevant parties who can enhance capacity development efforts such as mentorship, trainer to trainer programs, housing, urban roads, etc. to provide valuable support to all the stakeholders. These recommendations offer a roadmap for governmental bodies, organizations, policy makers and everyone involved in providing intervention programs to the Kayayei to create an effective, sustainable and culturally sensitive initiatives which will address the multidimensional challenges encountered by this group of girls.

6.3 Forging ahead?

Having worked with the kayayei previously in various capacities, these questions have lingered on in my mind: why does intervention not get maximum results? Who is responsible for coordination, monitoring and evaluation and what barriers are hindering collaborations. I wondered, how can stakeholders join resources together to maximize impact and avoid fragmentation? Due to my background, I had assumptions which were mostly institutional based but they have been quickly debunked by the findings of this work through empirical evidence. Although some of my assumptions turned out to be corrected while others were entirely unrelated. I have been surprised about the interesting findings I came across through this research which have been an oversight in implementation.

If I should turn back the hands of time to start this research all over again, I would considered the following question: *How does public perceptions and attitudes influence outcomes of interventions towards Kayayei products and services?* I would also have considered the *influence of gatekeeper's roles and interests on coordination and their power dynamics which influence intervention outcomes.* I would have explored *current exploitative practices employed within the Kayayei context which aligns with contemporary modern-day slavery in the forms of control and coercion which is manifesting and prevailing currently and the impact of 'madams' and role of gatekeepers in trafficking.* I would further explore *how inter-ethnic conflicts shape priorities, and influence collaboration among beneficiaries and how comparative analysis can contribute to enhancing programs for a more effective result in harmony.* By exploring these questions future

researchers could possibly contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in interventions aimed at serving the kayayei community. In this way they may facilitate a more sensitive strategic approach and guidance for a comprehensive policy framework.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I List of Respondents

Summary of Interview Respondents

ORGANIZATIONS	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES	DEPARTMENTS	POSITIONS	METHOD	DATE
1. Purim African Youth Development Platform (PAYDP)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO 	Founder	In-depth interview	August, 2023
2. Ministry of gender, children and social protection	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Gender (DoG) Social welfare Policy and Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer Deputy Director Director 	In-depth interview	August, 2023
3. United Nation Populations Fund (UNFPA)- Ghana Country Office	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Project coordinator National Programs Analyst 	In-depth interview	August - October, 2023
KAYAYEI INTERVIEWEES					
METHODS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	MARKETS	AGE		
1. In-depth interview & Life history	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tema Station Agbogbloshie Madina 	18-24		August to September, 2023
2. Focus Group Discussion	7				
Total Organizational participants=6 Kayayei=15					

Appendix II Semi- Structured Interview Guide for organizational stakeholders

Section 1: Demographics

Name:

Organization/Agency:

Position/Role:

Contact Information:

Section 1: Background Information

1. Could you please introduce yourself and your affiliation with the organization or agency involved in Kayayei intervention programs?
2. Who decides on which intervention programs to do and for who?
3. Who provides funding?
4. How does the government support these programs?
5. What social protection policies are there to protect the kayayei?
6. What programs are you currently running?
7. Based on your interactions with Kayayei and other stakeholders, what are the specific gaps or unmet needs in the current intervention programs?
8. How do you ensure that the voices of Kayayei women and girls are considered in decision-making processes and program design?
9. How do you collaborate and communicate with other stakeholders involved in providing assistance to Kayayei?
10. Are there any challenges you encounter in maintaining effective collaboration and communication with other stakeholders? If yes, please explain.
11. What is the role of the government?
12. What are the key challenges and barriers faced in coordinating efforts among stakeholders to empower Kayayei? How do these challenges affect the effectiveness of intervention programs?
13. In your view, what factors contribute to the long-term sustainability of intervention programs for Kayayei? How can the impact of these programs be enhanced?
14. What strategies are used to strengthen the leadership and organizational capacity of Kayayei?

Appendix III Semi-structure Interview and Focus Group Discussion

FGD Guide for Kayayei

Section 1: Demographics

Name

Age:

Sex

Region of Origin

Current Location (City/Town):

Region of Origin

City/Town

Educational Background:

Marital Status:

1. How long have you been involved in kayayei (head porter) work?
2. What were the main reasons or factors that led you to become a kayayei?
3. What are the significant challenges you face as a kayayei in your daily work and life?
1. Have you encountered any instances of discrimination or prejudice while working as a kayayei? If yes, please share your experiences.
2. How does your work as a kayayei affect your overall well-being and health?

Section 4: Intervention Programs and participation

1. Have you participated in any intervention programs aimed at empowering kayayei women and girls? (Yes/No)
2. If yes, how has the intervention program impacted your life and work as a kayayei?
3. What additional support or services do you believe would be beneficial for the empowerment of kayayei women and girls?
4. What would you like to change?
5. How are you involved in planning of programs to be implemented by organizations?
6. How do you get selected to join an intervention program? What criteria is normally used for selection?
7. Do you feel involved in the decision-making processes related to the coordination of assistance programs? If yes, how do you participate?
8. In your experience, what are the main barriers or challenges that hinder successful coordination of assisted programs for Kayayei? How do all the stakeholders help you to get your products out there for economic gains?
9. Have you faced any barriers or obstacles in accessing the support provided by intervention programs? If yes, please explain.
10. Do you feel empowered in your work and life as a kayayei? Please provide specific examples.
11. How do you mobilize to support yourselves?
12. Do you use the alternative skills thought you to work? If yes what have you done so far and is it economically beneficial? If no, why not?
13. What are your aspirations and dreams for the future?
14. Based on your experiences, what changes or improvements do you suggest to enhance the empowerment and well-being of kayayei women and girls in Ghana