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Women Empowerment in Northern Ghana
Research based on the example of two Ghanaian NGOs

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List of abbreviations

ACP	African Caribbean Pacific
AfDB	African Development Bank
DYDI	Damongo Youth Development Initiative
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GIGDEV	Girls Growth and Development
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NEET	People not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORRAG	Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NSCCL	National Steering Committee in charge of Child Labour
NVTI	National Vocational Training Institute of Ghana
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
RAINS	Regional Advisory and Information Network Systems Ghana
REP	Rural Enterprise Project
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
TVED	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skills Development
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem statement

The Northern Region of Ghana is characterised by massive labour migration both abroad and towards the south of the country. This is due to a structural neglect in terms of economic performance, infrastructure, lack of education service and lack of job opportunities in the north compared to the south of Ghana. A relatively new phenomenon is the specific cyclical migration pattern among women: Many young girls and women migrate from northern Ghana to the south of the country and end up working as load carriers (also called head porters or the local word “kayayei”) in the urban places of Ghana. Recent studies show that this kind of business, which can be described as a typical female business, has been growing immensely during the last decades with an increasing number of girls and women becoming involved in the “kayayei-business” (Awumbila 2007; Oberhauser/Yeboah 2011; Tanle 2003). This group of female migrants works in the market centres and lorry stations of the big cities of Ghana, carrying goods on their heads and selling them for a fee. Many women do this business seasonally, that means they migrate cyclically from the north to the south of Ghana in order to earn money.

Emigration in search for a job (labour migration) can bring many positive economic effects, such as remittances which can be invested locally or used for family and relatives etc. However, this type of labour migration and involvement in the “kayayei-business” does not only bring advantages, but also many precarious situations for women: so called “kayayei” are often confronted with unfair payment conditions, sexual harassments, precarious housing situations, exploitation or fraud etc. The majority of women involved in the “kayayei-business” comes from the northern part of Ghana, never went to school, is illiterate, has a lack of vocational skills and suffers from a poor financial status.

As adequate education and especially employment opportunities for women in the northern part of Ghana are rare and socio-cultural norms often hinder girls to go to school or attend trainings the situation for girls and women in general is difficult. Therefore many girls and women see themselves forced to migrate in search for work. They often end up in underpaid precarious jobs in the trade or sales business (Awumbila 2008; Tanle 2003; Adjei 2006).

Additionally the subordinate role of women in society, due to socio-cultural norms, often prevents women from taking part in the financial decision-making process or to have control

over financial means. Due to lack of education opportunities women do not have access to knowledge and therefore remain oppressed in the system (Apusigah 2004).

The combination of socio-economic weakness in the region, lack of education and employment opportunities as well as the oppressed position of women in society perpetuates a system which keeps women disadvantaged in society (ibid.).

Particular projects which are targeted on women empowerment and focused on training and education can serve as opportunities for women to change their situation and can serve as alternatives to labour migration.

1.2. Research interest and aims of the thesis

The phenomenon of internal labour migration among women from northern Ghana as well as precarious occupational fields like the “kayayei-business” is a consequence of the poor education and employment situation for women in the Northern Region of Ghana as well as of the general poor economic performance of the region and particular socio-cultural norms.

Women empowerment projects which are specialised on vocational skills trainings based in northern Ghana are targeting women with low levels of education or no education at all. This group of women is highly endangered to involve themselves into labour migration and thus precarious and hazardous jobs. The interest of the thesis is to find out about the role and strategies of two specific Ghanaian women empowerment projects in the Northern Region of Ghana in order to face the mentioned challenges for women.

A qualitative research among women participating in the two specific vocational skills training projects was carried out in order find out about women’s labour migration experiences; changes and benefits in their lives since they attend the skills training and women’s desire to migrate (again) in search for work after the training.

Specifically the research is focused on finding out about economic and social empowering factors, since it is assumed here that financial and social empowerment among women can lead towards less labour migration and occupation in precarious job-sectors and to a strategic change in power inequalities.

Based on the research outcome it is analysed which form of empowerment has taken place among women participating in skills training projects. Since economic and social empowering factors are seen as prerequisites for a self-fulfilled future without precarious occupations as well as for a strategic shift in power relations in society it shall be concluded whether voca-

tional skills training projects can contribute to a decrease of a form of labour migration which is precarious and dangerous for young women from northern Ghana.

Based on the findings the concluding chapters also involve recommendations for the two vocational skills training projects; for Ghanaian government institutions; for donor partners as well as all actors interested in the field of women empowerment through vocational skills training. The aim of the thesis is not to compare the two organisations in focus but to achieve a learning process between the two NGOs in order to optimise their offer and in meeting young women's interests and requirements.

1.3. Research questions

The description of the problem statement and research interest leads to the following research questions:

1. Why do women migrate from northern Ghana to southern Ghana and why do they end up in precarious situations when working as “kayayei”?
2. What are the objectives and strategies of two local Ghanaian women empowerment projects (DYDI and GIGDEV)?
3. How can vocational skills training projects contribute to an empowerment among women and lead to less labour migration among women?

1.4. Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were therefore formulated in advance:

- 1) Lack of education and vocational training as well as lack of labour opportunities in northern Ghana are among the main determinants for labour migration among women from northern Ghana.
- 2) Development projects such as DYDI and GIGDEV contribute to an empowerment among women through the provision of education and vocational skills training and provide an alternative to labour migration for women.

1.5. Methodology

The thesis and research is based on the study and analysis of primary and secondary sources and on an empirical qualitative research conducted during February 2013 and July 2013 in Ghana. Information about the socio-economic context of the research area (poverty, economic

performance, education situation, employment situation, globalisation/SAP impacts etc.) was collected mainly by primary and secondary sources. The secondary literature is composed of monographs, collected editions, scientific articles, relevant internet sources, articles of international organisations and NGOs. Primary sources comprise legislative texts, publications by governmental institutions, statistics by the Ghanaian national statistical service, Ghanaian national development plans etc.

In order to answer the second and third research questions it was necessary to conduct interviews in the research area. Information about the empirical research, the research design and interpretation strategy is described in detail in chapter 5.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is grouped into 9 chapters. The first chapter contains a problem statement, information about the research area and the aims of the thesis as well as information about the research questions and appropriate hypotheses. It also includes a short section about the methodology used to compose the thesis.

Chapter 2 gives an insight into the focus region of the thesis. It focuses particularly the gap between northern and southern Ghana and historical and current inequalities and challenges.

Chapter 3 deals with the employment situation in Ghana and with labour migration as a consequence of the poor employment situation for women in the northern part of Ghana. Additionally, the phenomenon of the “kayayei-business” is described in this chapter.

The situation of education and vocational skills training in Ghana as well as the concept of empowerment in general and in the context of Ghanaian women is analysed in chapter 4 of the thesis.

Chapter 5 describes the methodological approach of the empirical research in northern Ghana in detail. It includes the different research phases, design of interviews as well as limitations of the research.

The chapters 6 and 7 describe the two vocational skills training projects in focus, give information about their intentions and strategies and their understanding of women empowerment. These chapters also include a separate analysis of the outcomes of the interviews as well as an interpretation of the empirical research with special focus on empowerment factors and experiences of women with labour migration and the “kayayei-business”.

Chapter 8 summarises the outcomes of the research among participants of the two skills training organisations and describes common and overlapping empowerment factors and challenge areas of the interview partners. Additionally, the chapter includes a variety of recommendations which are based on the findings.

Chapter 9 provides an overall conclusion and gives information about the most important outcomes of the thesis.

2. Contextual analysis of the research field

2.1. Introduction

Ghana is predominantly a rural country, 64% of the total population live in rural areas, predominantly in the north of Ghana. In the three northern regions 80-90% of the population lives in rural areas.

Ghana has 10 administrative regions and 170 districts.

In the literature and in the general linguistic usage Ghana is often referred to as having a southern and a northern part which is historically determined.

The northern part comprises three regions: Northern Region, Upper West and Upper East. The three northern regions comprise 41% of the country's total area and 25% of its population. The climate is sudanic which

means that it is very dry with only a single rainy season per year (April/May to September), whereas the south has two rainy seasons and is therefore more fertile (Coulombe/Wodon 2007). Compared to the south the north has a shorter growing season, erratic rainfall, no high forest and no cocoa. Goods exported to the South are yams, shea butter as well as livestock (Ladouceur 1979).

This linguistic north-south divide is not only due to geographical and climate differentials, but traces back to pre-colonial and colonial times, where the north and the south were governed differently and the north was used mainly as a labour reservoir for southern areas. Post-colonial efforts to close this gap have achieved only little progress (Aryeetey/Harrigan 2000). Especially in terms of poverty and inequality significant disparities can be recognised between the northern savannah region and the southern areas of Ghana.

However, disparities do not only exist between north and south but it must be considered that there are significant inequalities within regions, in particular there are substantial rural-urban differentials in terms of poverty. Rural areas have higher levels of deprivation than urban are-



Figure 1 Map of Ghana

Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/ghana/ghana-political-map.html>
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as and especially the rural northern areas of Ghana are the most deprived ones within the whole of the country, whereas the urban centres in the north are equal of their southern counterparts (World Bank 2006). However, overall poverty and human development inequalities (access to health and education) are much higher in the north of the country, compared to the south. According to the Ghana Poverty Map there has been stagnation or only very limited progress towards poverty reduction in the northern savannah area since 1990 (Coulombe/Wodon 2007). There was an increase in poverty in the capital Accra as well during the last years – whereas Coulombe/Wodon explain this by a large migration inflow – and a reduction in the coastal and forest areas could be achieved (ibid.).

The majority of the poor in the north works in the agricultural sector. People grow primarily food crops and some crops for export such as cocoa. Poverty has also a gender dimension, with women facing higher levels of deprivation than men (ibid.). In the following chapters the gap between northern and southern Ghana will be explained in a historical, economic and development context.

2.2. North-south gap in Ghana: a colonial legacy

The north-south gap in Ghana is to a large part a historical legacy. The rural north was always a contested region in terms of labour reserve and hence an area of exploitation; the coastal regions were contested because of its fertile grounds and commercial meaning due to geographical position (Schicho 2004).

Pre-colonial relationships between the Asante kingdom and northern ethnic groups in the northern Ghanaian region established a hierarchy of dominance. The Asante kingdom always tried to block the expansion of the British to the north. After the Congress of Berlin in the year 1884/5 and the formal colonisation of the Gold Coast by the British a contest over northern Ghana took place. German explorers, French explorers and the British were involved in the struggle for this region. In 1888 the British and the Germans agreed to establish a so called “Neutral Zone”. Within this zone it was not allowed to seek for protectorates or exclusive influence. The “Neutral Zone” included parts of northern Ghana of these days where mainly Dagomba and Nanumba live and large parts of Eastern Gonja. The British finally succeeded in signing treaties with the chiefs of the Northern Territories and guaranteed exclusive rights for the British in the northern area. The ‘treaty of friendship and freedom of trade’ was signed between the British and the king of Daboya in northern Ghana in 1892. Whereas the friendship and trade were in interest of both sides, “[...] there is no doubt that in some cases, the African rulers were deceived or misled into signing treaties which contained clauses

whose full meaning and implications were not explained or even made known to them.” (Boahen 1987:48).

The strongest opposition against the British was still the Asante kingdom. Asante tried to defend their territory and their right to establish a state, but in 1896 the Governor of the Gold Coast committed troops to Kumasi, the capital of Asante kingdom, plundered the region and removed the Asantehene, the ruler over Asante kingdom. A few years later the Asante tried to resist another time against the British, this time they resisted first and foremost against direct taxation, compulsory labour, attempts of western education and against the demand for the Golden Stool (Boahen 1987). The Asante finally lost and by 1902 Asante as well as the Northern Territories were formally integrated into the British Empire and from this time on the Gold Coast was formally administrated under one Governor, with three constituent territories: the Gold Coast Colony, Asante (British protectorate) and the Northern Territories (British protectorate). After the First World War Togoland was included to be the fourth territory (Schicho 2004). The legislative, administrative and judicial systems of the four constituent territories were different. Until 1907 the Northern Territories were under military administration, whereas the south was governed by administrator officers. Consequently, political orders developed in different ways. While the south established political institutions in a modern western state sense, the north maintained its ethnic political system.

Until 1930 the British executed a form of direct rule, because the chiefs were rather seen as instruments for implementing orders of the colonial administrators and had no inherent authority. The system of indirect rule was eventually introduced to the Northern Territories in 1932. Northern chiefs were subordinated and under close supervision of British officers. The colonial administrators also installed chiefs in areas where there were no headmen. They created paramount chiefs and secured their power by ruling through these installed authorities. It also happened that chiefs were given authority over people of a different ethnic group. The chiefs didn't possess any political authority but only orders were passed through them. There were some matters over them they were given jurisdiction, such as markets, lorry parks, sanitation and later also facilities for primary schools. The administrative tasks, such as teacher's salaries and school materials were still given by the government (Ladouceur 1979).

The economy in the Northern Territories consisted mainly of subsistence agriculture, surpluses being sold at local markets. The assumption of the colonial administrators about the Northern Territories explains the relatively neglect of the north compared to the south: “As early as 1905, the colonial administration recognised that the Northern Territories was an economic

liability for the Gold Coast and that there was ‘no probability of any appreciable immediate increase in the revenue derived from the Northern Territories’” (Ladouceur 1979:45). There were no investigations into the North, except for what was needed for the south, such as trade or labour. Governor Sir Hugh Clifford justifies this attitude when saying that the population in the North was not large enough, transport was difficult and expensive and the area did not possess any natural advantages of soil or climate (ibid.). The Northern Territories hence were deemed by the colonial regime to have no direct economic value. The Governor therefore designated the territories as labour reserve for the mines and general labour recruitment in the cities in the South. “The period 1919 to 1924 saw the acceleration of labour recruitment in the Northern Territories. When [Governor] Guggisberg launched his development plan in November 1919 he calculated that a labour force of 27,000 men would be needed and suggested that a special recruitment scheme be organised in the Northern Territories“ (Anarfi et al 2003). Labour migrants from the north were involved in cocoa farms and in public works, such as building the railway and the harbour in Takoradi; in the mines and in the porter sector. Porterage or load carrying (human means of transport) continued at a high level until 1920 after the introduction of motor transport. The massive labour recruitment from the north had the effect that less people, mainly men, were involved in agricultural work in the north.

Generally speaking, the north of Ghana was subordinated to the south of the country in terms of economic and political aspects during British colonialism. British policy towards the Northern Territories can be characterised as one of paternalism, neglect and isolationism, as well as exploitation of the region’s manpower (Ladouceur 1979).

Moreover, the legacy of the colonial period is that of uneven development within the artificial created borders, not only concerning Ghana but the whole of African colonies. The colonies had to produce first and foremost for their colonial powers, which were in need of raw materials to accelerate production in the factories of industrial Europe. Colonies used to produce what they didn’t consume and consumed what they didn’t produce, because the colonial powers used the colonies also as markets for the sale of manufactured goods. The political, economic and infrastructural system created during colonial period was only to serve the colonial powers and therefore widely inadequate and very unevenly distributed within regions. “The outcome of this has been uneven regional economic development in most African countries, still a major stumbling block in the way of nation-building in Africa today“ (Boahen 1987:111). This is very much the case between the Gold Coast and the Northern Territories, though, both regions became independent as one country.

2.3. Independence and structural adjustment policies

Ghana became independent from Great Britain in 1957 and was the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence. Therefore, the country enjoyed to be an example for all the other colonies on the African continent. After independence Ghana went through many political and economic ups and downs, had periods of military rules and experienced four military coups: in 1966 when President Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown by the Ghanaian Army and police; in 1972 Prime Minister Busia's government was overthrown by military officers; in 1979 the third coup happened by the "Armed Forces Revolutionary Council" under J. J. Rawlings, who also organised the fourth coup in 1981. The first serious sign of democratisation were the multi-party elections in 1992, though, this was accompanied by heavy criticism of Rawlings' tight control over the political process. The opposition (New Patriotic Party) even boycotted the elections. However, J. J. Rawlings proved to be a civilian president, willing to practice separation of power, allowing a free press and an independent judiciary. Rawlings was re-elected in 1996 and did not follow the example of other African presidents in changing the constitution to allow himself a third term in office after 2000.

Since 1992 there have been two government-turnovers in 2001 when J. A. Kufuor from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) took over office from J. J. Rawlings from the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Government changed again in 2009 when J. A. Mills from NDC took over office.

Not just in terms of politics, but also in terms of economic performance, Ghana is one of the top countries in West Africa. In the first years after independence of Ghana in the year 1957 the country experienced a relatively high GDP growth under import-substitution policies. From 1964 on growth was turbulent and saw several ups and downs. There have been several years of negative growth, often years where the country saw government changes and military coups and explosive policy changes and reversals. By the beginning of 1983 the Ghanaian economy faced an explosive deterioration, due to inappropriate macro-economic and institutional development policies and external shocks. Deficits were covered through credits from the domestic banking system. This led to high inflation rates and an overvalued currency. Consequently the export revenues declined and imported goods were short. Investments and service provisions deteriorated as a consequence and a decline in real growth and per capita income was inevitable. Thus, many educated people left the country. This worsening situation forced the government under President J. J. Rawlings – which was named the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), a military dictatorship with civilians participating in the government – to introduce economic reforms. With major support from the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) as well as other multilateral and bilateral donors the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) was induced and the growth rate began to stabilise again in 1984 (Aryeetey/Harrigan 2000).

The second phase of reform in 1986 came along with a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), driven by the WB and IMF with the aim to engender a sustained economic growth and to increase the capacity of the economy to adjust to internal and external shocks.

Why is solely the economic growth rate emphasised so strongly here? The mainstream policy strategies in the 1980s, led by international financial institutes such as IMF but also multilateral donors such as United Nations (UN) and WB, followed a growth-oriented development approach, relying on modern growth-oriented countries and technologies (ibid.). As mentioned above, the overall aim of ERP (and SAPs) was economic growth through rapid industrialisation and private investments. In order to reach this aims a range of measurements were induced: the devotion of about 20% of total investment to the development of industry and trade; a flexible exchange rate policy, which meant that the currency was devaluated in order to increase export revenues; a gradual liberalisation of exchange and trade in order to improve the external payment position (ibid.). The policy of liberalising trade and payment formed the centre-piece of ERP with the result that increased export volumes in the traditional sectors of cocoa, gold and timber could be achieved, though, without large export diversification (ibid.). Moreover, the liberalising policies caused trends which are depriving the poorest groups in Ghana as will be explained further in the next section.

2.3.1. Impact of ERP

The impact of the ERP and SAPs in Ghana were widely seen positive and exemplary, however, structural inequalities and cut-backs in several sectors, particularly in the large agricultural sector led many people towards suffering, migration and unemployment. Most of the impact studies of adjustment policy in Ghana focus on the macro-economic performance and social costs of structural adjustments. In fact the macro-economy soon recovered from negative growth and could reach an 8% growth in 1984. However, the structure of the economy didn't change much: Private sector investment was minimal, agricultural growth was slow and only little employment in the formal sector could be created (Aryeetey/Kanbur 2005). The growth in the service sector was widely due to wholesale and retail trade. The agricultural sector which is the major sector in Ghana and occupies the majority of the labour force faced severe cut-backs and negligence. The agricultural sector policy since 1983 went through liberalisation of product and input markets, privatisation, experienced the removal of state monopolies,

elimination of price controls while subsidies and allowance for the introduction of private foreign exchange bureaus were introduced. These factors made transnational trade in global consumer items relatively easy. The result was a steady growth in the distributive trade sector of the economy since 1985 and more and more people, especially women, tried to generate income through the trading sector. Simultaneously, farmers faced a more limited access to credits, land and use of new technologies in production. The Ghanaian economist Ernest Aryeetey criticises the narrow focus of the ERP policy strategy. “Getting prices right is not sufficient to ensure sustained growth if several non-price constraints hamper the ability to respond to the new liberalized environment” (Aryeetey/Harrigan 2000:27).

As a result, the population of Ghana, especially northern Ghana, benefited little from structural adjustment policy of the 1980s, as the majority of the population is occupied in the agricultural sector. Moreover, the main export products such as cocoa, timber and gold don't grow in the northern regions to a large part. It can even be argued that the north was negatively affected by adjustment policies due to cut-backs in the agricultural sector, the limits of employment creation in the formal sector and the reductions in public spending (Whitfield 2009). Through a gender sensitive lens Jacob Songsore points out an important fact, namely that women are more engaged in unpaid domestic work than men. The work load for women therefore is high and their health is affected. “With a focus on growth rather than human development, SAP has had adverse effects on vulnerable groups such as women and children” (Songsore 2011:241). In addition, apart from women's subordinate access to productive assets, educational attainment and male-biased socio-cultural norms in work and employment, adjustment policies only brought incentives to traditional male sectors such as mining, forestry and export crop production. Food producers in Ghana, of whom 70% are women, experienced the smallest improvements in their living conditions, especially in the north of Ghana (Aryeetey Ellen 2000). Therefore, it is not an incidence that the 1980s and early 1990s were also the periods when more and more people, especially women, started to migrate from northern Ghana to the southern part of the country in order to find better income opportunities.

In terms of labour and employment, the informal sector employment, especially those attached to trading, has enormously grown due to ERP measurements and a shift from rural to urban economy has taken place. “There has been some displacement of labour from agriculture but it has been slow and it has been absorbed into services, especially trading, rather than manufacturing” (Fine/Boateng 2000:241). The informal sector in Ghana consists predominantly of the agricultural sector and the informal trade business. In both sectors a higher proportion of women can be found. Operations in the informal sector which are predominantly or

even exclusively female are petty trading, domestic working and portering (load carrying). The liberalisation policies of ERP promoted an increase in urbanisation and competition in trade and business and therefore increased the vulnerability in the whole informal sector, in which women are predominantly occupied. It can be argued therefore that structural adjustment has tended to discriminate against women by by-passing their economic interests (Areytey Ellen 2000). If it is argued that informal employment of women can be an additional source of money and brings out sometimes even more than formal employment, this is indeed true, but it must be kept in mind that the strategic situation of women is not changed by that and women are often discriminated and exploited. "Participation in informal sector enterprises does not necessarily empower women in some larger way but may be the main means to ensuring child survival and development" (Oppong 1997:164).

In order to summarise the impact of structural adjustment in Ghana it can be stated that *first* the measurements didn't lead to a structural shift in the Ghanaian economy in the sense of industrialisation and diversification. As emphasised by the Ghanaian economist Ernest Areytey, the macro-economic growths in the 1960s as well as in the 1980s both were largely a consequence of accumulated reserves and increased aid inflows and were not accompanied by improvements or a higher productivity (Areytey 2005). *Second*, the generation of more formal jobs failed, on the contrary, ERPs contributed to a rise in informal employment – which was partly due to liberalising policies – and therefore affected women most. *Third*, substantial cut-backs of public spending as well as of support for the agricultural sector perpetuated the poor situation for the rural population in northern Ghana.

2.4. Recent socio-economic performance in Ghana

Recently Ghana is one of the leading countries in West Africa in terms of growth, has a macro-economic stability and already reached the first of the Millennium Development Goals before 2015, namely to reduce extreme poverty¹ and hunger to the half. 2011 Ghana was classified from a low developed country to a medium developed country by UNDP. The Human Development Index (HDI) of Ghana currently amounts 0.558 and the country ranks 135 of 187 countries (UNDP HDR 2013). In the 1990s the average GDP growth rate was 4.3% and from 2001 onwards growth accelerated further. In the wake of the global financial crisis it declined again in 2008/2009, however in 2011 Ghana had a notably high growth rate of 14.4% (IMF 2012).

¹ income is less than \$1.25 a day

Concerning poverty, it must be first clarified how poverty can be measured. Only recently (since 2010) in the UNDP Human Development Reports poverty is measured by multiple factors such as health, education and living standard (Multidimensional Poverty Index). Poverty used to be measured just by income levels, indicated in dollars per day. Hence, if we compare data from the past with recent poverty trends, it is useful to take the income-level: Poverty rate was extremely high in 1991/92 (51.7%), but fell and currently 28.6% of the total population lives below the income poverty line of \$1.25 (UNDP HDR 2013). Before poverty was measured with the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), the Human Poverty Index (HPI) served as indicator. The HPI included longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living. According to the most recent indicator, the MPI, which includes the three dimension of the HPI and additionally some more indicators such as lack of income, disempowerment, poor quality of work, threat from violence etc., Ghana has a value of 0.144. That means that 31.2% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty and 21.6% of the population are vulnerable to poverty (UNDP HDR 2013)².

It must be considered, that there are substantial regional inequalities in Ghana. Measured by the population living on less than \$1.25 a day the three northern regions indicate a substantially higher poverty rate than the southern regions: the Northern Region has a poverty rate of 42%, the Upper East has a rate of 64% and in Upper West even 84% of the population lives below the poverty line. In the southern regions poverty rate ranges from 8% in Greater Accra to 22% in the Volta Region (GLSS 5 2008).

2.4.1. National development planning

Ghana is a highly donor-dependent country with a net ODA (Official Development Assistance) of USD 1.815 million in 2011 and a bilateral ODA share of 49% of GDP (OECD Aid Statistics). Among the main multilateral and bilateral donors are the World Bank funded IDA (International Development Association), United States, IMF, United Kingdom, African Development Bank (AfDB), EU Institutions, Canada, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands (ibid.).

In 1995 the Ghanaian Government set the target that Ghana should become a medium developed country within 25 years. This goal could be reached within 16 years. The first national Medium-Term Development Plan was adopted in 1997 and particularly aimed at: human development, economic growth, rural and urban development, infrastructure development and

² Data from 2008

an enabling environment. Ghana adopted two Poverty Reduction Strategies so far (GPRS I 2003-2005 and GPRS II 2006-2009). GPRS I was initiated as a condition for development assistance under the IMF-World Bank-supported Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative in 2002. Under GPRS I and GPRS II, substantial progress was made towards the realisation of macro-economic stability and the achievement of poverty reduction goals, though, structural challenges emerged: a balance of payment deficit and a fiscal deficit due to fiscal overruns and external shocks (crude oil and food price increases) (Areetey 2000).

The current national development agenda was prepared by the National Development Planning Commission and was published as '*Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda*' (GSGDA). The paper focuses on: human development; transparent and accountable governance and infrastructure development, particularly transport; ICT; housing and energy in support of agriculture modernisation; value added natural resource development with emphasis on oil and gas and private sector development. The aim is to accelerate and create employment opportunities and income generation for poverty reduction and shared growth (Government of Ghana GSGDA 2010). It must be stated here, that the GSGDA is not a politically binding document. Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, professor of political science at the University of Ghana, argues that there is no enduring political consensus on national development planning, but a perpetual discontinuity in plans and policy direction, which is due to partisan polarisation in Ghanaian politics and a dominant position of the president. "[...] the national interest has become fragmented along party lines, with the result that each new administration has followed its own short-to-medium-term development agenda and spending priorities based on its party's election platform" (Gyimah-Boadi/Prempeh 2012:102). The dissent is apparent, as the former president of Ghana, John Atta Mills, who was followed by John Dramani Mahama after his sudden death in July 2012, has formulated his own development plan "*Manifesto for a Better Ghana*" which deviates from GSGDA slightly.

Due to political discontinuity in development planning, impact of ERPs, historical neglect and globalisation impacts (global trade policies, land grabbing etc.) Ghana faces huge inequalities and challenges, which shall be described in the following chapter.

2.4.2. Inequalities and challenges

Despite a decreasing poverty rate, poverty remains a challenge in Ghana. Additionally, substantial inequalities can be observed, predominantly among three categories: between men and women; between rural and urban regions and between southern and northern regions. The Upper West and Upper East Regions remain the most affected by extreme poverty with a rate

of 84% and 64% respectively. The Northern Region's poverty rate is extremely high as well with 42% of total population living below poverty line (GLSS 5 2008). The GLSS (Ghana Living Standard Survey) indicates that poverty is a major challenge in the agricultural food crops producing regions, which are predominantly in the northern regions of Ghana, while poverty decreased in the forest zones and cocoa producing communities of Ghana, which are mainly in the southern, western and eastern areas of Ghana (GLSS 5 2008).

Substantial challenges and inequalities remain in the following fields, but are not limited to them:

- Agricultural sector and trading structure
- Employment including the challenge of child labour
- Education

The next section explains challenges in the agricultural and trading sector before the following chapter deals with the poor employment situation in Ghana and one particular consequence for women: labour migration (chapter 3). The nature of the education system and vocational skills training institutions is discussed in a separate chapter (chapter 4). Employment and education are crucial areas for this work and the research and it is therefore dealt with in a larger extent in separate chapters.

2.4.2.1. Agricultural sector and trading structure

Agriculture is the most important sector in terms of food security and socio-economic development and employs half of the labour force in Ghana. It is the main contributor to GDP with a share of 34.4% (FAO 2012). Raw material exports, in particular cocoa, minerals and timber accounted for three-quarters of the national export revenue in 2007. The agriculture sector is dominated by small farmers using predominantly animal traction and approximately 77% of farmers are involved in subsistence farming (ibid.). This is predominantly the case in the northern regions.

Ghana never could establish a large production or manufacturing sector, which is first and foremost due to colonial penetration that stopped pre-existing industries and trans-regional trade, as cheap substitutes were imported from Europe and trading suddenly became smuggling over the new borders (Boahen 1987). Industrialisation efforts also remained unsuccessful during post-independence and the structural adjustment period. Additionally, the large agricultural sector, consisting predominantly of small-scale farmers, experienced severe disadvantages as agrarian subsidies were eliminated. Agricultural activities such as crops and livestock, fisheries as well as manufacturing are therefore underperformed in terms of income

and the agriculture growth rates are below the overall GDP growth rates. The agricultural sector would have the potential to generate large scale employment opportunities, however due to determinants mentioned above combined with uncertain rainfall patterns, public underinvestment, limited use of high-yielding seeds and irrigation technologies, poorly functioning markets and limited access for farmers to public loans and last but not least unequal international trading structures it is not possible to tap the full potential.

Ghana does not fully benefit from existing free trade agreements, especially with its largest trading partner, the European Union (EU). The free trade structure between ACP (African-Caribbean-Pacific) countries and the EU exposes domestic (agricultural) producers to direct competition with EU companies. “Eliminating tariffs will expose domestic producers to direct competition with EU firms. Many of Ghana’s producers will no longer remain profitable as their ability to compete with EU imports is highly limited by severe supply-side constraints“ (Patel 2007:4). The access to the EU market and cheap imported goods cannot be just seen to be positive, as it hinders further production in Ghana. Moreover, the EU protects several ‘sensitive products’ and therefore has the power to protect and subsidise its own products, while the Ghanaian market is exposed to the liberalised structure (Patel 2007).

The bilateral trade between Ghana and China got more attention in recent times as economic activities between Ghana and China grew immensely during the last decade. The relatively strong presence of Chinese traders and entrepreneurs in Ghana in recent times is seen controversial as it has a structural impact on local traders. Cheaper prices alter consumer behaviour and thus local traders see the Chinese as a threat. Additionally, though China became a major investor for development projects (mainly in the telecommunication and infrastructure sector) it is argued that China wants to secure markets for their consumer and industrial goods in resource-rich African countries in using their state-owned companies to underbid competitors for government projects (ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD 2006). Some studies argue that Chinese presence is still little (Marfaing, Thiel 2011) and local traders know their own market much better. Though, cheap Chinese products directly compete with local Ghanaian goods and are first and foremost a threat to small traders (petty traders) in Ghana.

Ghana is an exporter of raw materials. Consumers and farmers who are dependent on food crop export face a highly unfair situation on the global world food market. The food prices are high and volatile due to speculation on food prices by big institutional investors and due to increased demand for land (see sub-chapter 2.4.2.1.1 Recent threat: Land grabbing) as well as due to high oil prices which drive up the costs for fertilizers and transport. Consumers suffer

from the high food prices and even farmers who export food crops often do not profit from a higher world food market price as they need to rely on intermediate traders, who often dictate the price.

Through a gender sensitive lens it is to be recognised that women are even more deprived by these unequal market and trading structure and in the agricultural sector generally. Women usually have even lower access to land and loans, family labour and extension service, own less livestock, use less fertilisers and own less mechanical equipment, but they are more often responsible for food delivery in the household (FAO 2012). Especially land tenure is partly regulated by traditional systems which often exclude women from decisions. Women therefore have limited access to land which they could use in a productive way.

Recently, Ghana faces another challenge which exposes its large agricultural sector to transnational profit-oriented actors.

2.4.2.1.1. Excursion: Recent threat: Land grabbing

Land is the most essential resource for farmers. However, land is becoming an important resource for transnational acting companies as well, especially companies which are specialised in producing agrofuels.

The phenomenon of land grabbing became more widespread in Ghana in recent times. While some describe it as investment and job creating opportunity in developing countries, others criticise land grabbing as neo-colonial behaviour with substantial harm for the local communities (FIAN 2010).

Land grabbing is widely defined as “taking possession of and/or controlling a scale of land for commercial/industrial agricultural production which is disproportionate in size in comparison to the average land holding in the region” (FIAN 2010).

What is common most in Ghana are land deals about agricultural lands between transnational companies and local authorities. The land is predominantly acquired by transnational companies for planting jatropha plants for the production of agrofuel. Studies show that transnational companies often use unserious methods in order to acquire land from chiefs and families, as well as individuals. In Ghana part of land is owned by the state, however most of the land belongs to customary chiefs, families and individuals. Documented land leases show that land was predominantly leased from customary chiefs (FAO 2009).

Bakari Nyari, former Vice Chairman of the Ghanaian NGO Regional Advisory and Information Network Systems Ghana (RAINS Ghana) refers to one specific case of how a Norwe-

gian agrofuel company took advantage of Ghana's traditional land ownership system, the current climate as well as economic pressure in order to deforest large parts of land in northern Ghana for the plantation of jatropha plant. The company took land of individual farmers and promised them a "better future", jobs and incomes, which never happened (Nyari 2008).

There are some scholars, though, who see agrofuel investments as not only bad. Festus Boamah argues that "[...] socially and environmentally responsible biofuel investments can rather contribute to increased food production, employment creation and income generation to complement agrarian and rural development in economically deprived rural areas" (Boamah 2011:1). Boamah argues that the impact of land deals always depends on specific contexts.

Tsikata and Yaro conducted a study in rural northern Ghana and found that impacts are different depending on land holding systems, but disadvantages for local communities predominate. "Land deals have tended to destabilise the existing 'multiple harmonies'. Biodiversity is threatened by the monoculture practices employed by both companies and out-growers. [...] Economically, land deals are not able to generate the levels of employment needed as alternative livelihood activities for 'all' displaced people, particularly women" (Tsikata, Yaro 2011:30).

The World Bank argues in a similar way and refers to several studies which show that expected benefits of land grabbing were not achieved and that there is a correlation of land grabbing and human rights violations, forced displacement of local population as well as restrictions to local nature. The people hurt most were women, smallholders and indigenous people (Deiniger et al. 2011).

Transnational companies very often have no or only poor codes of conduct and the Ghanaian state lacks clear regulations and criteria for land deals as well. In addition the interest of the state as well as powerful local elites often do not coincide with that of poor community members (Tsikata, Yaro 2011).

As long as there are no clear regulations about ecological and social responsibilities for land appropriation by transnational companies, who use land for commercial production, land deals must be seen as a potential threat, especially for small-scale farmers in Ghana.

2.5. Conclusion

The first chapter gave insight into the socio-economic conditions of Ghana, the poverty situation and challenges which are yet to overcome, predominantly concerning the northern part of Ghana and gender related inequalities. From a historical, socio-economic and gender-related

view there are large disparities between northern and southern Ghana in terms of development, economic performance and poverty. Historical events, post-independence and structural adjustment policies, as well as environmental factors contributed not insignificantly to the given situation. Neglect of the northern part of Ghana in terms of economic performance and investments during the colonial period contributed to a relatively disadvantaged initial situation of the northern regions when Ghana became independent. A great economic downturn made the Ghanaian government to induce a structural adjustment programme supported by IMF and WB, which caused even larger disparities between northern and southern Ghana.

Despite a relatively good general position of Ghana compared to other West African countries, there are still challenges both regionally and in terms of gender. Substantial challenges are to be found, amongst others, in the agricultural sector, youth education and employment as well as child labour and gender inequalities (these are discussed in chapters 3 and 4 in detail). In addition, structural inequalities like the exposure of export farmers to volatile food prices due to speculations on the world food market and unstable food security due to land grabbing and unequal international trading structures make the situation highly vulnerable for Ghanaian farmers, exporters and traders.

Women are always the most disadvantaged group, as they are mainly responsible for food provision in the household and therefore suffer most from eliminated agricultural subsidies, land grabbing, unequal trading structures and environmental factors such as droughts. Due to a male dominated society and male-biased socio-cultural norms women have a subordinated position in society, and therefore less access to education, land and financial means such as credit, as well as formal job opportunities. Moreover, girls are more involved in domestic work than boys, which could be an obstacle for education and later employment.

The analysis showed that in terms of regional inequality the northern part of Ghana is much more deprived and disadvantaged compared to the south of the country.

The next chapter gives insight into a very important field of Ghana's economy: the employment situation. While the unemployment rate in Ghana seems not to be very high, underemployment and precarious occupations are very common and women are most affected by this reality. It will be pointed out that the northern part of the country as well as rural areas are far more disadvantaged in the field of employment than the southern part and urban areas of the country. As a consequence of the precarious employment situation in northern Ghana labour migration, especially among women, is high. Subsequently the phenomenon of labour migration among women is discussed.

3. Poor employment situation in Northern Ghana and labour migration as a consequence

3.1. (Under-)employment and poverty

As indicated earlier Ghana's total labour force is predominantly concentrated in the agricultural sector (55.8%) followed by the trade (15.2%) and manufacturing sector (10.9%). The employment rate is 81.9% and the unemployment rate is 3.6% (GLSS 5 2008). The latter figure seems low but the labour situation is characterised by high prevalence of underemployment. That means that a high number of employed people are working up to 40 hours a week and it is still not enough to earn sufficient money to make a living. Underemployment is more alarming in rural areas than in urban areas and women are generally more affected than men (ibid.). The predominant form of employment for men and women is self-employment. 53.1% of men and 56.9% of women are self-employed (GLSS 5 2008).

It is still a challenge for Ghana to provide decent job opportunities or engage young people in a form of skills training (ibid.). Young people account for only 14% of regular wage earners in the formal sector and see themselves forced to create their own economic opportunities, mostly in the informal sector as own-account workers, domestic employees, apprentices or unpaid family workers (ibid.).

The government invented some employment programmes for the youth and other vulnerable groups (e.g. women) in order to generate income opportunities and provide people with working experience and employable skills. The National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) has been in place since 2006 and targets people between 18 and 35 years. While being employed through NYEP young people still face challenges as the allowances paid are often not sufficient. The skills programme provided by NYEP is done in cooperation with NGOs or private small enterprises but is only running for six months.

The Rural Enterprise Project (REP) seeks to create jobs in rural areas to alleviate poverty. The target groups are especially women and vulnerable people. It is already established since 1995 and consists of four components:

- 1) Business development services (skills trainings)
- 2) Access to finance for establishing businesses
- 3) Provision of apprentices support kits
- 4) Provision of rural teaching facilities

The programme is widespread in the northern regions of Ghana but still not sufficient to reach out to all people.

3.2. ‘Working poor’ and ‘decent work’

Speaking of employment and working – whether self-employed, wage earners or other forms of work – means to earn money for a living from labour. The challenge here is that many people employed or working people are underemployed, which means that they cannot earn a living from what they earn through work. ‘Working poor’ is a term widely used to describe this phenomenon. Therefore the nature and availability of employment opportunities is connected to poverty. As Janvier Nkurunziza points out, employment generating is a better opportunity than simple food aid, financial and in-kind assistance to the poor because employment income is more reliable. It provides people with the choice to work where work is available, it preserves dignity as it rewards efforts and it helps to be independent (Nkurunziza 2007). Unemployment and underemployment therefore can be seen as immediate causes of poverty (ibid.). People without working opportunities or incomes below the poverty line are more exposed to shocks such as illness, loss of assets and income etc. and tend to have no access to social assistance, pensions, insurances and the like (ibid.).

International organisations such as ILO and UNDP created the term ‘decent work’ and put more effort on achieving this goal in recent times.

“Decent work sums up the aspirations of ordinary people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men” (ILO 2007:15).

Especially in rural Ghana and in the three northern regions of Ghana employment opportunities are scarce and the situation for young people is most alarming. Decent jobs are rarely available. Informal employment and self-employment account for the majority of employment forms which is highlighted in the following section.

3.3. Self-employment in the informal sector: the reality for women

Informal employment is employment without labour or social protection including self-employment in small unregistered enterprises and wage employment in unprotected jobs (Chen 2007). In many poor countries and so in Ghana the informal economy is a basic component of the total economy. Undisputable facts within the informal economy are that there are huge gaps in earnings, irregular pay, occupational safety and health hazards, lack of coverage by social security and women are over-represented in bottom segments while men are over-represented in the top-segment (Chen 2007; FAO 2012).

The informal private sector dominates the labour market in Ghana with 47.8% of the total labour force employed in the informal private sector (GLSS 5 2008). Most of the new jobs created since the mid-1990s are hence in the informal private sector (World Bank 2011). In rural Ghana the majority of the population is self-employed in either the agricultural or non-agricultural sector. If we consider that about 56% of those people have a second job or even more jobs we can see that full and decent employment with one job is widely not given. Income earned with one job is often not sufficient for a living and in order to cope with this situation people have to increase their work load in having two or more occupations (FAO 2012).

What is most important for this research is the situation of self-employed women in Ghana. Statistics show that the majority of the female labour force is occupied in the informal private sector (49.2%) in and outside agriculture and is self-employed (55.9%) (GLSS 2008). Furthermore the statistics show that the education level of the majority of self-employed women is low. GLSS 2008 shows that 71% of self-employed women in the rural area did not go to school at all, 28% attended primary school, 1% went to secondary school and 0% has a post-secondary education (GLSS 2008). Self-employment apparently is a way for many women without high education level. However, self-employed workers in Ghana (both male and female) have acquired more vocational training than other employment categories. 81% of self-employed women in Ghana have acquired vocational training while only 56% acquired vocational training and are not self-employed but working in other forms of employment (FAO 2012). Hence rural women who plan to be self-employed are first and foremost beneficiaries of vocational trainings. The nature of the vocational training combined with access to capital and resources is therefore determining if women can be successful in starting their own businesses because it is also evident that self-employed workers are more likely to fall below low earnings classifications (FAO 2012).

What has to be taken into consideration as well is the time spent in so called unproductive or unpaid work. Women in Ghana tend to spend more time in domestic work than men as the allocation of roles and responsibilities in the household is determined from childhood. Girls are far more engaged in household work than boys. Equally girls between the age of 12 and 14 tend to work more in paid and productive sectors than boys (FAO 2012). The disadvantages for girls and women are thus evident.

Speaking about employment it is necessary to mention that children and adolescents in school age are very often involved in labour and employment activities, which is mainly due to economic reasons.

3.3.1. Child labour

Child labour is a widespread phenomenon in Ghana, particularly in the informal rural sector. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, provided by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana has a rate of 16.6% of children that are economically active (GSS 2012). However, domestic work is not included in this rate. UNICEF also classifies domestic work as child labour when this type of work exceeds specific time limits. Therefore UNICEF provides a different number of child labour in Ghana, namely 34% (UNICEF n.d.)³.

There are striking differences between rural and urban child labour incidences in terms of domestic work, with 4% in urban areas and 17% in rural areas and a relatively higher proportion of economically active children in the three northern regions (GLSS 5 2008; GSS 2012). In terms of gender, girls are exposed to domestic work more often and to a larger extent than boys are (ibid.).

The sectors where children are working mostly in Ghana are agriculture (largest proportion of child labourers, in particular in the cocoa sector); small-scale mining and quarries; fishing; commercial sexual industry; domestic sector; transport and sales sector (head porters “kayayei” and street hawkers) (ILO n.d.).

The Ghana Constitution of 1992 says that “children have a right to be protected from work that constitutes a threat to their health, education and development” (Republic of Ghana: Constitution of Ghana 1992 Article 28:2). Additionally, the Children’s Act of 1998 prohibits the engagement of children in exploitative work and defines ‘exploitative labour’ as work that deprives the child of his/her health, education or development (Republic of Ghana Children’s Act 1998). According to the Act the minimum age for admission of a child into employment is 15; with 13 years the Act allows children to do light work; with 18 years hazardous activities are legal for children (ibid.). Moreover, Ghana has a *National Plan of Action* that aims to eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2015 and there is also a National Steering Committee in charge of Child Labour (NSCCL).

The definition of child labour by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and International Labour Organization (ILO)

³ Data from 2010

points out that child labour is not per se negative unless it is of hazardous nature and of exceeding time limits:

“Child labour is defined based on a child’s age, hours and conditions of work, activities performed and the hazards involved. Child labour is work that interferes with compulsory schooling and damages health and personal development. Especially in the context of family farming and other rural family endeavours, it is important to recognize that some participation of children in non-hazardous activities can be positive as it contributes to the inter-generational transfer of skills and children’s food security” (FAO-IFAD-ILO 2010).

Some scholars stress similar opinions like Loretta Bass “We must also be willing to distinguish naked exploitation from benign or even useful child labor that adds to household survival and realist workplace training. Merely condemning all child labor equally while blaming poverty generally does nothing to focus limited resources and attention on those children in the worst situations” (Bass 2004:6).

In the Ghanaian context Iman Hashim argues that “[w]ork is [...] seen as age-appropriate behaviour for children [...]. It is a process of enculturation into their roles in the domestic economy and wider community.” (Hashim 2007:914). However, the author also stresses the exploitative and hazardous nature of child labour (ibid.).

With all these context and time-depending as well as different types of child labour in mind, it is true, though, that in Ghana one in five children is a child labourer, of them about one in five is involved in the worst forms of child labour and West Africa is falling behind other regions in the world in the fight to eliminate child labour (ILO n.d.). And when children are required to work many hours in domestic and productive work, the chance and time for school attention or skills training is limited. This prevents children from gaining education that could help to get out of poverty. Moreover, child labour perpetuates special gender patterns that remain later in children’s working lives (ibid.).

3.4. Labour migration as a consequence of poor employment situation

It was highlighted that underemployment in Ghana is high and that northern and rural areas are affected most by this fact. Occupation in the informal private sector is much larger than in the formal working sector and self-employment is the dominant occupation in rural areas. The majority of working women are occupied in the informal private sector and are self-employed and it is also evident that this group has rather low education. In turn, self-employed women are the group who benefit most of vocational skills trainings (the nature and offer of vocational skills training will be discussed in chapter 4.1.1). How challenging or how beneficial is the

situation for self-employed women in northern Ghana? This question was part of the empirical research in northern Ghana and will be focused in chapter 6 and 7.

The following chapter however will deal with a specific form of female labour migration which is partly due to harsh economic conditions and a poor employment situation for women in northern Ghana.

Studies show that the poor socio-economic situation in northern Ghana is interconnected with large emigration flows from the north of Ghana either to the south of the country or abroad (Awumbila 2008; Tanle 2003; Adjei 2006 etc.). Migration itself can bring many positive effects such as remittances, which can be invested locally in education or health. A new migration trend or pattern, particularly among females from northern Ghana, who migrate typically at a young age and cyclically in order to work in the head porter (load carrying) business to generate higher incomes, can open up new possibilities for women such as breaking with traditional labour divisions or dependencies on men's incomes. However, this type of female migration and occupation brings lots of precarious situations to women, such as bad or no housing, exploitation, discrimination, sexual harassments etc.

Recent migration patterns in Ghana show a significant increase in independent female migration from rural northern regions to southern cities, such as Accra and Kumasi. These trends have not just one but multiple determinants, according to scholars who are dealing with migration issues (Awumbila 2008; Adjei 2006; Tanle 2003). The determinants for an increasing internal female migration trend range from development inequalities between northern and southern Ghana, colonial and post-independence policies resulting in general poverty and lack of education and employment opportunities, to environmental factors as well as cultural factors.

In Ghana people have always been moving due to different reasons or policy regulations. During colonial times the movement of people from the Northern Territories to the southern areas was common, as the colonial administrators declared the north to be a labour reservoir for the south of Ghana. After independence and during the 1960s Ghana became a popular immigration-country, in particular by people living in neighbouring countries. Increased employment opportunities and higher wages in urban areas and industry were the main incentives for many people to come to Ghana. This was due to a relative economic prosperity and Kwame Nkrumah's liberal migration policy which was geared towards the promotion of Pan-Africanism. During this time about 2 million citizens from other countries lived in Ghana among an overall population of 8.4 million people (Awumbila 2008). There were also high numbers of peo-

ple migrating internally from rural to urban areas in order to benefit from higher wages and more working possibilities there. During the following periods, the 1970s and 1980s, immigration into Ghana decreased, in particular for two reasons: the Aliens' Compliance Order in 1969, which aimed at the expulsion of large numbers of immigrants (residence permit was needed within a two-week period); and the economic downturn and political instability (military coups, discontinuation). By 1980 emigration thus became a coping strategy for many Ghanaians; among them many skilled people especially in the health and teaching sector (Awumbila 2008). It was also during the 1980s that more and more women started to migrate from north to the south in order to earn money.

Currently about 52% of Ghana's population over 7 years is highly mobile. The largest proportion of migrants are young adults, aged between 25 and 29 years (GLSS 5 2008).

Female migration became even more evident in the last years and for now both women and men migrate in equal numbers (Adjei 2006).

3.4.1. Female migration

Elizabeth Adjei, director of the Ghana Immigration Service, differentiates between six types of female migration (Adjei 2006):

- Migration of unskilled or semi-skilled women from rural to urban regions for economic, cultural and social reasons: "Scattered writings and observations indicate that there was a substantial population of female migrants in most of the big cities in Ghana in the 1970s. By 1984, the women outnumbered men in the urban population" (Adjei 2006:51). This phenomenon became even more predominant in the last years and is particularly the case for women from rural northern areas to urban southern areas in Ghana, in order to look for income opportunities, skills training and education (ibid.).
- Commercial migration: Migration of women traders internally and externally; to the sub-region, the east (Asia) and to the global north in order to import goods and distribute them on big local markets. As the global political economy shifts, the Asian regions become more often destinations for female traders.
- Migration of skilled professionals and students to Europe and the USA: the profession of the majority of female skilled emigrants is the nursing profession.
- Spousal migration: women follow their husbands or partners to the migration destination. This type of migration was predominant in the colonial and post-independent years but still is widely practised today.

- Migration of adolescents internally and externally for either education or to acquire household items like pots, pans, clothes etc. for starting life and for marriage.
- Trafficking of adolescents and young women: Young women or even children who move out from home in search for a job are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. The result is often bonded labour or prostitution.

Determinants underlying internal female migration are both multiple and changing, hence no general assumption can be made about determinants of female migration. “In general the literature indicates a complex mix of factors have shaped peoples’ movements both within and outside Ghana and that these have changed and are changing in response to globalization and other socio-economic conditions” (Awumbila 2008:20). According to the above types of migration the following determinants are more or less significant or combined (Adjei 2006; Anarfi 2003; Awumbila 2008):

- Increasing poverty, especially in rural areas
- Inadequate social services such as health and education
- Imbalances of development: distribution of social service and infrastructure
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of employable skills
- Acquisition of assets
- Other cultural and social benefits
- Trade
- Urbanisation
- Growth of administrative sector
- Land degradation, agriculture, landlessness
- Population growth rate and as a result increased domestic supply of labour

According to which determinants are significant for women concerning their migration decision, migration can bring positive and/or negative consequences. Positive consequences can be of economic nature, such as remittances for families which can be used for subsistence, health and employment or the development of small-scale businesses when returning to the place of origin. Migration can also have an impact on the status of women: When women migrate autonomously and earn their own money traditional roles and dependencies could be broken, which could bring increased empowerment for women (Adjei 2006).

However, negative consequences for women in migration processes can also occur: the dislocation in kinship relationships which are important for social cohesion; the risk of increased

vulnerability due to low incomes for unskilled women in particular as they engage in menial and insecure jobs including sex work. The latter is predominantly the case among young girls/women who are in the street vendor or head porter business, widely referred to as “kayayei” (see chapter 3.5).

An additional factor which should not be underestimated is “brain drain”, the loss of skilled workers in Ghana. “In fact some research suggests that Ghana ranks first in out-migration of the highly skilled in Africa. The flow of nurses and teachers is overwhelmingly female, with serious consequences for our health care and education system“ (Adjei 2006:55). Adjei additionally refers to another form of discrimination of women, which is “brain waste”, that means that many women, although highly skilled, are in low-skill jobs in their region of destination (ibid.).

3.4.2. Migration of unskilled and semi-skilled women from rural areas to urban market regions

The type of migration which experienced significant increase in the last years is that by young unskilled or semi-skilled women from the rural north of Ghana to the urban market centres in the south of the country, often in a cyclical pattern, in order to generate income for themselves and their families. “Young females now form the majority in internal migrations from northern Ghana to urban centres in the south. They mostly work as ‘kayayei’, porters, in market centres and lorry stations” (Awumbila 2008:19).

The cyclical migration pattern among women stems predominantly from their domestic and family responsibilities, which restrict their time away from the household (Oberhauser/ Yeboah 2011:29). Moreover, the GLSS 5 shows that there is a higher proportion of female return migrants than male return migrants in the same age group of 20 to 34 years (GLSS 5 2008).

According to Awumbila the main factors for the north-to-south migration among females are:

- Poverty
- Lack of education
- Lack of job opportunities
- Need to purchase items for marriage
- Some socio-cultural factors

Poverty and lack of education and job opportunities partly stem from the spatial inequalities in levels of development brought about by a combination of colonial and post-colonial economic policies as well as some environmental factors (Awumbila 2008). The northern regions

of Ghana still remain significantly behind the southern ones in terms of infrastructure, social service provision, education and employment opportunities.

An additional determinant factor for female migration is that migration processes among women have already been embedded into some local cultures and traditions. “In Northern Ghana, migration to cities has become a tradition for girls. When they marry, brides are expected to have certain items, such as pots, pans, cloth and money. A girl who has nothing is considered a disgrace. Girls feel obliged to migrate to the south, dropping out of school, to work to earn money” (Adjei 2006:50).

The issue of female migration from rural northern Ghana to urban southern regions of Ghana and the occupation in the “kayayei-business” has been issue of several studies in recent years and there is evidence that a large number of young female migrants from the northern regions moves directly to southern urban market centres and lorry stations in order to generate money (Awumbila 2007; Oberhauser/Yeboah 2011; Opare 2003; Tanle 2003).

The rural–urban work migration pattern among women is also embedded in broader socio-economic relations. It partly stems from liberalising policies and the introduction of market economy in the event of structural adjustment of the 1980s and 1990s (Areetey 2000; Oberhauser/Yeboah 2011). Neoliberal policies have reduced formal employment opportunities. “One measure taken under structural adjustment has been a reduction in government size, leading to labour retrenchment. As a result, hundreds of thousands of workers have been thrown out of work. Since few new jobs are created to absorb those laid-off, unemployment is constantly on the rise“ (Oppong 2003:37). Even more crucial for women from rural northern Ghana is the fact that neoliberal policies have cut subsidies for the agricultural sector and emphasised the export-oriented commercial agriculture instead. Hence, earnings and opportunities from small-scale agriculture diminished. Major cuts in public spending and a worsening situation for Ghanaian traders made the situation for many people even more vulnerable. „The introduction of market economy in the 1980s led to extreme price instability and poverty. In particular, the IMF structural adjustment programme which accompanied the economic decline [...] contributed to a preponderance of women in the migration process” (Adjei 2006:50). Unequal international trading structures as well as the phenomenon of land grabbing perpetuated the situation. As a result a growing feminisation of poverty in the rural northern regions emerged and with no competitive skills and education the occupation in the street vendor sector in the south of Ghana became a livelihood strategy for many women.

This specific form of female migration which targets to generate income in the street vendor business is related to extremely vulnerable and exploitive situations for women. This is why Adjei concludes that “[f]emale migrants remain vulnerable to poverty; illiteracy; poor working conditions; poor health and inequitable access to health care; HIV/AIDS and, in the case of these working in the streets and remain homeless, sexual exploitation“ (Adjei 2006:55).

3.5. Occupation in the load carrying business: the “kayayei-phenomenon”

Next to agriculture, trading is the most important economic activity in Ghana. Many young female migrants in search for income sources finally end up in the most precarious part of the trading sector: the head load porter business. Widely referred to as “kayayei” young women work as porters of goods in the market centres and lorry stations in the big cities of Ghana. Being engaged in the trading/street vendor business as a “kayayoo” means carrying all day long other people’s luggage on the head for a fee (Tanle 2003).

This form of commercial human portering is not a new phenomenon, but has its roots in the trans-Saharan trade in West Africa. It was an ancient means of transporting goods, when modern means of transport were in absence. With the expansion of imported european goods into the south such as salt, cash crops, jewellery etc. head porters became even more crucial as goods needed to be transported from the coastal regions to the interior markets and vice versa (Tanle 2003). During these times head portering was a male dominated business, which has to do with slavery and colonial strategies of labour force exploitation. In Ghana head portering was practiced largely by people from neighbouring countries who were commonly referred to as “kaya kaya”. When the Aliens Compliance Order of 1969 came into effect lots of non-Ghanaians, who dominated the porter business, had to leave the country. Gradually, women filled the vacuum in the porter business that had been created due to the Order. According to scholars two main tendencies amongst others contributed to the fact that head portering became a female business. The *first* is provided by James Adu Opare and Asomaning et al. who state that carrying loads on the head is commonly thought to be women’s work, whereas carrying luggage on a cart is men’s work, because the latter is considered to be hard work (or harder work than carrying loads on the head). Transporting loads on the head without machines or supporting means is cheaper than carrying loads with carts. Traders and marketers therefore choose more often the cheaper means of transport, which is the women’s one. This explains why there are more women working as porters in the urban areas (Opare 2003; Asomaning et al. 1996). *Second*, structural economic changes in the 1980s brought by ERPs and

market liberalisation caused a shortage in formal working opportunities and simultaneously a broader spectrum of informal working opportunities in the trading sector. Opening up the Ghanaian market for more goods from Europe, America and Asia⁴ paved the way for the importation of a higher number of goods and hence increased competition among traders and vendors. Traders and marketers therefore engage “employees” in an informal way (“kayayei”) to carry and distribute their goods. For the traders and marketers, this is the cheapest form of transport.

In the meantime the occupation as “kayayei” for a period of time has become a common income generation strategy for women. “This so-called informal sector is increasingly providing an economic arena for rural migrants, the unemployed from the modern sector, and school-leavers” (Oppong 1997:163).

The term “kayayoo” (singular) or “kayayei” (plural) is derived from two words: “kaya” is Hausa and means goods, “yei” is a Ga word and means women. Hence, the term refers to female commercial head porters (Tanle 2003). Both terms “kayayoo” and “kayayei” have become part of the Ghanaian commercial vocabulary (Opare 2003).

The most striking characteristic of “kayayei” or porters is that they are predominantly, even exclusively, women. A majority of them is very young, about 15-25 years. Studies show that women working as “kayayei” are predominantly from the northern Ghanaian savannah regions (Upper East, Upper West, Northern Region), from Burkina Faso or Togo and only a small number of them come from the southern Ghanaian regions; mostly they are school drop-outs or completely unschooled and come from economically weak families (Adjei 2006; Opare 2003; Tanle 2003). “Kayayei” do not use any form of transport in their business, as they have no possibility to invest in technologies and do not intend to stay long (Tanle 2003).

The dominant factors why women leave their homes and work in the street vendor business are of economic nature. “The results from the logistic regression show that poor financial situation is the main factor that influence [sic!] the women to migrate to the south for the *kayayei* business. The unfavourable socio-economic conditions literally push people out of the rural areas in the north, while the presence of job opportunities and social amenities tend to pull people to the urban centres“ (Tanle 2003:108). Opare detected four main determinants why women are engaged in the street vendor business or “kayayei-business”, which are on the first glance all of economic nature, but strongly reflect both the patriarchal structure and uneven chances among women and men on the labour market in Ghana and the disparities be-

⁴ in particular goods are important from Italy, France, Germany, Mexico, Brazil, China, Thailand and Dubai

tween the northern and the southern regions of the country. *First* – and this is the case for the majority of “kayayei” according to Opare’s findings – women want to save money to enter into large-scale or other sedentary work. They migrate because in their place of origin there are no possibilities to earn the necessary capital for the intended enterprise. *Second*, women want to save money for investment or the buying of personal items and properties for the preparation of marriage, because society expects the newlywed to possess items such as cloth, shoes, jewels, kitchenware etc. to take it to matrimonial house. The *third* group of women consists of widows, who need to earn money for their and their children’s survival. *Fourth*, young women want to earn money in order to be able to afford school items and school fees for apprenticeships (Opare 2003).

The category that should not be ignored here are the girl children. Working as “kayayei” in the southern urban parts of Ghana has become common for many school-drop outs or other children from the north, predominantly female children. Asomaning et al. argue that there is legislation which prohibits children less than 15 years of age from working in Ghana, though, all too often children find themselves forced to work as part of the survival requirements of their families (Asomaning et al. 1996).

In order to generate money, to fulfil the own and other’s expectations, women undergo many precarious situations and risks when working as “kayayei”: they often sleep rough in the streets, practise prostitution by night, and are often exposed to sexual violence with the consequence of HIV/Aids infection and unwanted pregnancy. Moreover, women could be cheated by their clients, most of whom are themselves women (Adjei 2006). This makes the “kayayei-business” a precarious, hazardous and risky one.

From a rational choice and goal-oriented view the engagement in the “kayayei-business” requires virtually no capital outlay and it is a self-employment of women who can earn about twice the national daily minimum wage and are thus financially better off than the average unskilled or semi-skilled Ghanaian worker (Opare 2003). However, since the “kayayei-business” is a precarious and hazardous job, the long-term private and social costs must be considered and these are supposedly higher than the job brings in the end. In fact, the effects on health and general life can be considered as negative (ibid.).

There have been already some suggestions to improve the situation of “kayayei”, such as projects in northern Ghana to boost agricultural production in order to reduce famine and poverty (Opare 2003). Asomaning et al. suggest literacy programmes for women and training in business management and health issues for women engaged in the street vendor or “kayayei-

business”. They suggest further an improved access to the formal banking system in order to place the savings there and the provision of accommodation shelters for female porters at the market locations (Asomaning et al. 1996). Hence, it is also a matter of social policy if women engaged in the “kayayei-business” suffer from precarious situations. Additionally, it has been widely criticised that subsidies for agriculture have been eliminated and this makes farming (as an alternative to the “kayayei-business”) more expensive, especially for women from northern Ghana with limited access to land and credit (Opare 2003).

Initiatives in the north of Ghana such as the Damongo Youth Development Initiative (DYDI) and Girls Growth and Development Ghana (GIGDEV) – on which the empirical research of this paper is based – target exactly this problem of internal female migration and respond to it through the provision of skills training, informal education and micro-credits (see chapter 6 and 7).

3.6. Conclusion

Whereas unemployment rates seem not to be very high the occurrence of underemployment is alarming in Ghana. Among the people underemployed many of them are women who are engaged in the informal private sector. To be underemployed means not to be able to earn a living through the work engaged. This is also true for many women who are self-employed. Studies show that most of the self-employed women are unskilled or semi-skilled. In order to overcome poor financial status and underemployment many people, especially from the northern part of Ghana, decide to migrate in search for work. As the economic and financial situation of many migrants – predominantly female migrants – is often poor, migration in search for income opportunities is often connected with precarious, hazardous situations in the target region. The “kayayei-business” experienced an increased significance during the last two decades as it is a form of self-employment without high capital investment and brings out often more money than the average national per day salary for other jobs. Head porter jobs and human means of transportation is not a new phenomenon in Ghana, however women engaged in this business suffer from diverse precarious and hazardous situations which can affect the rest of their lives. The suggestions how to improve womens’ situations or how to prevent women from doing “kayayei-jobs” reaches from training projects in the place of origin to social policy schemes in the destination areas. It is evident that the majority of women engaged in the “kayayei-business” are unskilled or semi-skilled, school-drop outs or have not been to school at all. Targeting education and skills trainings therefore seems to be an intelligent strategy how to tackle the issue of labour migration. However without appropriate em-

ployment opportunities it is hard to find alternatives to labour migration. Still, education and skills training can also contribute to job creation as an increased level of knowledge is always an inspiration for self-initiative.

The following chapter therefore deals with the education situation in Ghana and focuses as well on the vocational skills training situation in the country. Can education and skills training contribute to an empowerment among people and thus provide an alternative to labour migration? This is discussed in chapter 6 and 7 based on the findings of the empirical research in northern Ghana. Before, however, the education situation in Ghana is analysed as well as the meaning and relation to the concept of empowerment.

4. Education and vocational skills training in Ghana: a contribution to empowerment

4.1. Education situation

School attendance and enrolment rates in Ghana seem high at the first glance, however it is necessary to consider regional and gender differences, as well as the quality of education. The current school attendance rate in the whole of Ghana is 86%. The rates among females are lower than those for males and the three northern regions have comparatively lower attendance rates, especially concerning girls (GLSS 5 2008). Primary education in rural areas is comparably low. Only 59% of the rural female population and 71% of rural male population have primary education. Access to secondary education for women and men in the whole of Ghana remains low, particularly in rural areas, where the share of men and women with secondary education is 13% and 3% respectively (ibid.).

Concerning adult literacy there are substantial differences between women and men as well as regional differences. In the whole country 6 out of 10 men are literate, whereas only 4 out of 10 women are literate. The literacy rate in urban regions is 70% while it is only 40% in rural areas (GLSS 5 2008). In rural areas only 29% of women are literate compared to 52% of men (ibid.).

Low education levels are an obstacle for better paid job opportunities in the labour market or for more profitable entrepreneurship and this is most alarming for young women from rural areas (FAO 2012).

4.1.1. The role of vocational skills trainings

Ghana is making progress in terms of education provision and access but the quality of education and skills trainings is still poor and hampers competitiveness (World Bank 2011). There is also a fast expanding group of people with basic education, however additional education and training are lacking. Some 120,000 students leave basic school every year without access to post-basic programmes (ibid.). Most alarming is the situation for girls' education. Efforts have been achieved by the Government of Ghana, development partners and NGOs since the 1990s, though the percentage of girls not enrolled in school is still high. This can be traced back to a lack of parental support, negative socio-cultural practices and poor quality of education (Casely-Hayford/Akabzaa 2009). The Government used large scale generic strategies as well as specific strategies such as sensitisation, advocacy campaigns and direct scholarships

schemes for girls, but still the drop-out rates of girls in upper primary and junior high schools is high (ibid.).

This is where vocational schools and vocational skills development projects come in, especially those targeting the generation of so the called NEET group – people not in education, employment or training (World Bank 2011). The landscape of vocational skills training opportunities in Ghana is quite huge. The skills training sector includes about 200 public formal training institutions and more than 400 private and church-owned vocational skills training centres. 26 of the public formal training institutions are technical institutions under the Ministry of Education. The private registered and unregistered institutions contain about 70,000 students (World Bank 2011). According to the National Vocational Training Institute of Ghana (NVTI) there are 15 registered vocational schools in the Northern Region of Ghana. The New Education Reform, which was launched in September 2007 also includes the goal towards better access and higher quality of technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) in order to achieve higher relevance to the needs of industry and hence a sustained socio-economic development (Palmer 2009).

According to the World Bank and the International Network for Education and Training NORRAG (Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training) the formal TVET (technical and vocational education and training) providers largely fail to meet labour market demands as well as to connect with competitiveness, growth and social inclusion in Ghana (World Bank 2011; Palmer 2009). WB and NORRAG also argue that there are sustainability challenges in the vocational skills education field. *First* sustainable employment growth is necessary for the utility of acquired skills and *second* an expansion in the quantity of skills trainings doesn't necessarily mean enhanced training quality (Palmer 2009).

Many vocational skills training projects in Ghana therefore strive to meet labour market demands and to increase their quality steadily in order to reduce poverty. Apart from labour market demands there is yet another dimension private or non-governmental education and training providers seek to attain. They are convinced of the social transformative role of education in order to achieve empowerment among their target group. How is empowerment connected to education and what exactly is empowerment? The next section will highlight the connection between education and empowerment further and explain the concept of empowerment.

4.2. Education and empowerment

A number of small skills training projects in particularly vulnerable areas with high school drop-out rates and low school enrolment figures are equally dependent on market demands in order to be successful; however these projects particularly focus on a NEET generation while most of the formal TVET opportunities require a certain level of education (completion of Junior High School), which prevents the most vulnerable group from attending formal public skills trainings and vocational schools. In addition, small non-governmental skills development projects focus more on people's empowerment in a multi-dimensional sense as well as on self-initiative.

The two vocational training projects in northern Ghana around which the research was carried out target particularly the NEET group and strive to achieve empowerment and self-initiative among young women from northern Ghana. Having a form of education or skills training, though, is not a guarantee to get an income-generating job. It needs support from the state, financial institutions or development projects in order to start up a business or to use skills in a productive way. However, enjoying a form of education or skills training can contribute to other dimensions apart from economic empowerment: the development of personality, talents, potentials and life skills. If education and skills trainings focus on empowerment it is not only targeted on economic empowerment but on social, psychological and political empowerment as well. Education and skills training can have socially transformative impacts in particular in countries where people live and work under conditions which are strongly directed by local social norms (Fennell 2008).

In order to understand the wide and controversial category of empowerment it shall be dealt with it in the next chapter before the nature and goal of two specific Ghanaian skills development projects targeted on women empowerment are introduced.

4.3. What is empowerment?

The term empowerment is used in a variety of disciplines ranging from social psychology to development studies, however it became a buzzword in relation to women and development throughout the world since the late 1970s (Batliwala 2007). The term traces back to the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 16th and 17th century and revived in some other historical struggles for social justice (Batliwala 2007). In the second half of the 20th century, the term and concept of empowerment was inherent in several movements, such as feminist, black power, liberation theology or popular education movements etc. – groups, which were

trying to achieve more equitable, participatory and democratic changes in society and development.

Both the term and the concept of empowerment became more important in the development context during the 1990s, when the World Bank and the UN adopted the concept. There is no general and commonly shared definition of empowerment, since it depends on the understanding of the nature of power and inequality. Widely agreed, though, is that empowerment affects three levels: the political, the economic and the social sphere. Empowerment is therefore a socio-political process and is about shifts in political, social and economic power between and across individuals and social groups. Indisputable as well is that the critical operating concept within empowerment is 'power' (Batliwala 2007). It is therefore necessary to deal first with the meaning of power before discussing empowerment concepts.

4.3.1. Power

We can roughly distinguish between realistic power concepts which focus on the analysis of power relations among actors and structuralist power concepts which include the existing context and paradigms (Nohlen, Schultze 2005). The realistic power concept is about gaining and maintaining power, detached from moral, which makes ruthless use of unethical instruments possible. It is necessary to consider the context and era in which the realistic understanding of power emerged, namely the Renaissance in Europe, when political orders changed and competition among citizens was existent due to shortages of goods. Thomas Hobbes followed up this realistic view and defined power as "the ability to secure well-being or personal advantage 'to obtain some future apparent Good' (Hobbes 1985). Max Weber's definition of power also lies in the Hobbes' and Machiavelli's tradition as he defines power as to have the ability to control the behaviour of others, even against their will (Weber 1968). The same tradition follows Robert Dahl, who says that "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Nohlen, Schultze 2005:524). This understanding of power is described in the literature as pluralistic and one-dimensional in the sense that power means participation in decision-making. Feminist theories describe this view as 'power over' concept (Rowlands 1995, Kabeer 1994 etc.).

Contrary to this pluralistic view are the structuralist power concepts, which define power as at least two-faced (Bachrach/Baratz; Giddens et al). In their "*Two faces of power*" Bachrach and Baratz do not only include the behaviouristic aspect (one-dimensional, how is power exercised?) in their conceptualisation of power but also the latent power structure, an 'ordered

system of power' (Bachrach/Baratz 1962). The 'second face' of power according to Bachrach and Baratz is therefore the restrictive face of power, the dynamics of non-decision-making:

"[...] can the researcher overlook the chance that some person or association could limit decision-making to relatively non-controversial matters, by influencing community values and political procedures and rituals, notwithstanding that there are in the community serious but latent power conflicts? To do so is, in our judgment, to overlook the less apparent, but extremely important, face of power (Bachrach/Baratz 1962:949).

While both 'faces' of power are related to any given conflict and interest, Steven Lukes asks whether there is consensus if there is no evidence of conflict (Lukes 1974)? He concludes that there are power structures even when there is no concrete conflict and the behaviour and the needs of people are already the result of the existing power dependencies. Whose interests prevail is a matter of "[...] the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups, and practices of institutions" (Lukes 1974:22). It is therefore possible that the suppressed act against their own interests, without being aware of it. Or as the feminist Naila Kabeer puts it: "Power relations may appear so secure and well-established that both subordinate and dominant groups are unaware of their oppressive implications or incapable of imagining alternative ways of 'being and doing'" (Kabeer 1994:227). This third view is described in the literature as the third dimension of power. This third dimension of power is particularly important within feminist theories as it refers to self-awareness and self-confidence and is about recognising the existing power relations among men and women and gaining the self-confidence to change and influence unequal power patterns (Oxaal, Baden 1997). Feminists call this approach the 'power within' concept and simultaneously refuse the simple 'power over' concept of the Hobbes' tradition (Kabeer 1994; Rowlands 1995).

As we can see the feminist view differs from the behaviouristic concepts of Hobbes, Machiavelli and Weber. The latter see power as zero-sum, which means that if one actor increases power, the power of the other actor decreases. The feminist approach focuses on influencing power relations in a way that structural power inequality can be overcome.

How can this discussion of power concepts now contribute to our understanding of empowerment and more precisely women empowerment? It very much depends on the view of 'power' of how empowerment could be understood. Therefore we can distinguish two interpretations of empowerment:

First, empowerment is about bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it, so that oppressed people have access to political processes and the economic sphere. This is about gaining and maintaining power in order to have access to and participate in the decision-making process. It does not necessarily mean that power here is a zero-sum, but

could also be a win-win if conflict is avoided. Within the development discourse the World Bank is following this concept of empowerment aiming at poverty reduction (*'empowerment of the poor'*). „*Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives*” (WB 2002:11).

This approach is widely described as 'power to' approach as it is about bringing people outside the decision-making process into it (Oxaal & Baden 1997; Rowlands 1995).

Second – and this is emphasised by many women empowerment theorists – empowerment is not only understood as to have access to decision-making processes but it is also about understanding the internalised power structures and gaining the ability to influence this given pattern (e.g. overcoming of gender disparities). It refers to the 'power within' approach which understands power as a positive force and people themselves being able to bring changes in historically embedded political, economic and social relations (Eyben/Kabeer/Cornwall 2008). “*Empowerment happens when individuals and organised groups are able to imagine their world differently and to realise that vision by changing the relations of power that have been keeping them in poverty*” (Eyben/Kabeer/Cornwall 2008:6).

I see this second definition of empowerment as a more holistic approach and I refer to this definition whenever I use the word empowerment in this work.

However for this research about the situation of women in northern Ghana it is important to keep both approaches in mind, as the research is about poverty reduction in the Northern Region of Ghana in giving people access to knowledge and resources as well as it is about strategic power changes in the situation of women in the context and location given.

4.3.2. Three dimensions of empowerment

In order to conceptualise empowerment and to catch the concept in a more general and practical way empowerment can be classified in three dimensions: social, economic and political empowerment. It shall be stated here again that empowerment in general is always understood as a process and not as an end state (Eyben/Kabeer/Cornwall 2008).

The *social dimension* of empowerment is about changing society in a way that the own place is respected, not dictated by others (Eyben/Kabeer/Cornwall 2008). Power is manifested in structures and institutions. Social empowerment means the capacity for people to secure their respect, social inclusion, rights, structures, dignity, anti-discrimination, self-representation

which leads to changes in manifested structures and institutions which keep people in poverty (ibid.).

The *economic dimension* of empowerment means that empowered people can think beyond immediate survival needs and they have the possibility to negotiate a fairer distribution of growth benefits. The target group profits from market access and growth processes and their contributions to the economy are valued (ibid.).

Inequalities in the fields of rights and persisting social discrimination which are historically embedded are difficult to overcome and are further perpetuated by market forces. Those entering the market without assets or basic knowledge about the functioning of markets will hardly break out of the poverty trap. In contrast, those who gained knowledge, skills and financial resources will be able to access, participate and benefit from economic structures as well as to influence the economic structures (ibid.).

In terms of *political empowerment* the representation in political institutions and the democratic process and the participation in decision-making processes are the most important criteria. However in order to be able to participate in political negotiations it needs mobilisation around rights and forming individual and collective capabilities to engage in negotiation processes. Political empowerment therefore is also about access to information about rights and opportunities and about learning to think critically about the individual circumstances and possibilities. Once this is given it is possible for even historically marginalised people to participate in the political process to reshape it according to a fairer structure for them (ibid.).

4.3.3. Women empowerment in the context of Northern Ghana

As already indicated, women are far more disadvantaged in terms of education, employment, income and accessibility to land and financial means in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Inequality indices show a rather high inequality status in Ghana: The Gender Inequality Index (GII) which replaced the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) comprises of three dimensions with five indicators:

- 1) Reproductive health (indicators: maternal mortality, adolescent fertility)
- 2) Empowerment (indicators: parliamentary representation, educational attainment – secondary level and above)
- 3) Labour market (indicator: labour force participation)

Ghana ranks 121 out of 186 countries and has a GII of 0.565 (UNDP HDR 2013). This is a relatively high value and therefore improvements still need to be achieved in terms of gender equality.

The Ghanaian feminist Apusigah stresses the importance of women's work in Ghana with their myriad roles that women play at family, household and community level towards national development. However, women's work remains under-appreciated. "Women remain subjugated in workplaces, educational institutions, families and communities" (Apusigah 2004:11). Apusigah refers to studies which show clearly that Ghanaian women are disadvantaged regarding access to education and training, health and nutrition, politics and decision-making and employment and income⁵. Additionally, women suffer from several human rights abuses in both the domestic and public spheres and are exposed to all kinds of domestic violence and are subjected to various forms of sexual harassment in households, communities and workplaces. Apusigah argues that this situation is largely due to women's subordinate position in society, in particular in the socio-economic system. She therefore argues for women's empowerment through a change in the status of women. According to Apusigah, this can be achieved through practical programmes that support and promote strategic gender interests, which include:

- Reduced vulnerability to violence and exploitation
- More economic security, independence, options and opportunities
- Shared responsibility for reproductive work with men and the state
- Organising with other women for strength, solidarity and action
- Increased political power
- Increased ability to improve the lives and futures of their children

(Apusigah 2004).

In particular, Apusigah argues that women should become active partners in the decision-making process at all levels. She opts for a blending of the practical and the strategic agenda because the change of the status of women is based on a strategic agenda. Apusigah therefore opts for a blending of 'power to' and 'power within' approaches in order to attain empowerment among women. Her suggested tools for achieving all the strategic goals are education and training, health and nutrition, employment and income and human rights (Apusigah 2004). "It must, however, be built on a practical goal thus rendering the two imperatives intricately connected" (Apusigah 2004:14). This means that programmes or projects targeting on providing knowledge and skills give women an opportunity to make individual choices and thus contribute to strategic changes in the society. The socially transformative role of education and skills training can therefore be fulfilled and an empowerment among women can be achieved. However, it has to be taken into consideration that women can only empower themselves.

⁵Apusigah refers to Apusigah 2002; Hesse 2000; Nikoi 1998; Mould-Iddirisu 1996

Projects, practical programmes and development organisations can only support them and provide the necessary framework in form of skills, knowledge and resources. “Development agencies and governments cannot empower. The most they can do is to facilitate and support people’s own efforts.” (Eyben/Kabeer/Cornwall 2008:24).

4.4. Conclusion

Education and training provision is inevitable of a modern state system. It provides the foundation for future economy and serves the future generations. In Ghana the education system is widespread with lots of schools and also vocational skills training institutions. Gaps can be observed between southern and northern regions, urban and rural areas and among men and women. The population in the northern rural areas experiences more challenges in educational attainment and access and because of local social norms women receive lower education than men. Those who have no access to education or training remain often dependent on others. The empowering factor of education or a specific training is to gain a skill to use it productively. In using a skill productively financial dependence on others can be reduced. Getting education and knowledge also gives prerequisites to be self-initiative and to start businesses. In a holistic understanding of education though, education and training do not only contribute to an economic empowerment but to a social and a political empowerment too.

The last chapter strived to explain the meaning of empowerment and its underlying concept ‘power’. Whereas “power over” concepts are common in Hobbes’ and Weber’s tradition and are continued in WB and UN definitions; feminists emphasis the “power within” approach, which means that vulnerable/oppressed people themselves understand the underlying structures of power and therefore strive to change the structure. Empowerment therefore doesn’t necessarily mean to suppress another group or to challenge a group, but to gain power within the system itself on the levels of economy, social relations and politics in order to overcome inequalities. The latter categories also explain the three common dimensions of empowerment: economic, social and political. Education and skills training provision institutes can contribute to all three forms of empowerment and thus be able to contribute to a change of power structures within the society.

According to the Ghanaian feminist Apusigah women in Ghana are far more disadvantaged in terms of education, employment, income and accessibility to land and financial means and are underrepresented in political institutions. This is due to women’s subordinate position in society and the socio-economic system, according to Apusigah. She therefore suggests a change

of the structural status of women in the form of practical projects and programmes around education and training, health and nutrition, employment and income and human rights.

It is in the interest of this work to find out about the strategic changes in young women's lives who are targeted by such practical vocational skills training projects in northern Ghana. It is also in the interest of this work to find out about income possibilities for women attending a vocational skills training as well as their economic and social empowerment. The question if specific vocational skills training projects can contribute to less labour migration among young women can only be answered after finding out about changes in the situation of the mentioned target group.

In order to be able to interpret and analyse the changes in women's lives who are attending vocational skills projects in northern Ghana it has to be focused on several components:

1. the strategic role of women in the Ghanaian context
2. the education situation for women in northern Ghana
3. the employment/income-generating possibilities for young women in northern Ghana
4. the form of empowerment which should be achieved through vocational skills projects

The next section gives an overview over the methodological approach used in carrying out the empirical research.

5. Methodological approach of the field research

5.1. Selection of the research methodology

The empirical research was conducted in the form of a qualitative field research on the basis of individual, personal in-depth interviews. Quantitative research methods were not considered as appropriate for this research due to several reasons: *First*, written questionnaires would have excluded a great number of the target group since many of them are illiterate. *Second*, quantitative methods prevent the researcher from asking into detail and asking for re-explanation and therefore the risk of misinterpretation for a researcher from a different cultural context would be high. *Third*, the aim of the research is not to cover a large number of people but a sufficient number of people in different training stages in order to find out about general problem and opportunity areas.

Apart from the empirical qualitative field research a detailed literature research was carried out as well as additional research in the form of interactions with experts at the research location (NGO initiators, local scientists, government institutions/offices).

5.1.1. What is qualitative research?

Qualitative research aims at exploring and analysing structures and forms of expression of social processes and is aimed at understanding people's specific behaviours and actions in a social context as well as the dynamics emerged through this behaviours and actions in the social environment and how these dynamics determine behaviours and actions again (Froschauer/Lueger 2003). To select a qualitative research methodology means to speak to experts themselves because members of a social system are the experts themselves and at the same time represent the social system (ibid.). Qualitative research therefore is not about valuing a system but understanding a system and giving reasons for particular behaviours and actions by a specific group of people (Froschauer/Lueger 2003). The expectation and demand on a research in general is to create opportunities to generate new knowledge and it must be possible to assess this newly generated knowledge as well as expand and specify it (Froschauer/Lueger 2003).

The research work and thesis at hand is an attempt to meet this requirements and demand of qualitative research. Therefore it was planned and carried out in a careful and precise manner. The following section gives an overview of the research approach.

5.2. Research design

After defining the epistemological interest and drafting the aims of the research it was apparent that the research required a relocation of the researcher to the research field for several months in order to carry out the research in a proper and careful way. In advance of the research the whole approach had to be planned (planning phase). The second step was to transform the planned steps into the concrete organisation of the research such as access and contact to the research field and setting the time frame for the research stay (orientation phase). Eventually the research itself could be carried out which always required reflexion phases (research phase).

5.2.1. Planning phase

The research interest was clearly defined before the research questions were formulated. The interview questions were only done preliminary in order to guarantee an open and adaptable approach. A detailed problem definition in advance (e.g. all young women leave their homes for joining the “kayayei-business” and live in harsh and hazardous conditions) would have clearly defined the researcher’s perspective of a social system and limited the possibilities to see the real functioning of the social system. The interest therefore was rather to find out about the reality and outcomes and dynamics of this reality in the social system.

What was done initially was to gain a first general idea of the research area in order to structure the research itself. This was done in form of an in-depth literature research which was drawn and summarised in chapter 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis. The literature research and the detailed study of the research area contributed to the clarification of my assumptions and expectations.

The initial planning phase of the research stay also included considerations about how to plan and organise on-site research and was accompanied by considerations about my required competences, possible expectations from cooperation partners on-site and my deficits.

I saw my required competences as the following:

- being able to adapt to a different social and cultural system
- being able to develop a trustfully relationship with interview partners
- being able to explain my role as a researcher from a different context
- being able to organise the research on my own

I considered the potential expectations by my interview partners to be “how do we benefit from your research?”

Concerning my own deficits of doing this particular research I was most concerned about the fact that I am not very familiar with the social and cultural system of the research field and therefore could easily misunderstand and misinterpret answers; in turn my questions can easily be misunderstood or misinterpreted. I also did not know how difficult or easy it would be for me to adapt to a very different social and cultural system. My main concern therefore was if it is justified that I write about a system I am not part of. How do I ensure that I understand things right?

5.2.1.1. Why do I think I am able to do the research?

My advantage was that I was already a bit familiar with the social and cultural context of the research field as I have visited the region twice before. I see myself to be very adaptable and willing to learn and listen. I tried not to value but tried to be as neutral as possible. In order to overcome the deficit of not being part of the social system, I decided to see communication and interaction as a permanent learning process on both sides. Learning processes do never have an end but are ongoing. In addition intercultural communication, understanding and exchange is an integral and important part of development cooperation.

I also planned to stay at the research location for several months in order to make sure to understand the social and cultural system deeper and – most important – to establish kind of a trustful relationship with my interview partners. Additionally, I decided to stay with the project initiators themselves, in order to be close to the project beneficiaries and the field of interest.

5.2.2. Orientation phase

This second phase of the research work included the constant contact to the partners on-site in order to realise the steps planned in the first phase. The contact partners (project managers of the projects) facilitated the contact to the target group (project beneficiaries) and the project managers also provided the necessary information about the social system and – what was most important – the information I needed to select the interview partners (e.g. who attended a training and owns a business). It was also the project managers I consulted in case of problems, concerns or questions.

In the course of the stay I had the possibility to get to know my interview partners gradually and tried to establish trustful relationships in advance. I also gained additional experience about the social system and social reality through school visits, interactions with women groups, scientists, local NGOs and government institutions.

5.2.3. Research phase

The research itself was accompanied by the fact that I tried to adapt myself as much as possible to the research field. The research process contained permanent reflection phases in terms of content and methodology. My research methodology did not change during the process but since a research is always a process and is not stable it should be flexible and adaptable (Froschauer/Lueger 2003). The focus of my research changed insofar that I had to revise and adapt my interview guideline slightly and did not stick to the guideline but rather was guided by the interview partners' structure or answers. I tried to provide topic areas and tried to find out what is important for the interview partner. I provided some kind of structure in form of my interview guideline but tried to be open and change the structure if required.

5.2.3.1. Communication process

A very important part of the research and communication process was the fact that I did not mention the word 'empowerment' though my research is concentrated around this phenomenon. My intention rather was to find out about indicators of empowerment which I partly defined in advance and partly were defined by my interview partners in the process of communication. The questions itself were prepared immanent but open. At the beginning of each interview I attached great importance to the explanation of my intention, clarifying my role and asking for permission. When working with an interpreter I always paid great attention that the interpreter understood my intentions and concerns. At the end of each interview I gave space for questions and asked about the interview partner's feeling to speak about personal experiences to a stranger.

5.3. Scope and location of the research

36 qualitative personal and individual in-depth interviews with young women from northern Ghana were carried out. In order to gain a more representative sample of the target group the interviews were conducted among people in different stages and locations:

- 1) Women in ongoing training
- 2) Women graduated from training and having an own business
- 3) Women graduated from training without having an own business
- 4) Women from rather urban areas
- 5) Women from rather rural areas

The interviews were carried out mainly in the town Damongo, the city Tamale, the village Daboya and the village Savelugu. Due to a language barrier between myself and the person

interviewed in most cases it was necessary to work with an interpreter. The interpreter did not have any close relation to the projects or the interview partners in order to ensure a neutral position of the interpreter. The location of the interviews was different, depending on the interview partner's wish, possibilities and circumstances. The interviews were conducted either at the skills training centre, the interview partner's work- or home place or my accommodation place.

5.4. Interview guideline and interpretation pattern

The interview guideline was grouped into seven sections. The following table will give an overview of the interview guideline. It does not provide a full list of the questions asked but gives an idea about the questions in each section.

Section	Examples of questions
<i>Personal questions</i>	Age; school level; family status
<i>Migration experience</i>	Relevance; reason for migration decision; experience with "kayayei-business"
<i>Participation at the skills training</i>	Reason of taking part; getting to know the project; kind of training
<i>Expectation of training</i>	What did/do you expect from the training?
<i>Experience of training</i>	Benefits; challenges; financial and social impacts (empowerment indicators, further explained in the next section)
<i>Employment</i>	Wish for self-employment/own business; challenges and experiences with own business
<i>Further training/future plans</i>	Additional trainings required/desired; future plans

Interpretation is the analysis of meanings, denotations and connections. The communication processes between me and the interview partners gave information about specific characteristics of the social system. To find out about these specific characteristics is the task of interpretation. Interpretation is always dependent on the researcher's linguistic know-how and knowledge in terms of content and thus is always dependent on the perspective of the researcher. It is the task of interpretation though to assume that with the utmost probability people will think and act in a predictable way under specific circumstances (Froschauer/Lueger 2003). My previous knowledge about the social context and system was necessary for the communication and interpretation process. However I also tried to blind out this knowledge during communication processes in order not to distort outcomes.

Before the interviews could be analysed it was necessary to design an interpretation framework. The framework was designed according to the seven sections of the interview guideline and gave information about the following criteria:

- 1) Age/Family status
- 2) School level
- 3) Migration experience
 - a. Reason for migration
 - b. Occupation in “kayayei-business”?
 - Information about experiences in the “kayayei-business”
- 4) Way of getting to know the skills training project/influence from outside
- 5) Reasons of taking part at the training
- 6) Expectations from the training
- 7) Benefits of the training
- 8) Changes of situation before and after training
- 9) Challenges and problems while in training
- 10) Desire for own business incl. reason
- 11) Problems with establishing own business
- 12) Still need for migration
- 13) Future plans and further training
- 14) Further information

The answers of the interview partners were allocated to the mentioned criteria. The next step was to narrow the information down in order to be able to answer the research question:

“How can vocational skills training serve as tool for empowerment for women and lead to less labour migration among women?”

Therefore it was necessary to specify empowerment criteria, which are the following:

Economic empowerment

- 1) Being able to use skill productively
- 2) Financial independence after training
- 3) Participation in financial decision-making process in household

Social empowerment

- 4) Expressing oneself through activity
- 5) Changes in respect gained from family/community
- 6) Social function of centre

- 7) Ability to pass on skills to others
- 8) Feelings about training and work

Future plans and desires

- 9) Need for further training
- 10) Still need for labour migration

Key words were developed in order to allocate answers to the specific empowerment indicators. It was also considered if the issue or key words were of importance for the interview partners or if they were brought in by me. Differences and similarities and tendencies among the different interview partners were already considered during the interpretation process in order to facilitate the analysis.

5.5. Limitations of the research

The research in northern Ghana in the town of Damongo and in the city of Tamale as well as in the villages Daboya and Savelugu consisted of a small selection of participants of two women development and empowerment projects. Hence the outcomes of the interviews are only case studies and it is not possible to draw general conclusions for all women participating in the two respective organisations. In order to gain information about general chances, challenges, achievements, empowering factors, reasons of participation, future plans etc. of women involved in the projects DYDI and GIGDEV it would be necessary to carry out a long-term and broad quantitative study among women who are involved or passed-out of DYDI and GIGDEV. It was the interest of this thesis rather to only illustrate case studies in the field of vocational skills training projects for women in northern Ghana. The most important limitation of the thesis is therefore its non-representative nature.

Concerning the selection of the interview partners I was mainly dependent on the advice and information by the project managers as well as the availability of interview partners. A balanced and individual selection of interview partners could therefore only be partly realised. If the selection of the interview partners would have been different a divergent outcome of the thesis could have been possible and probable to a certain extent. Empowering factors, fields of problems and my own recommendations and conclusions drawn would probably be different. The outcomes are therefore based on individual experiences and life situations.

My own role was apparently sometimes misunderstood, as many interview partners asked me for institutional or organisational support, though I explained my role as an independent re-

searcher. Possible expectations of the interview partners could have determined their answers and statements.

However the aim of the thesis is to give an idea about problems and challenges as well as achievements, benefits and changes in the lives of women in northern Ghana who have low or no education or skills training and are currently involved or have been trained in DYDI or GIGDEV. The following chapters describe the two women empowerment projects in focus.

6. Damongo Youth Development Initiative

6.1. Project location and context

The project is located in the town of Damongo in the Northern Region of Ghana. Damongo is the capital of the West Gonja District which comprises about 8,352 km² (West Gonja District Assembly 2005) and a population of 84,727 (GSS 2012). The economy of the district is agriculture-based with about 60% of the population being employed in the agricultural field (UNDP 2007). The industry sector is the second largest field comprising of mining, quarrying, manufacturing and construction. The service sector employs the smallest part of the population (ibid). The biggest employer is the private informal sector, which comprised 80% of the workforce in the year 2007 (UNDP 2007). Women dominate the wholesale, retail and manufacturing sector. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2007 this trend is even increasing and self-employment is very high in the district (UNDP 2007). All other sectors apart from retail and wholesale and service are dominated by men (West Gonja District Assembly 2005).

The area has been targeted by some governmental poverty reduction programmes (Rural Enterprise Project, Ghana Youth Employment Programme) and several non-governmental organisations are active in the area. However the situation for people in the region is still challenging, due to a lack of employment opportunities for the youth, high school-drop-out rates and a lack of skills trainings. Infrastructural neglect makes the situation even more difficult. Therefore the poverty rate and out-migration of the District of Damongo are high. According to the Government of Ghana (GoG) four out of ten adults stay or live outside of the district for at least one year (West Gonja District Assembly 2005). Especially women migrate to urban regions in order to generate money. Many of them end up in precarious jobs like the “kayayei-business” due to a lack of education or no productive skill to offer.



Figure 2 Map of Ghana, Damongo

Source: http://www.mapsofworld.com/lat_long/ghana-lat-long.html#
(Permission to use the figure from Compare Infobase Limited)

The migration flow in order to generate money in urban centres of the country has several reasons and is always an individual decision embedded into structural conditions. Parents' inability to pay school fees for further education and the lack of education offers are major contributors. In addition, traditional beliefs and customs contribute to a high number of women being not educated or school drop-outs, as women are widely seen as domestic servants. A heavy work load in the house prevents girls from school attendance and good school performance. The lack of enough employable skills training offers contributes to the high number of out-migration as well.

The community based non-governmental organisation *Damongo Youth Development Initiative* is active in the field of skills trainings in order to provide employable skills and to contribute to women empowerment in the district of Damongo.

6.2. Project description

The Damongo Youth Development Initiative is a small community-based vocational skills training initiative in the town of Damongo targeting young women living in the immediate surrounding area of Damongo. Since the beginning of the project in the year 2001 every year 10 to 20 women join the skills training centre and graduate after three years of training. By the beginning of 2013 107 women passed out of the skills trainings. The majority of the women uses their acquired skill productively either at home or in an established shop. A low number of women also went into further education or training (Senior Secondary Schools, Teacher's Training College, Nursing School etc.). The project is funded by non-governmental donor partners from the global north, as well as local governmental and non-governmental cooperation partners.

In order to address women from the Northern Region of Ghana working in menial jobs such as the "kayayei-business" the skills training project in Damongo was started in the year 2001. Since the project initiators are from the northern part of Ghana themselves they experienced the difficult situation for girls and women in this area which is widely due to lack of employment opportunities and a lack of education or productive skills. The initial motivation of the project initiators was to reduce the number of women migrating and ending up in precarious situations and to provide young women with productive skills in order to use them for themselves, their families and for the society.

The centre for skills training in Damongo includes four skills training offers for women:

- 1) Sewing training

- 2) Soap making training (incl. pomade making)
- 3) Batic tie & die training
- 4) Bread making training

Women usually are trained in all four or at least two of the skills and have also the possibility to specialise in one of the skills. The reason for this particular selection of skills trainings is based on their function as basic needs for the individual and society as well as on the local availability of the resources. Once the skill is acquired it can be used at home for the individual or family and/or used productively as a small-scale business. The training period is usually between two to four years, according to the acquisition of the participant.

While in training the women also receive theoretical workshops about health issues, family planning, women in society, religious freedom and other cross-cutting issues. The project initiators' intention is to provide women with the necessary knowledge to take informed and independent decisions for themselves. The theoretical workshops help to strengthen awareness of cross-cutting issues since many women didn't go to school or are school-dropouts and therefore often do not have the required knowledge about important issues (e.g. of health issues such as HIV/Aids).

Exchange programmes with women from different skills trainings programmes and excursions within Ghana are part of the project as well.

In order to gain knowledge about business and financial management the target group also receives basic courses in financing and business management. These basic courses provide the women with the necessary knowledge needed since it is one intention of the project to encourage the trainees to be productive for their families or to establish small businesses after their training. However, the theoretical courses do not have a fixed time-table and therefore do not target all the participants on a regular basis which is a challenge for the project.

The skills training is free of charge apart from a registration fee of 10 GHS (about 5 Euros). The women in the sewing training also gradually pay for the sewing machine during their training period. At the end of the training period they are provided with a new sewing machine. Hence, the women do not have to pay the full amount of a sewing machine at once but gradually during a three-year-period.

With support from donor partners a micro-credit programme has been initiated recently. After the training period women will be provided with small loans in order to help them starting their own businesses. Since the target group of the project is a young, vulnerable and poor group of women they often lack the required starting capital for establishing a business and

also have no access to financial services such as credits. The loans should help them to start initiatives such as small businesses. The micro-credits programme is a pilot programme and has only recently started. Results about impacts are therefore yet to come.

Since the start of the project and training centre in Damongo it has been a role model in the region and therefore expanded to more rural places within the west Gonja District. The population in rural places suffers even more from lack of education and employment opportunities. Motivated by the training centre in Damongo graduates from the centre started their own training centres in the communities of Daboya, Bowena, Mankarigu, Lingbinsi and Tuna. Four training centres in villages around Damongo are in the planning phase. The training centres are based in the centre of Damongo and the villages, however, participants from remote areas often lack adequate transportation to the training site and therefore do not participate on a regular basis.

There are no special selection criteria of participants for the vocational training however the project targets first and foremost women between 15 and 26 years who dropped out from school (due to pregnancy or other reasons) or didn't attend any form of school at all. It is not necessary therefore to have a school certificate or a particular level of school while in most public vocational schools a certain level of school is required. Hence the NEET group (people not in education, employment or training) is targeted by DYDI. Women are the focus target group because the poverty situation in the area which contributes to the inability of parents to pay their children's school fees as well as traditional/cultural perceptions of girls/women to be domestic workers is more crucial for girls than for boys.

6.3. Goals and intentions of DYDI

Generally the purpose of the project is to help young women to become financially independent, to be able to support themselves and to take responsibility for their own lives. The intention is to motivate young women to be self-initiative, creative and productive for themselves and the society as well as to pass on the skills to others in order to create jobs (Anthony Anyoka, personal interview 25th February 2013, Damongo).

Through the provision of skills, knowledge, resources and ideas it is intended that the participants of the project shall become self-initiative and productive. It is intended that the women who pass out of the training should be able to take over responsibility to start up their own small businesses. According to the project manager the empowering aspect of the project is to

make the knowledge and skills available to the targeted persons so that they themselves can make informed decisions about their lives (ibid.).

Since the project is targeted on women the empowerment aspect is also about the provision of knowledge that contributes to challenge those traditional and religious things that are against women's interests. The skills training as well as the theoretical training shall contribute to the development of a critical mind among the project participants concerning the role of a woman both home and outside. The project manager claims further that the result of financial independence, informed decision-making, responsibility, knowledge and skills of the participants leads to an increased self-esteem among them, which is another important component of empowerment (ibid.).

DYDI is targeted therefore at economic empowerment (financial independence through productivity) as well as social empowerment (self-initiative, creativity, knowledge, responsibility, self-esteem). In terms of empowerment the project manager of DYDI gives a clear statement: "When we empower you we want you to use it for your own power, power with your family and with the community and not over the community" (Anthony Anyoka, personal interview 25th February 2013, Damongo).

6.4. Outcome of the field research among participants of DYDI

The interviews among participants of DYDI were carried out both in the rather urban area Damongo – where the main skills training centre is located – and in the rather rural area Daboya – where a branch of the main training centre is located. The sample of 21 individual interviews does represent case studies and does not allow a general conclusion about labour migration or the involvement in the "kayayei-business" or the grade of empowerment through the skills training however based on the outcome of the conducted interviews the analysis provides an idea about the situation of women in skills trainings in northern Ghana.

The analysis is separated into two areas which are interconnected though: the first research area gives information about occurrence and relevance of labour migration and the "kayayei-business"; the second research area is concentrated around economic and social empowerment among women through the skills training at DYDI. In the end it shall be concluded whether skills training at DYDI can serve as alternative for labour migration (including the "kayayei-business") and whether an economic and social empowerment among women could be discovered.

Main challenge areas for women are overlapping with the interviews among participants in GIGDEV and are therefore analysed commonly in a separate chapter (chapter 8.3).

In order to give an idea about education level, main reasons for and expectations from DYDI skills training by participants an overview shall be given first.

6.4.1. General information about interview partners from DYDI

Since the participants of DYDI are from Damongo, Daboya or the immediate surrounding area most of the women knew the skills training project or heard about it from friends, relatives and women who passed-out of the training already.

The interview partner's age ranges from 19 to 40 years. Most of them have children; only three out of 21 interview partners have no children.

The case studies illustrate that most of the women decided on their own to join the training however with support (mentally and financially) by their family members. In some cases the registration is only possible because family members help to afford the registration fee.

According to the interviews the reasons to take part at the vocational skills trainings are mainly due to the women's interest in the specific skill and to have an income opportunity for themselves and their families. In the rural area (Daboya) many women also mentioned that they haven't been to school or the results at school were not good enough to continue and that made them to learn a skill. The reasons for taking part at DYDI are therefore of financial nature but also driven by own interests into the specific skill as well as low education levels in the formal sector.

It was found out that the main expectations from the training by the women asked are similar to the reasons why they want to take part at the training (being financially independent, acquiring the skill). Some of them also mentioned that they expect to open a shop after they finished the training. The social aspect of supporting and helping others by training and teaching them could be found out as well.

The desire to open a shop after completing the skills training was mentioned by all women interviewed, hence apparently the desire to run an own business in the future is high. This could be connected to the fact that having an own business in the social context given brings out much more prestige and respect rather than using the skill at home.

After some personal questions the interviews started with questions about migration experiences as this is part of the research area. The following section gives information about occurrence of labour migration and the outcome of migration experiences.

6.4.2. Labour migration and “kayayei-business”

The research question – *“Why do women migrate from northern Ghana to southern Ghana and why do they end up in precarious situations when working in the “kayayei-business?”* – was partly answered already in the theoretical discussion (chapter 3.4 and 3.5). It was mentioned that large studies about migration and “kayayei-business” show that this is a widespread phenomenon among women from northern Ghana. The outcome of the sample of 21 interviews among women in training with DYDI or passed-out of training from DYDI (both in rural and urban regions) shows that a few of them really went to southern areas to work and even more of them intended to go, however, for some reasons didn’t go. More than half of the women interviewed have either been to the south working in urban areas or intended to go to the south and work. Therefore the case studies show and acknowledge that labour migration among women from northern to southern regions of Ghana is given and common.

The women who went to work in the southern urban regions all ended up in the “kayayei-business” because there was no other alternative to generate money. The main reasons mentioned for the migration decision was to earn and save money for themselves and their families. The women mentioned that they can earn and save much more money while working in the “kayayei-business” than in any other menial occupation in their own region. Some of the women who went to the south to work also mentioned that they intended to buy a sewing machine with the money earned to be able to learn the sewing skill or to join a sewing training afterwards.

The school level of those who migrated or intended to migrate to the south is varied, however, none of them has higher education than Junior High School. The interviews also show that some women would have liked to continue school but due to pregnancy, lack of financial means or bad school results it was not possible for them to continue formal school.

Due to the small-sized sample it is not possible to make a general conclusion about labour migration among women from northern Ghana, but it showed that the specific form of cyclical female labour migration is common and given in Damongo and Daboya. It also showed that the involvement in the “kayayei-business” is given and a common area where women are occupied after their migration if they are unskilled and have low or no education.

The outcome shows an interesting rural-urban difference: the frequency of labour migration to the south is more evident in the rural area (Daboya) than in the urban area (Damongo). Some women from the rural area also choose to interrupt the skills training for a short period of time in order to migrate and try to earn money in the southern centres. Again this tendency has to be seen carefully and critically, hence the sample of the interviews is too little to draw a general conclusion. Nevertheless due to even less occupational possibilities for women in the rural areas in comparison to urban areas the outcome is likely to picture the reality.

Experiences with the “kayayei-business” are – like in theory – janus-faced. While the advantage of the head porter job for most of the women is the ability to save money or to buy the desired items, the disadvantage mentioned frequently is the dangerous nature of the work: bad housing situation, hard work and the risk that the employers don’t pay salary.

The opinions are different if it comes to the question if there will still be need for migration after the training. About half of the women who migrated say that due to the skills training there is no need for migration and earning money somewhere else anymore, however, for the other half it is not completely excluded because it depends on the financial situation in future and if they can take care of themselves and their children.

The next research question refers to empowering factors of vocational skills trainings but is also connected to labour migration: *How can vocational skills training serve as tool for empowerment for women and lead to less labour migration among women?* It is assumed here that empowering factors of economic and social nature play a role in migration decisions. Therefore it shall first be analysed if empowerment has taken place in women’s lives since they have been attending or already attended skills training within DYDI and in what way empowerment has taken place.

6.4.3. Economic empowerment

In order to get information about the grade of empowerment gained during the skills training certain indicators for empowerment were asked. The term itself (empowerment) was not used, since the understanding of the term can be very different. Like in theory empowerment was broken down into dimensions (economic/financial and social empowerment)⁶.

⁶ The political dimension of empowerment was not taken into consideration in this particular research, as it would have required a more detailed study about political influences and participation in the region.

Following indicators for economic empowerment were formulated: financial independence; participation in financial decision-making processes on household level, control over own finances and productive use of the skill.

Among women who are still in training with DYDI (in Damongo and Daboya) financial independence is mainly not given of course and they are still widely dependent on family members (parents, husband etc.). They are therefore not able to take their own financial decisions at household level. However, the results of the interviews also show that the majority of women in training already use their acquired skill productively. The women indicated that they use, for example, the sewing skill for themselves, family and friends. This is an income source for them and helps them to earn a bit of money and hence allows them to take their own financial decisions. Many women therefore indicated to be more involved in financial decision-makings in the household since they joined the training. It has to be taken into consideration, though, that due to traditional and socio-cultural norms women generally enjoy rather low participation in financial decision-makings on the household level in this region.

Nevertheless an economic empowerment among women in training is given. However it was evident that many women have to do additional jobs while in the training in order to earn money for the next day. Most of them indicated to be engaged in the sales sector (e.g. selling tea, oranges, groundnuts etc.). According to the interviews there are no major differences between the rural and urban area in terms of financial empowerment apart from the fact that women in the rural area (Daboya) interrupt their training more often to earn money.

Those women interviewed who already passed-out of the training since several years and established businesses indicated 1) to be financially independent 2) to be more involved in financial decision-making processes 3) to have control over their finances and 4) to make productive use of their acquired skill either for themselves or their families and others or both. On the base of the conducted interviews an economic empowerment among women having a business has therefore taken place.

It was found out that most of the women who run their own business would like to expand their business and learn either more skills or intensify their knowledge in the appropriate field. Since the training at DYDI is a multiple one (women have the possibility to be trained in all the four skills) the desire for implementing more than one skill for money generating is given. Due to a lack of financial means or opportunities, however, many of them don't see the chance to realise these desires. From one case study it was found out that offering just the

sewing skill in the shop is not enough for being financially independent and therefore she is also engaged in the sales sector to be able to survive financially.

Reasons for not implementing soap or bread-making skills are often due to financial reasons, as the resources are expensive and facilities (such as bread oven) are not available without financial support. One case study however showed that implementing three of the four skills is possible. The woman built the business gradually and is running it together and with her husband.

Those who did not establish a business or a shop indicated that the main reason is lack of financial means. One case study illustrated that if there are no financial means to establish a business/shop after the training it is likely for the women to work in a different field to earn money for financial survival (mostly: sales sector). It was found out from some women in the rural area (Daboya) that it would be even an option for them to go to the south and engage in the “kayayei-business” again if they are not able to accumulate financial means to establish a business.

As mentioned above in the section “*Description of the project*”, one important goal of DYDI is to help women to be financially independent by encouraging them to use their acquired skill productively. Once they are able to establish a business or able to use their skill to supply others this goal can be approached. However it must be taken into consideration that lack of finances hinder them very often to open a business or to expand and intensify their efforts. Nevertheless the acquired skill and knowledge helps women to be empowered economically as they can use their skill productively for themselves and their families at least (this is done by all the women asked).

In addition to economic empowerment social empowerment is likewise important in order to gain a holistic set of tools in order to be successful, encouraged and content.

6.4.4. Social empowerment

Social empowerment refers to people’s capacities to secure their respect, social inclusion, rights, structures, dignity, anti-discrimination and self-representation which can lead to a change in society and in people’s immediate lives (Eyben/Kabeer/Cornwall 2008). The following questions served as indicators about social empowerment during the interviews: ability to express oneself through work/skill; realisation of changes concerning respect from family and society; experience of a social function of the skills training centre; ability to pass on skills to others; motivation for self-initiative as well as feelings experienced in training and

work. In the following analysis about social empowerment among DYDI participants are no major differences between the rural and urban area or training stage of the women hence the analysis covers both regions and all the women in different stages.

The indicators of social empowerment observed during DYDI interviews were rather clear and explicit concerning respect and expressing oneself through activity and work. All the interview partners stated that they receive more respect since they learned a skill. They mentioned that they automatically receive more respect from family and community if it is seen that the women are able to support family and society with something (e.g. dresses). This social function is an important goal by DYDI, as it is also intended to use the newly gained power within family and society.

It was evident that the interview partners can express themselves in doing their work and training. Most of them are therefore motivated to be self-initiative and open their own business or shop after training. This meets one intended aspect of DYDI skills training. To open a shop in future is also important for the women to be more respected by family and society. Increased respect from others leads to a raise of self-esteem which is an important indicator for social empowerment.

The women interviewed who own their own business also pass on their knowledge to others (mostly in the form of apprenticeship) which is a form of self-initiative. It was also found out that the skills training project helps the participants to sharpen their sense for helping and supporting others in society because they also received support from the project. It was found out that many women learned about the importance of education during their training. Hence they developed the wish to further their own education as well as their children's education in future. This shows that skills trainings have a socially transformative impact about future generations and make people being more concerned about others.

The skills training centre of DYDI also fulfils a very important social function for their participants: some women mentioned that they can discuss their problems with each other or even forget of their own problems in the household due to interactions and distraction. This social function is very important especially in the existing context where women are more oppressed in terms of saying their mind and in terms of participation in decisions at household and community level. The interview with one woman running a DYDI skills centre put the social function of the centre in a nutshell: "I am their [the participants'] mother, I am their father and I am their husband while they are in the centre" (Rashida Mahama, personal interview 8th April 2013, Daboya).

As mentioned above social empowerment is also about securing one's own dignity. It is not only always about material things but also about feelings. Many women mentioned that they feel happier and proud since they acquired the skills training. It was mentioned frequently that there is no fear anymore to work because they learned the skill and feel more confident since they took part or take part at the skills training. These are important factors which show that learning a skill helps people to learn for life and to increase their self-esteem.

6.5. Concluding statements

The target group of the skills training project DYDI which has a centre in Damongo and five branches in surrounding villages are local young women who have low or no education or training and employment and who want to learn a skill for their own or productive use. According to the DYDI project manager the intention is to prevent women from migrating and ending up in precarious jobs like the "kayayei-business"; to give them knowledge, skills and tools for productive use; to help them being financially independent; to motivate and encourage them to be self-initiative in order to achieve empowerment within family and society.

Labour migration and "kayayei-business" is a common scenario for women from the District of Damongo and this was also confirmed by the study carried out. The outcome of the interviews illustrate that skills training has a reducing effect on labour migration to a certain extent, that means, only if financial livelihood is guaranteed.

Financial empowerment was measured by financial independence; participation in financial decision-making processes on household level; control over own finances and productive use of the skill. Financial empowerment is therefore very much connected to the women's migration decision. Though the participation of financial decision-making processes and general control over money by women is low in the social context of northern Ghana and the District of Damongo, the research outcome shows that most of the women who were trained in DYDI or are still in training use the acquired skill productively either for themselves or for others and hence can make economic decisions. Women who own a business are financially independent and have control over their finances. Lack of money however prevents many of them to expand their business, to intensify their knowledge or to establish a business at all. In order to address this challenge DYDI has recently started to support their graduates with micro-credits as it was realised that establishing and sustaining small businesses requires starting capital which the young women often lack. The outcome of the study showed that the lack of financial means is even the main obstacle to establish a small business after the training peri-

od. The outcome of the financial support is yet to be seen as it is a pilot-programme and has recently started.

In order to take informed decisions and to be motivated and encouraged to become self-initiative the women were asked about several social empowerment indicators such as the ability to express themselves through work/skill; perception of changes concerning respect from family and society; experience of a social function of the skills training centre; ability to pass on skills to others; motivation for self-initiative as well as feelings experienced in training and work. Increase of respect for the women by family and society was observed and assessed clearly which contributes to an increase of the women's self-esteem. This motivates the women to work for themselves and the society and to establish shops and businesses. Additional changes of social nature that have taken place since they attended the skills training are feelings of happiness and pride, their ability to carry out a skill and to express themselves in their activities as well as the experience of social functions of the centre. The women's newly gained awareness for support for others (like they receive help from the project) as well as for their awareness of the importance of education and training proves that the skills training has a social transformative character. Many of the interview partners already have children they attach great importance on their children's education since they are in the skills training.

In general it shall be stated that the research shows that economic and social empowerment has taken place in the women's lives since they attend or attended DYDI skills trainings. In addition the skills trainings have a reducing effect on labour migration by young women from northern Ghana to a certain extent, that is, when financial circumstances allow.

The following chapter deals with the outcome of the research among GIGDEV participants, which in the end is analysed together with DYDI outcomes. Since both organisations are operating in the same field and region a common analysis makes sense and the organisations have the opportunity to learn from each other as well.

7. Girls Growth and Development

7.1. Project location and area

The organisation is located in a rural community in the Tamale Metropolis. Tamale is the capital of the Northern Region and is the only district in the region which is predominantly urban. Tamale is one of the fastest growing cities in the whole of West Africa in terms of population and economy and expansion. This can be recognised in the gradual absorption of the surrounding small villages by the urban centre (UNDP 2010). Agriculture (farming at subsistence level) and wholesale/retail are the main economic occupations and main source of livelihood in Tamale though widely do not provide the necessary salary for a living. Therefore the amount of underemployed people is high: 80.2% in the year 2008 (ibid.). The majority of the Tamale population lives below the poverty line. Reasons are shortage of food security due to poor harvests, problems with storage and high food prices (ibid.).

In terms of employment the private informal sector is the main occupation sector with 65.3% in 2008. The unemployment rate is 15.1% in rural areas and 22.8% in urban areas which is due to a lack of job opportunities and seasonal work occupations (ibid.).

The number of schools and enrolment into school is quite high and has increased during the last years, however, the quality of education did not improve sufficiently.

Tamale is often referred to be the NGO-capital in Ghana, as most of national and international NGOs have an office there. NGOs in Tamale focus on several socio-economic areas such as agriculture, environment, water and sanitation, education etc.

The situation for young people in and around Tamale is still challenging, as work opportunities are low and even if people are engaged in some form of work the salary is too low to survive. This is where community-based projects like the skills training project Girls Growth and Development (GIGDEV) come in.



Figure 3 Map of Ghana, Tamale

Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/ghana/ghana-political-map.html>
(Permission from Compare Infobase Limited)

7.2. Project description

GIGDEV is a small community-based women empowerment project in Jisonayili within the city of Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana offering income generating skills trainings for vulnerable young women who live in the immediate surrounding area of Tamale. GIGDEV was initiated by local people and registered as an NGO in the year 1998. GIGDEV has provided employable skills trainings for 380 underprivileged girls and supported over 700 girls with working equipment so far. The organisation is largely dependent on local governmental and non-governmental cooperation partners including traditional authorities and is also supported by international non-governmental donors.

The initial and main motivation of the GIGDEV (Girls Growth and Development)⁷ founder was to teach and train marginalised and vulnerable girls in order to help them being productive and self-reliant so that they become agents of change in their communities (Stella Nitori, personal interview 25th June 2013, Tamale). Initially the target group were young girls on the street selling minor things; girls who are doing the seasonal “kayayei-business”, orphans; girls who stay with foster parents and have no possibility to go to school or attending any other form of education. 1998 the idea became an organisation and was registered and named Girls Growth and Development (GIGDEV).

The organisation expanded and has currently five training centres in Tamale and surrounding communities: Jisonayili (Tamale, headquarter), Zabzugu/Tatale, Savelugu/Nanton, Tolon/Kumbungu and Gushegu. The training centre in Tamale also takes boarding students.

The target group is still young women from Tamale and the surrounding villages/communities who have not been to school or dropped out of school, those who stay on the streets, orphans, girls who stay with foster parents or are single-parent mothers or are physically challenged. The girls are between 16-28 years and are selected by the organisation partly in collaboration with the Unit Committees, Assemblymen/women of the District Assembly and, if necessary, after a visit in their homes. The organisation is providing four core skills trainings:

- 1) Dressmaking
- 2) Hairdressing
- 3) Textile designing and batic tie & die
- 4) Catering (community catering and locally made food)

GIGDEV trainings are holistic trainings which means that literacy and numeracy training as well as capacity building programmes such as workshops on human rights come along with

⁷ More information about GIGDEV: www.gigdevgh.org

the skills training since the majority of the target group has not been to school or only has basic education. In addition, reproductive health, development and gender, HIV/Aids etc. are mainstreaming activities within the organisation. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is also part of the training and provides the trainees with the opportunity to acquire additional knowledge in the field of ICT. It is a concern of the GIGDEV founder to also teach the women how to cook local food with local ingredients if this skill has not been provided to them in their homes. The literacy and numeracy training as well as the theoretical workshops mainly take place in the main training centre in Tamale. Women in the rural areas do not fully benefit from the theoretical workshops which is still a challenge for the project.

The skills training in the centres is free of charge, apart from a registration fee of 10 GHS (about 5 Euros) at the beginning of the training period. The training period varies according to the skills trainings and is about 1-2 years.

The main idea of GIGDEV is that the skills acquired through the training shall be used productively in form of a business or shall be used at home. Without any financial means it is difficult to establish a business or to even become productive on one's own. The strategy of GIGDEV is to provide start-up packages which contains of working tools for the women who pass out of the training. The organisation also uses an integrative approach in the form of meetings with parents (or foster parents) to advise them to contribute to the trainee's need. In particular parents and foster parents are encouraged to support their daughter with starting-up capital for businesses. GIGDEV suggests to start using the skill acquired at home and gradually start a business. GIGDEV monitors their passed out trainees for a period of approximately two years.

7.3. Goals and intentions of GIGDEV

The project intends to provide resources for skills training, the training itself, ideas about business management, formal and non-formal education and intends to promote reproductive health and human rights. This approach aims to transform marginalised girls into responsible and productive adults and should contribute to the reintegration of the women into their families and communities (Stella Nitori, personal interview 25th June 2013, Tamale).

The acquisition of skills which shall be used productively in order to raise the living standard combined with education as well as the knowledge about human rights is the organisation's approach to achieve women empowerment. According to the founder of the organisation women are generally more oppressed in the system, women are less involved in politics than

men and women are often vulnerable and dependent and therefore also economically disadvantaged. Therefore GIGDEV focuses on a welfare- and rights-based approach in the form of providing skills for productivity and providing knowledge about human rights. The combination of both approaches should lead to a change in the communities and should create awareness of the importance of education for the beneficiaries' own children. The organisation stresses further the importance of the development of potentials and talents of beneficiaries as this is part of their definition of empowerment (ibid.). GIGDEV therefore focuses on economic empowerment (job opportunities, income generating skills, socio-economic development) and social empowerment (self-reliance, responsibility, mental development). In the long run this can also lead to political empowerment as women are encouraged to speak out their minds and know their rights (ibid.).

7.4. Outcome of field research among participants of GIGDEV

The interviews among participants of GIGDEV were carried out in a rather urban area at the GIGDEV base (training centre in Tamale) and in a rather rural area (training centre in Savelugu). The small sample of interviews (15 individual interviews) does not allow a general conclusion about relevance and frequency of labour migration, "kayayei-business" and empowerment through skills training among interview partners but the analysis of the research will give an idea about empowering factors for women in GIGDEV skills trainings as well as their labour migration experiences.

First, general background information of the interview partners should be given which will be followed by an analysis of the interview partners' labour migration experiences. Second, the economic and social empowerment factors experienced by the interview partners are illustrated.

Most important challenge areas overlap with those of participants from DYDI and are analysed in a separate chapter (chapter 8.3.).

7.4.1. General information about interview partners from GIGDEV

The interview partners' ages, both women in GIGDEV training and women passed-out of the training, ranges from 20 to 30 years. Nearly all women have children; five out of fifteen women don't have children.

It was found out through the case studies that most of the women got to know the project either by themselves, through friends, passed-out women or from family members. Some women also heard about GIGDEV through the media (TV or radio).

The case studies show that the women who were trained or are trained in GIGDEV mostly decided themselves to join the training centre in Tamale or Savelugu, however opinions and advices of family members were included in the decision.

The most important reasons for taking part in the skills training for the interview partners are: learning a skill to be able to earn money and their interest in the particular skill.

The interview partners' expectations from the training are similar to their reasons for taking part at the training as most of them mentioned that they want to acquire the skill to be able to earn money in order to be financially independent in future. When talking about earning money it was found out that nearly all of the women asked would like to earn their money through their own businesses (shop) in future. Though the desire to run an own business after completing the training is high it is independent from their expectations from the skills training itself in most cases.

The interview partners were asked at the beginning about any labour migration experiences. The following chapter gives information about the outcome of interviews concerning labour migration and occupation in the "kayayei-business".

7.4.2. Labour migration and "kayayei-business"

The outcome of 15 individual interviews shows that there is evidence for labour migration among women towards the southern urban centres to earn money. Labour migration played a role in the lives of nearly half of the women asked. Their migration decisions were mainly due to lack of financial means for school fees and lack of financial means within the family. The occupation in the south should help them and their family financially for the immediate future.

The interview outcomes show that not everybody who migrated ended up in the "kayayei-business" but still predominantly in the trade and sales sector.

Since the skills training project is focused mainly on women who dropped out of school or didn't go to school at all the majority of women who migrated in search for work had no or only primary school education.

The outcome shows that most of the women who migrated and ended up in the “kayayei-business” or menial sales business decided on their own to migrate due to financial problems. Some of them mentioned to intend to earn money for their school fees or to be able to buy a sewing machine.

Experiences mentioned by the interview partners show that the migration process and the “kayayei-business” as well as the sales business includes some dangerous aspects and is therefore connected to negative experiences.

Rural and urban differences in terms of labour migration cannot be stated explicitly since labour migration occurred in both regions likewise. However, labour migration among women interviewed is given and most of them end up in the sales sector or in the “kayayei-business” due to lack of alternatives.

The question if there is still need for migration in order to earn money in future was answered very diverse and reaches from “no need any more due to skill” to “will go again if there is no money for establishing a business”. Hence, it depends on the individual financial situation and experience if the woman decides to do labour migration again or not. Financial factors are thus determinant if women see themselves forced to migrate in search for work again or not.

The following section deals with the economic or financially empowering factors which the skills training at GIGDEV brings.

7.4.3. Economic empowerment

Information about economic (financial) empowerment through the skills training at GIGDEV was found out through formulating certain indicators without using the term *empowerment* itself. Using the term *empowerment* would have required to give a detailed definition of the underlying concept. Following indicators were used for economic empowerment: financial independence; participation in financial decision-making processes on household level, control over own finances and productive use of the skill.

Outcomes of interviews among women in training with GIGDEV illustrate that financial independence of women while they are in the training is partly given. In the rural area (Savelugu) the majority of women in training mentioned that they are not financially independent, however they mentioned to be more involved in financial decision-making processes since they started the skills training. Women in training in Tamale also tend to be more involved in financial decision-makings at home since they started the skills training. The involvement in financial decision-making processes on household level is mainly due to the fact that nearly

all women in training who were interviewed use the acquired skill productively while in the training (e.g. sewing for others; doing hairdressing for others). In doing so they are able to earn a bit of money and this allows them to make financial decisions. The money they earn themselves can also be controlled by them.

It was also found out, though, in order to survive financially some women have to work every day before or after the training. They were or are mainly occupied in the sales sector or as domestic workers.

Nevertheless the productive use of the skill allows them to be economically independent to a certain extent and this fulfils one goal of GIGDEV: to help women to be financially better off.

Those women interviewed who finished the skills training in GIGDEV already use their acquired skill productively either through an own business or in a different form (for the household). The case studies of women owning a business show that financial independence is widely given, as well as control over their own finances although they are struggling to improve their business in order to secure their wellbeing. One case study showed that it is necessary to be also involved in the sales sector in addition to the sewing shop. Another case illustrated that financial support from family members is still necessary although she owns her own business. According to the interviews lack of financial means and lack of opportunities to intensify their knowledge in the appropriate field are among the main obstacles to improve their business.

Many women indicated to be motivated to do further trainings either in the field of their acquired skill or a similar skill (e.g. dress designing). The reason mentioned frequently for this desire was the existing competition in the field of hairdressing, dressmaking and soap making on the local market. Some women developed a plan for the future in which they intend to integrate more than one skill in order to overcome the challenges of competition on the market.

One case study showed that in addition to her hairdressing training at GIGDEV her cooking skills improved greatly during the training period, as this was an important part of the holistic approach of GIGDEV. She is now using her cooking skill productively and is able to earn a bit of money by using the cooking skill. This example shows that it is not necessarily required to go exactly into the field of the skill trained but the approach of GIGDEV also makes it possible to make productive use of other skills learned at the centre.

On the base of the findings of the conducted interviews economic empowerment is widely given through the productive use of acquired skills. Women make use of the skill either already during the training period or afterwards or both. One big challenge is the lack of starting

capital to establish a business or shop after the training and to keep the business going after establishing. Lack of chances to intensify training or further training is also one challenge for women who would like to increase their knowledge.

Based on the research financial empowerment is therefore undoubtedly given through skills training, however it happens that women struggle to maintain and establish businesses in a sustainable way.

The next section provides an analysis of the women's perceptions about social changes which is likewise important as economic empowerment if success and wellbeing shall be achieved.

7.4.4. Social empowerment

Social empowerment, as mentioned, is about securing one's own dignity by securing respect, increasing self-esteem, expressing oneself through work and activity and to secure and use acquired knowledge so that it can lead to a change in structures and society. The mentioned criteria served as indicators about social empowerment. Again the term itself was not used in order to avoid confusion about the meaning of the concept. Social empowerment for women is very important in a context where social norms are widely determined by men while women enjoy only little participation in decisions within society and household.

In terms of social empowerment among women who are participating or have participated at the skills training within GIGDEV all the interview partners clearly mentioned that the respect they gain by others – both family and society – has risen since their skills training. The women mentioned that the skill helped them to feel more respected because the immediate surrounding (family, society) sees that they are able to provide something (e.g. dresses) for themselves and others.

In addition many women expressed that they feel happier and have no great fear anymore about work since they attended the skills training and increased their knowledge. This helped to increase their self-esteem. Their hope for the future has risen as well since they learned a skill. Many women stressed that it is very important to them to have something to do now in comparison to their situation before the skills training where they were either only in the house doing household chores or only did minor jobs in the sales sector.

The women interviewed also said to be able to express themselves through the skills training or the work performed. They said they like the training and the work they do which is very important in terms of social empowerment since self-fulfilment is necessary for being successful in what they are doing.

The GIGDEV training centre fulfils a social function as well as it was expressed by the women: they learned how to mingle with people there and to care for each other like the managers of the centre do.

Through workshops about health issues as well as ICT- and literacy trainings women get more knowledge in these appropriate fields and are therefore able to take informed decisions about themselves and their family. If they are more informed they can become agents of change in society. This is one important intention by the GIGDEV managers. Women who were involved in workshops and classes mentioned that they enjoyed the workshops (e.g. about health issues) and classes (ICT, literacy). For some it was their first opportunity to learn reading and writing. Nearly all of the interview partners mentioned that they would like to have more workshops and classes. Especially the women in the rural area would like to have literacy classes and workshops about cross-cutting issues as well as business skills.

Social empowering factors are clearly given among interview partners from GIGDEV training centres. This is shown by the indicators such as increase of respect, expressing oneself through work, increase of knowledge and self-esteem and hope for the future. These indicators picture the most important social changes in the women's lives since they attend(ed) the skills training at GIGDEV.

7.5. Concluding statements

GIGDEV follows a combination of welfare- and rights-approach which is the provision of skills trainings as well as provision of knowledge about rights and cross-cutting issues. The approach aims to transform marginalised girls into responsible and productive adults and contributes to the reintegration of the women into their families and communities. GIGDEV offers four skills trainings and provides literacy/numeracy and ICT training for young women who are foster children, orphans, or marginalised in a way.

The research among participants in GIGDEV skills training centres in Tamale and Savelugu and among women who completed the skills training at a GIGDEV centre showed that the opportunity to learn a skill helps them to prevent labour migration to a certain extent. Many women in the region see themselves forced to migrate in search for work. Without skills to offer they end up in the sales or the dangerous "kayayei-business". Some women interviewed also migrated in search for work, however, are now happy to be involved in a skills training in order to prevent labour migration in future. This though, is only possible if their financial livelihood is guaranteed.

GIGDEV skills trainings give the prerequisites and tools as well as opportunities to become productive and financially independent in future. The women mentioned to be now able to use the acquired skill in a productive way and this gives them the opportunity to participate in financial decision-makings at home. Since the socio-cultural norms in this region of Ghana traditionally don't involve women very much in decision-making processes women's participation is only based on their own earnings.

Nevertheless the skills training programme also helps the women to be encouraged to become self-initiative. The desire to open a shop for instance is very high among the women interviewed. The acquisition of the required starting capital however, is often a challenge as well as the required business skills.

The women expressed in the interviews that they observe an increase of the respect gained by their immediate surroundings. They also expressed feelings of happiness, hope and reduced fear since they participated at GIGDEV skills trainings. These social indicators show an empowerment which women can use for transforming themselves and society towards an increased involvement and independence of women in society. The trainings also contribute to a form of self-fulfilment as the interview partners stated that they are able to express themselves in the training and work.

The holistic approach of GIGDEV gives women the opportunity to involve themselves in different sectors of the labour market (cooking; ICT; etc.) apart from the sector of their specialised skill.

Some cases show that financial means are still the major challenge for the women to establish, maintain or expand a business. Secured financial means would also prevent them from repeated labour migration.

The following chapter summarises the overlapping and most important factors in terms of empowerment and challenges of both DYDI and GIGDEV participants. Challenge areas and empowerment indicators are similar and therefore it makes sense to summarise them in one common chapter. The summary is based on the analysis of the outcomes of the interviews.

In the subsequent chapter recommendations and suggestions are provided, which address the mentioned problem areas.

8. Summarised outcome of the research: empowerment, challenges and recommendations

8.1. Empowerment leads to social transformation

Financial and social empowerment

The outcome of the interviews showed that women who participate in a skills training at DYDI or GIGDEV enjoy a range of financial and social benefits and as a result this can lead towards empowerment on the household- and community level. In chapter 4.3.3 *Women empowerment in the context of Northern Ghana* the idea of Apusigah concerning women empowerment was explained: in order to achieve empowerment among women in northern Ghana Apusigah suggested programmes which target strategic gender interests. Projects like DYDI and GIGDEV do definitely meet some of these strategic gender interests and can also contribute or at least create prerequisites to Apusigah's suggested empowerment components. The strategic gender interests or empowerment components suggested by Apusigah are illustrated in the table below (left column). On the base of the analysis of the research and the description of the two women empowerment projects the following contributions by GIGDEV and DYDI can be mentioned:

Strategic gender interests (empowerment components) by Apusigah	Contribution of GIGDEV and DYDI
Reduced vulnerability to violence and exploitation.	Exploitation in minor jobs in the sales business and the “kayayei-business” are curtailed since women have an alternative to earn money due to the skills training. The social function of the training centre serves as shelter and room for exchange and discussion about problems in the household.
More economic security, independence, options and opportunities.	Financial independence; control over women's own money and participation in financial decision-makings has increased through the skills trainings. GIGDEV and DYDI trainings give prerequisites to establish own income sources in order to achieve financial independence and security.
Shared responsibility for reproductive work with men and the state.	Increase of knowledge about business, human rights and cross-cutting issues takes place and encourages women to take over responsibility for their own working possibilities and to act with self-initiative.
Organising with other women for strength, solidarity and action.	The training centres play an important social function in terms of helping and supporting each other. Women want to support and train others like they were supported and trained by the project.

Increased political power.	GIGDEV and DYDI can only play an initial role in achieving an increase in political power by women and encourage them to speak out their minds.
Increased ability to improve the lives and futures of their children.	Raise of awareness about the importance of education and training among the participants of the skills training. The women's desire is to ensure education and/or training for their children. This leads to a social transformation in society where education plays a crucial part. The women's ability to increase their children's needs is given by the income opportunity through the skills training.

It is therefore evident that GIGDEV and DYDI fulfil an important role in women's empowerment in northern Ghana.

Additional advantages of DYDI and GIGDEV are the following:

The organisations provide free training, apart from a registration fee, and therefore facilitate the access to training and education. The offer of gradual paying for registration as well as the offer to receive a sewing machine after training by DYDI is of special benefit for their participants. Women's training and education contributes to an increased participation in financial decisions at household level. Likewise women are given the opportunity to use skills productively and ideally become financially independent. The strategy of DYDI – to learn not only one but multiple skills – is advantageous for the women, as it is a strategy to overcome competition and volatile market demand.

Efforts of GIGDEV and DYDI to support the women before, during and after training are great and of much value. Especially GIGDEV applies an effective strategy in paying much attention to the inclusion of families/parents in the training and education process of the women, as well as the monitoring of passed-out participants for a period of time.

Apart from providing education and training the organisations also provide access to information and room for exchange among women which is equally important for women's participation, chances and awareness of rights.

The social function of the training centre is given within both organisations as room for exchange and discussion is provided and workshops or lessons about human rights, gender issues etc. are held. Women are encouraged which leads towards an increased awareness of gender equality in the social context given. This leads further to more participation in decision-making in household and society.

Empowering factors in the social sense come along with the skills training. Women receive more respect by family and society due to their skill and knowledge; they feel happier, proud and more confident and their social sense develops further. Additionally, motivation for self-initiative is provided by both organisations which is important for developing talents and being able to express oneself through the activity carried out. All these social factors lead towards transformations of the social context and of the existing gender roles. As Apusigah suggests: women need to change their role in society in order to overcome their suppressed role and it is possible through practical development projects with strategic impacts.

Value of education

The holistic approach of both organisations by offering skills training and life skills (cross-cutting issues such as HIV/Aids; knowledge of rights; literacy; ICT; gender issues etc.), in other words, the blending of non-formal education and skills training, sharpens the women's awareness of the importance of education. Participants therefore pay more attention to their children's education. The combination of education and skills training therefore contributes to other dimensions of empowerment apart from financial empowerment, such as development of personality, talents, potentials and self-initiative. The value of education and training is seen and appreciated by the participants and encourages and motivates them for further training, school or intensifying their skills training. These factors lead to a social transformation within the current and next generation.

Chances on the labour market

The inclusion of additional skills like literacy, numeracy and ICT, which is provided in GIGDEV, offers an opportunity for women they often do not have in school or other vocational skill training institutions. This additional offer in GIGDEV even leads to further education and training desires among women and provides them with different employment opportunities on the labour market. Generally, the desire for further training and education is increasing among women within GIGDEV and DYDI.

DYDI is furthering the chances on the labour market for women as they give the opportunity to learn and use more than just one skill.

8.2. Curtailing precarious occupations like the “kayayei-business”

After analysing empowerment indicators for women participated or still participating in DYDI or GIGDEV the initial problem and research question shall be picked up: *How can vocational skills training for women lead to less labour migration among them?*

It shall be stated here again that migration itself is not bad and can bring many positive aspects; the form of migration which is addressed here and should be curtailed is one where people end up in precarious, dangerous and risky occupations due to low or no education or training, lack of alternatives or absolute financial poverty. The “kayayei-business” is one of these dangerous and precarious occupations and many people – above all women – are occupied in this field.

Based on the research among the two skills training projects it was found out that among those women who were involved in labour migration and/or ended up in the “kayayei-business” in the southern urban centres of Ghana there is no desire by them to repeat it. The women mentioned that if financial security is given there is no need any more for migrating in search for jobs. Due to the acquired skill they have an alternative to labour migration and the “kayayei-business”. The refusal of repeated labour migration is sometimes also connected to bad experiences in former labour migration periods.

However, it was mentioned by some women that if there is no money for establishing a business or making a living after the training and there is no other option (for training etc.) it could be possible for them to migrate again and look for work in the south (which often ends in the occupation as “kayayei”). Therefore it is important to support the women with adequate and sufficient encouragement for self-initiative, knowledge, business skills, literacy skills and if possible financial support or advices for financial support by other initiatives or institutions (e.g. such as credit union) in order to save them from labour migration again. Awareness trainings about consequences and risks of precarious occupations (which the “kayayei-business” is) could also serve as a way of protecting women from dangerous occupations. Additionally, advices for alternatives such as DYDI or GIGDEV trainings or other education or work opportunities should be provided. This information and awareness raising should be carried out by the government, schools and civil society organisations like DYDI and GIGDEV. Only if awareness training is done in various and different ways it can reach out to all people endangered (NEET group included).

Organisations like DYDI and GIGDEV are not only a good alternative for labour migration but also a location for awareness-raising and training as well as they can operate as centres for encouragement for self-initiative for the population.

The analysis of the research in and around Tamale and Damongo showed that skills training projects contribute to financial and social empowerment among women which have a direct effect on curtailing labour migration and thus occupation in dangerous and hazardous busi-

nesses. If women have a skill they have an alternative to labour migration and the “kayayei-business” because it is possible for them to use the skill acquired productively as well as for themselves.

8.3. Challenge areas

The following section gives an overview of the most important challenges mentioned by women interviewed during the research in Damongo, Daboya (DYDI) and Tamale, Savelugu (GIGDEV). These challenge areas form the base for my suggested recommendations in the subsequent section. The recommendations are suggestions for DYDI and GIGDEV in Ghana, for existing and possible donor partners in and outside of Ghana, for governmental institutions, for private institutions/organisations/companies as well as for all people interested in the field of vocational skills training and women empowerment.

Financial means to establish a business

The desire to have an own business or shop is greatly given among participants of both organisations. The biggest obstacle is apparently the financial means for realising the business plans. Suggestions such as forming partnerships for opening businesses are only partially agreed or even refused by the interview partners. This could be due to the fact that shared businesses among women are not common in the area and therefore are not promoted by institutions, schools or individuals. Lack of business and managerial skills are additional reasons. Taking loans from banks or credit unions for establishing a business are seen as burden by many women which creates fear of not being able to pay back in due time.

Support by parents or relatives is sometimes given, though, families are often also in a very vulnerable financial state and cannot fund the business plans.

Additionally, in the socio-cultural context given women are widely dependent on their husbands and families concerning decision-making. If women are not supported by their husbands or families (mentally or financially) to open a shop or establishing a business it is difficult for them to realise their intention.

Working and training

In order to be able to earn for themselves and their families (or children) many women are forced to generate money although they are in the skills training. The majority of them is occupied in the sales sector or – as it is very common in the northern Ghanaian context – it is necessary to help and support family members at home, on the field or at work. Loads are extensive for women who are forced to work for money before or after the training every day.

The double or even triple burden (inclusive child care and/or household) on women can lead to less training results at the end of the day which occupies them even longer in the skills training.

Literacy and numeracy training

Since the target group of DYDI and GIGDEV is a group of women with low or no education (NEET group) many of them are not able to read and write when they join the skills training. Providing literacy trainings is an important prerequisite for a successful training and for the use of skills acquired. Being not able to read a measuring tape for example is an obstacle for learning the sewing skill. The literacy training is even more urgent in the rural areas (Daboya and Savelugu) of the research area as there are more women without reading and writing skills.

The case studies showed that many women benefited from literacy and numeracy training during the training periods. It helped them a lot in order to improve their overall education and training. However, many women still mentioned the desire to be able to read and write in future. The importance of basic education is widely seen and advocated by the women interviewed. Therefore there is still need for intensifying and promoting the literacy and numeracy training in both organisations.

Transportation to the training site

It was found out that some women even have problems to come to the training every day in due time. This is partly due to household or child care duties however also due to a lack of transportation opportunities. In the urban area the taxi is the most common public transport possibility. The funding of the taxi costs can be a great problem if the woman or/and her family is in a very poor financial state and when the walking distance to the training centre is far. In the rural areas the public transport possibilities are rare especially when women come from remote areas to the training centres (in Daboya and Savelugu). The way to the training centre is often far and alternative transportation possibilities are not given. This leads to irregular participation in the training which is not very effective in the end.

Furthering education

The desire for further education and training is evident according to the research carried out. Some women are not able to work completely on their own after the training due to insufficient knowledge. Many women would like to learn additional skills before they start a business. As mentioned in chapter 8.1 *Empowerment leads to social transformation* the skills

training enhances their participants' desires to further their education and training. The challenge is that the women often face a lack of opportunities for intensifying their training, education or for learning additional vocational skills in the region. Some of the women mentioned to intend to be apprentices again after the skills training at DYDI or GIGDEV in order to intensify their knowledge in the appropriate field. Affording the costs could be an obstacle for them, as well as finding an appropriate possibility for them to learn more skills since quality adult education programmes are rare in the region.

Child care and training

The majority of the women interviewed has at least one child. In the socio-cultural context given it is widely common to give birth at an early age (from 18 onwards). Child care duties often prevents women from coming to the training regularly and on time. Many women bring their children to the training site since there is nobody taking care of the children while the mothers are in the training. Some women mentioned that it is a challenge and double burden to care for the child while being in the training.

8.4. Recommendations and suggestions

Financial means to establish a business

Since recently it is a strategy of DYDI to support women who passed-out of the training with financial means to help them establishing a business or shop. Since it was found out that start-up capital for a business is a great challenge financial support in form of micro-credits for graduates is a very good strategy. It is important to ensure effective monitoring; to provide encouragement to the women and to evaluate the outcome of the financial support given. The support through micro-credits should be accompanied with effective monitoring and support in form of courses and advices concerning business and financial management in order to absorb fear of the financial dept.

Alternatively, I suggest the model of micro-credits for a group of women (cooperative) by micro-finance institutions. It is similar to micro-credits for individuals like DYDI recently does except for the financial burden is distributed on a group of women instead on one person and it is provided by a separate financial institution. Micro-credits provide women with access to financial services which they often lack due to their poor financial state. Women should be encouraged by organisations like DYDI or GIGDEV to form cooperatives and join micro-finance institutions in order to develop business ideas and realise small enterprises.

The strategy of GIGDEV is to advice and encourage women as well as their families and find individual solutions for the women. Especially parents and foster parents are encouraged to support their daughter with starting-up capital for businesses. For starting-up participants also receive a package with working tools from GIGDEV which helps them for their initial start.

In the social context of northern Ghana it is widely common to believe that having an own business brings out much more prestige and respect than using skills at home. Therefore women should be encouraged to start and realise business ideas. Nevertheless as initial start they should be encouraged to start using their skill at home if financial support is still a problem.

Additionally, it is recommended to intensify basic business skills courses or workshops during the skills training lessons. It is evident from the study that most of the women who pass out of the skills training would like to be self-employed. Since self-employment in Ghana is one of the sectors where underemployment occurs frequently (meaning: it is not possible to make a living from the work done) the women should receive basic financial, management and business skills in order to prepare them for their business initiative and in order to overcome the challenge of underemployment.

Working and training

It was mentioned that the burden and workload for women can even increase when they are in training since household chores, child care and sometimes additional working for money (e.g. in the sales sector or farming) are mostly part of their duties as well. In order to face these multiple burdens it is first and foremost necessary to bring up this fact and discuss about it with women and their families. GIGDEV does already attend to this issue in holding meetings with participants and their families about women's and gender issues.

Bringing gender issues on the agenda regularly is an important and necessary aspect in order to face double or triple challenges for women (household/child care; education/training; working for money). Workshops with participants of the skills trainings including their family members (parents and/or husband) contribute to an increased awareness about women's roles and burdens because this is often not considered by the society. The strategic imperative is hence likewise important as the practical imperative, to say it in the words of the Ghanaian feminist Apusigah. She advises – as explained in chapter 4.3.3. *Women empowerment in the context of Northern Ghana* – a blending of practical development programmes which promote strategic gender interests. In practice, this means that workshops, meetings, awareness raising campaigns, advocacy etc. about gender issues and women's roles and positions in society are

inevitable and necessary in addition to the skills training in order to achieve full empowerment among women. Activities like these contribute to a change in society in favour of women and also encourage and motivate women to change their own role. As Odutolu, Adedimeji et al put it according to Seen and Batliwala “[...] any development programme that changes women’s control over resources must also build their confidence in themselves, if women are to have the resilience and motivation to retain and build on that control” (Odutolu; Adedimeji 2003:94). Otherwise women will remain in the subordinate role and face challenges like “working and training” or double or even triple burdens. This finding is a very important one and shall be particularly stressed in this work.

Organisations like GIGDEV or DYDI fulfil that function best as they are a centre and meeting place for women. They play a very important role by encouraging women to become “agents of change” (like GIGDEV managers put it) in their own family and in society. In the end however, women can only empower themselves with the necessary support of development programmes and projects which provide skills, knowledge and resources.

From official side loads on women should also be removed by more and better offers by government, e.g. child care stations, promoting girl’s education, awareness of gender issues including awareness creating campaigns within the population.

Furthering education to meet labour market demands

The training itself must be constructed so that quality and appropriate preparation for the labour market is given. In chapter 3.1 (*Under-)employment and poverty* it is stressed that work without earning sufficient financial means to make a living is very common in northern Ghana. In order to prevent women from this threat the training must be qualitative high, well-trained trainers and staff and must come along with education and training in the area of business and financial management. The blending of skills trainings, like DYDI does, is a very good opportunity to prepare women for the high competition given in northern Ghana among dressmakers for instance. Therefore it is first recommended to provide incentives to learn more than one skill and second to combine vocational skills training with business skills trainings (financial management, accounting skills etc.) as well as other trainings like ICT.

Higher education and training does not necessarily lead to an improved employment status (FAO 2012), therefore it is recommended to DYDI, GIGDEV but also the Government of Ghana to further courses which promote self-initiative and encouragement among women as well as provide them with access to resources and financial means.

Literacy and numeracy training

Literacy and numeracy training is fundamental for women to compete on the labour market and to learn their skill properly and is also the basis for a better and more intense education and training in the future. A regular schedule and time-table on literacy and numeracy classes like in GIGDEV headquarter is a very effective method for increasing women's knowledge. All participants in the skills trainings centres should be integrated in literacy and numeracy classes for an appropriate period of time. Additional skills like ICT skills, which are promoted in GIGDEV, are an effective method as well to increase women's chances on the labour market and for their future activities.

Transportation to the training site

Transportation to the training centre can sometimes be a problem for the participants, especially when participants come from remote areas or have to travel a long distance to the training centre. The concept of "bicycle banks" shall be suggested here which was initiated as a pilot project by RAINS Ghana⁸ in order to reduce distances to schools for deprived children by providing them with bicycles. Children – here in this case women who are participating at skills training programmes like GIGDEV or DYDI – use bicycles which are communally owned or owned by the training institution for the way to school or the training centre. In order to make the bicycle bank sustainable the women (alternatively their parents, family members etc.) are required to pay an affordable fee to the community or institution managing the bicycle bank to secure the access to the bicycles. In case of break-down the bicycles are fixed by the managers of the bicycle bank. Ideally, bicycles should only be used to overcome the distance to the training centre.

This suggestion is of course also meant for participants who stay in the training centre's town as distances for participants staying within the town of Damongo or Tamale can also be far.

Child care and training

As already mentioned child care stations in order to remove burdens from women would be an opportunity to balance child care and education. Official sides and governmental institutions are requested here to make an effort, because for development programmes such as DYDI or GIGDEV it would be an additional financial effort and burden to care for their participants' children (e.g. with a child station).

⁸ Special thanks to RAINS Ghana for the permission to adopt their idea and include it as a recommendation for other Ghanaian NGOs.

Regional Advisory Information and Networks Systems (RAINS) is a Ghanaian registered non-governmental organisation that is committed to promoting the rights of the marginalised in society. It is based in Tamale/Northern Region of Ghana. Further information: www.rainsgha.org.

Further recommendations

The research and thesis at hand shall provide an opportunity for GIGDEV and DYDI to learn from each other and to adopt the one or the other idea as well as to cooperate and exchange knowledge, ideas and intentions. The project regions are not the same, however, they are similar as Damongo and Daboya (West Gonja and Central Gonja District) and Tamale and Savelugu (Tamale metropolitan and Savelugu-Nanton District) are all immediate neighbour districts and are facing the same challenges such as lack of education and working opportunities for women, high labour migration among women etc. Additionally, GIGDEV and DYDI target the same group of people, have a similar approach and share almost the same goals. Therefore a learning process between the two organisations can only be advantageous for both the organisations and their beneficiaries.

9. Overall conclusion

Historical events, post-independence politics and structural adjustment policies as well as environmental factors contributed to a wide north-south gap within the country of Ghana. Poverty rates are highest in the three northern regions of Ghana. The north lacks far behind the south of the country in terms of economic performance, infrastructure, education and employment opportunities. Agriculture is the most important occupational sector for the population in the north. The agricultural sector theoretically does have the potential to generate large scale employment opportunities. However, due to cut-backs of subsidies, uncertain rainfall patterns, public underinvestment, limited use of high-yielding seeds and irrigation technologies, poorly functioning markets and limited access for farmers to public loans and unequal international trading structures it is not possible to tap the full potential. Ghana, especially the north, is facing additional challenges like the phenomenon of land grabbing where the most vulnerable group – small-scale farmers – is affected most.

The north-south gap is to a large extent a colonial legacy and especially for the rural population in the northern region many post-colonial measures were not helpful or even counterproductive. Economic recovery programmes included cut-backs of agricultural subsidies and promoted export-oriented agriculture instead. Opportunities from small-scale agriculture diminished. A great economic downturn made the Ghanaian government to induce a structural adjustment programme supported by IMF and WB, which caused even larger disparities between northern and southern Ghana. In the wake of ERPs and SAPs in the 1980s, as trade became more important and market liberalising steps were taken, women already started to migrate from the north to the south of Ghana in search for jobs as formal jobs were not created. The occupation of women in precarious and underpaid jobs in the informal trade and sales business started to rise.

This historical and post-independence events were fundamental for the current problems in Ghana. Underemployment is a widespread phenomenon in the country. Underemployment means that in spite of working, people are unable to live on their earnings. In the rural and northern areas this phenomenon is far more common with a larger degree of severity. The majority of the female labour force is occupied in the informal private sector and is self-employed. The informal private sector generally dominates the labour market in Ghana. Driven mainly by few job opportunities in the northern regions, by financial poverty and by the lack of education many, women see themselves forced to migrate in search for work. Female migration has increased during the last decades especially in form of a cyclical labour migra-

tion by young women from northern rural Ghana to the southern urban centres. Migration per se is not negative but those women who have low or no education and no skill mostly only find menial jobs in the sales or trading sector or join the “kayayei-business”. To be a “kayayoo” means to carry all day long other people’s luggage on the head for a fee. Women occupied in this kind of jobs suffer from exploitation, bad housing and living conditions, sexual harassment etc. As a result, a growing feminisation of poverty in the rural northern regions emerged and with no competitive skills and education the occupation in the street vendor sector in the south of Ghana became a livelihood strategy for many women.

Therefore employment growth as well as education and skills trainings opportunities for women are necessary in order to face this challenge. Although school enrolment figures seem high in Ghana, school drop-out rates are equally high and the quality of education is often bad. Especially for the rural population in the north any form of higher education is rare. Generally the three northern regions lack behind the rest of Ghana in terms of education. Vocational training schools often require certain education levels and therefore exclude the most vulnerable group of the population: those without any school education. The role of education or skills training is undoubtedly important for women in countries where people live and work under conditions which are strongly directed by local social norms. Education and training have socially transformative impacts on the individual and the society. This is especially true for women who have a subordinate position in society.

In the socio-economic system in northern Ghana, education and training contributes to the three dimensions of empowerment: social, economic and political empowerment. Empowerment is defined here as a socio-political process and is about shifts in political, social and economic power between and across individuals and social groups. Empowerment is not only understood as to have access to decision-making processes but it is also about understanding the internalised power structures and about gaining the ability to influence this given pattern (e.g. overcoming of gender disparities). The underlying concept of empowerment is power which is understood as to be a positive force. That means people themselves have the power to bring changes in historically embedded political, economic and social relations. The Ghanaian feminist Apusigah suggests practical programmes with strategic gender interests to change the subordinate role of women in society. Two examples of practical projects with strategic gender interests are introduced here. A qualitative research study was carried out among women participating at the *Damongo Youth Development Initiative (DYDI)* and the *Girls Growth and Development (GIGDEV)* skills training centres in northern Ghana. The aim

was to find out about strategic changes in their lives since their attendance in the skills trainings.

The research covers a small sample of personal individual interviews, hence, it is not representative and does not allow general conclusions. The aim was rather to find out about general tendencies, benefits and problems of the target group in order to learn more about the target group's situation. The aim was not to compare the two organisations but to contribute to a learning process between the two organisations. The research was carried out in the DYDI training centre in Damongo (rather urban area) and in DYDI training centre in Daboya (rather rural area). Likewise, the research was carried out in GIGDEV training centre in Tamale (urban area) and in GIGDEV training centre in Savelugu (rural area). The outcomes of the research are based on individual experiences and life situations and are not representative for all participants of DYDI and GIGDEV. It shall be stated here again that possible expectations by the interview partners from me as a person from abroad could have determined answers and statements. Additionally, if the selection of the interview partners would have been different a divergent outcome of the thesis could have been possible to a certain extent. The selection of the interview partners was widely dependent on advice and information provided by project managers and the availability of the interview partners.

The Damongo Youth Development Initiative in the West Gonja District in the Northern Region of Ghana is a small local NGO which focuses on skills trainings for women in order to prevent them from migrating and ending up in precarious jobs like the "kayayei-business". The project intends to provide free skills trainings to help young women to become productive and to be financially better off as well as to motivate and encourage them to be self-initiative.

The GIGDEV approach is similar. GIGDEV as a small NGO in Tamale, Northern Region of Ghana, follows a welfare- and rights-approach. The organisation aims to transform marginalised girls into responsible and productive adults through the provision of free skills trainings and capacity-building programmes.

The outcomes of DYDI and GIGDEV interviews are similar since they are operating in the same field and region. DYDI and GIGDEV skills trainings provide an alternative to labour migration and thus curtail the frequency of precarious occupations like the "kayayei-business" among women from northern Ghana. If women have a skill they have an alternative to labour migration because it is possible for them to use the skill acquired productively as well as for themselves. Programmes like DYDI and GIGDEV contribute to enhanced awareness of the

value of education which can lead to a social transformation in society. In addition, with increased knowledge and skills women are able to improve their competitiveness on the labour market and can act in a self-initiative way.

DYDI and GIGDEV contribute to a range of financial and social empowering factors among their target group and thus contribute to strategic gender interests such as:

- Reduced vulnerability to violence and exploitation
- More economic security, independence, options and opportunities
- Shared responsibility for reproductive work with men and the state
- Organisation with other women for strength, solidarity and action
- Increased ability to improve the lives and futures of their children
- Increased political power

The most important challenge areas for women in GIGDEV and DYDI skills trainings are of financial nature. Challenges and appropriate recommendations are the following:

- *Financial means for business as a difficulty:* The desire to have an own business after training is great among the participants but the financial means are often lacking. Micro-credits to graduates or graduate-cooperatives are an opportunity, however this must come along with regular and intensive training in business and managerial skills as well as encouragement for the target group provided by GIGDEV and DYDI.
- *Working while in the training lessens the results of training:* Women with their multiple roles in family and society often suffer from double and triple burdens. Strategic gender issues to target and discuss this issues as part of the skills training can face these challenges. Programmes on gender issues to raise awareness can contribute to a change in society in favour of women and will also encourage and motivate women to change their own role.
- *Illiteracy among women:* Literacy and numeracy skills are widely not given among the target group of DYDI and GIGDEV before they join the skills trainings, however, literacy is fundamental for the women in order to compete on the labour market and to learn their skill properly. Additionally it is also the basis for a better and more intense education and training in the future. Literacy and numeracy trainings should therefore be enhanced and promoted further in DYDI and GIGDEV and should come along with skills trainings.
- *Lack of transportation possibilities to the training site leads to irregular participation in the training:* Communally owned bicycles which can be used for the way to the training

site to avoid irregular participation can serve as solution to overcome distances to the training centre.

- *There is a lack of further education offers or the opportunity to intensify knowledge and skills in the region:* High-quality training is important as well as encouragement for women to learn more skills and to blend it with other trainings like literacy, numeracy and ICT etc. This increases the chances on the labour market.
- *Women often suffer from a double or triple burden:* Women who are in training, work for money and care for their children do often not receive the expected results in the training. Child care stations – ideally financed by governmental institutions – could serve as alternative for women who face double or triple burdens.

If women want to change their role in society in order to overcome their suppressed position and to participate in decisions within household and society, practical development projects with strategic impacts are of great support. In fact, women can only empower themselves but they need the necessary support with skills, knowledge and resources which is be given by organisations like DYDI and GIGDEV.

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10.1. Personal interviews

- Interview with Mr. Anthony Anyoka, founder of DYDI, 25th February 2013, Damongo, Ghana.
- Interview with Mrs. Stella Nitori, founder of GIGDEV, 25th June 2013, Tamale/Jisonayili, Ghana.
- Interview with Madam Rashida Mahama, manager of DYDI training centre in Daboya, 8th April 2013, Daboya, Ghana.
- 21 personal interviews with participants of DYDI in Damongo and Daboya, 1st March to 30th April 2013.
- 15 personal interviews with participants of GIGDEV in Tamale and Savelugu, 30th May to 12th July 2013.

10.2. List of figures

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Appendix

Abstract

The diploma thesis deals with the strategy and in particular with the impact of two local women empowerment projects in northern Ghana which seek to curtail internal female labour migration within the country of Ghana. The first part of the thesis provides reasons and causes of massive labour migration from the north towards the south of the country. The analysis comprises historical, post-independence, structural adjustment and current socio-economic policies. It is highlighted that internal labour migration has become a livelihood-strategy during the last decades in particular for women from the north of Ghana. This is problematic in case they end up working in the street vendor business as load carriers in urban market places in Ghana which is true for a high number of women from northern Ghana. It is a precarious occupation due to a range of unfair and hazardous conditions. Women empowerment projects in the north of Ghana seek to curtail labour migration by offering skills trainings for women from the northern regions.

Empirical research based on personal interviews among participants of two women empowerment projects in and around Tamale and Damongo in the Northern Region of Ghana was carried out. The research intended to find out about women's labour migration experiences and important changes in their lives since they attended a skills training in northern Ghana. Based on the research outcome it is analysed which form of empowerment has taken place among women participating in skills training projects and which impact skills training projects do have on the occurrence of labour migration. The analysis differentiates between social and economic empowerment factors and clearly indicates benefits as well as challenges for women in both skills trainings projects. Based on the challenges found the thesis provides ideas and recommendations to stakeholders on how to tackle these challenges.

Zusammenfassung

Die Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Herangehensweise und vor allem Auswirkung zweier lokaler Frauenausbildungsprojekte im Norden Ghanas. Diese zielen darauf ab die massive interne Arbeitsmigration unter Frauen einzudämmen. Zunächst werden Ursachen für Abwanderung vom Norden Richtung Süden des Landes dargestellt. Die Analyse beinhaltet historische, strukturelle, politische und sozio-ökonomische Faktoren. Dadurch wird deutlich, dass die Arbeitsmigration innerhalb Ghanas von Nord nach Süd zunehmend eine Überlebensstrategie für Frauen aus den nördlichen Teilen des Landes ist. Eine hohe Anzahl an Frauen landet im schlecht bezahlten und prekären Straßenverkaufssektor in den südlichen urbanen Zentren Ghanas. Frauenprojekte im Norden Ghanas wollen diesem Phänomen entgegenwirken und bieten spezielle Ausbildungsprogramme für Frauen aus der unmittelbaren Region, um die interne Arbeitsmigration einzudämmen.

Unter den Teilnehmerinnen zweier lokaler Frauen-Ausbildungsprojekten im Norden Ghanas wurde eine empirische Studie durchgeführt. In und rund um Tamale und Damongo wurden persönlichen Interviews über Arbeitsmigrationserfahrungen und Veränderungen im Leben der Frauen seit der Projektteilnahme geführt. In der Ergebnis-Analyse wird auf wichtige Veränderungen in Bezug auf soziale und ökonomische Ermächtigung durch die Projektteilnahme eingegangen. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Ausbildungsprogrammen für Frauen im Norden Ghanas und dem Vorkommen von Arbeitsmigration wird dargestellt. Die Analyse streicht sowohl die Vorteile als auch die Herausforderungen für die Frauen in beiden Ausbildungsprojekten heraus. Die Arbeit möchte Ideen und Handlungsmöglichkeiten für verschiedene involvierte Akteure aufzeigen um die aufgezeigten Herausforderungen zu bewältigen.

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