

"WE ARE TREATED AS IF WE ARE NOT HUMAN BEINGS" SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF KAYAYEI IN GHANA

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SUMMARY REPORT

APRIL 2018

(M)PAYDP

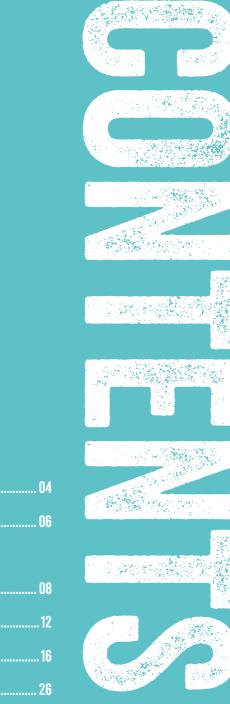
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Please note: This document contains sensitive material that relates to violence against women and girls that some people may find upsetting.

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THE ASSOCIATION OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (ACDEP)

ACDEP is a development NGO in Northern Ghana with its Development Secretariat located in Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region. Our primary focus is on the socio-economic development of Northern Ghana as a whole and the rural poor in particular. ACDEP is engaged in the fields of Agricultural Development, Food Security, Livelihoods and Climate Change; Agricultural Value Chains and Market Access; Agri-business Financial Services; Primary Health Care, Community Health and Nutrition; with Youth, Gender and Environment as a cross-cutting programme. Through these programmes, ACDEP works with other development partners and rural communities to improve livelihoods, household food security, good health and poverty reduction in Northern Ghana.

FORWARD (FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT)

FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is an African-led, women's rights organisation. Our work focuses on the issues of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and other forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) that impact on the health, dignity and wellbeing of African women and girls. We work for the day when African women enjoy equal rights and opportunities, have control over their own bodies and are free from violence. To achieve this, we work with community members, key professionals, policymakers, and through strategic networks and partnerships.

PURIM AFRICAN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM (PAYDP)

The Purim African Youth Development Platform (PAYDP) is a non governmental organisation and non profit organisation that seeks to protect the rights of young people and women and seek to promote the total development of communities with emphasis on vulnerable groups among young people and women.

PAYDP is made up of board members, volunteers and staff who use their resources to support the development of the organization. Our primary goal is towards young people with special emphasis on girls.



FORWARD would like to thank the PEER researchers, PEER supervisors and the Kayayei who took part in the research – without whom the detailed living experiences of the Kayayei in Accra would not have been as rich and powerful as it is. The valuable information will be used by FORWARD and partners to develop a programme to address the concerns they have shared.

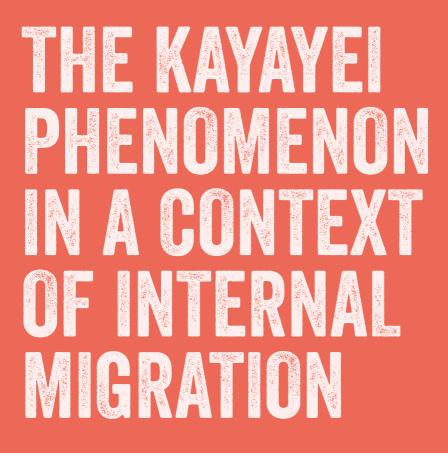
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We acknowledge the critical roles played by project partners; the staff at PAYDP and ACDEP, especially Aku Adzraku, Malex Alebikiya, and Esenam Kavi. Their hard work and determination to see this research and report to completion has resulted in this document.

Our gratitude also goes to the whole FORWARD team who, in diverse ways, played pivotal roles during the production and completion of this report, especially to Lottie Howard-Merrill, Wossen Kifle, Adwoa Kwateng-kluvitse, Naana Otoo-Oyortey, Jenny Vaughan, Naomi Reid and Caroline Walker.

Finally, this report would not have been possible without the financial support of Comic Relief. We are very grateful for their continued support and backing.





KAYAYEI

Young women and girls who earn money by carrying loads on their heads in urban lorry parks and markets, also known as head porters. The word Kayayei is made up of two words; the Hausa word 'kaya', which means load, luggage, goods or burden, and the Ga word 'yei', which means women or females.

RETURNEES

Those who have migrated from their original region to work as kayayei, and have since returned.

Most Ghanaian migrants move internally instead of migrating outside the country. More than half of internal migrants move to the southern-located capital, Accra, and the Ashanti region. The majority of migrants originate from rural areas. Meanwhile, communities with higher levels of literacy, income, higher rates of subsidised medical care, better access to water and sanitation are less likely to produce migrants.

Reasons for internal migration vary, but economic incentives are key. The majority of migration is in order to find work. Other motives include education and marriage, although women are generally more likely than men to migrate for marriage.

Some forms of migration are on the rise, which is the case for young women and girls aged between 10 and 35 years migrating to Accra to work as Kayayei.

Kayayei predominantly originate from the three northern regions of the country i.e. the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions and their primary destinations are the markets of the Greater Accra and Ashanti regions.

The majority of Kayayei tend to move around the age of 13-17 and stay in their destination cities for a maximum of five years. Their main motivation is economic – to provide for themselves and their family. For girls with little or no education nor formal qualifications, Kayayei work is attractive because no assets are required to begin working. Carrying goods does not require any equipment (apart from one basin in which the items are carried) or training. The informal nature of the work also makes it easy for Kayayei to leave their jobs and return home.

Kayayei represent a highly vulnerable group, because their work is insecure and poorly paid. They tend to have limited social safety nets, inadequate housing and are disproportionately affected by violence and abuse.

But the prospect of earning an income and sending remittances home often outweighs the potential cost of discontinuing education and living and working in unsafe conditions. Thus their numbers in Accra have steadily increased over the last decade, in line with families' increasing struggle as subsistence farmers due to the impact of climate change on rainfall patterns.

No effort is made to analyse the complex motivations for migrating. As long as the regional inequalities in development are not addressed, the harsh conditions in the urban areas remain preferable to staying in the north with few economic options and no source of income.

¹¹ The singular of Kayayei is Kayayoo, however in common usage Kayayoo is almost never used. So this document will use Kayayei as both singular and plural.







STUDY OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to contribute to the design of programme interventions to improve the socioeconomic wellbeing and reproductive health rights of young women and girls, specifically Kayayei, returnees and those at risk, in Ghana. Its objectives were to:

- 1. Identify locations and communities from which most Kayayei originate.
- **2.** Explore the push and pull factors that influence the decision to become Kayayei and the challenges faced by Kayayei.
- **3.** Identify current interventions that address the needs of Kayayei, returnees, and those at risk of becoming Kayayei.
- **4.** Identify and assess past interventions that target and address the situation of Kayayei, returnees, and those at risk of becoming Kayayei.
- **5.** Identify programme intervention gaps and make recommendations for future interventions.
- **6.** Provide an opportunity to raise the voices of young women and girls affected by the issues, so that their needs are thoroughly understood and prioritised in subsequent initiatives.
- **7.** Add to the body of information available about Kayayei to inform broader policy direction and practice.

The research was carried out in four regions of Ghana. ACDEP led in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with returnees and those at risk of becoming Kayayei in three regions of northern Ghana. Young women and girls were identified as 'at risk' if they came from the same area and social backgrounds as other Kayayei. In these regions, a total of 128 interviews were conducted with those at risk. This data was complemented by key informant interviews, such as District Planning Officers and community leaders.

In Accra. FORWARD. in collaboration PAYDP. organised Participatory with Ethnographic Evaluation and Research (PEER) with current Kayayei. In PEER, members of the target community are trained to carry out in-depth conversational interviews with individuals from their own social networks. PEER is a very effective methodology when working with marginalised groups. Researchers can gain insights into sensitive issues such as sexual behaviour and gender relations. Four PEER Supervisors oversaw 12 PEER researchers who carried out interviews with 30 Kayayei. PEER researchers were empowered through their involvement in the study: they gained experience of designing research questions, carrying out interviews and collating data. At the end of the study the PRs met to share preliminary findings and contribute to the recommendations.



"THE PEER RESEARCHERS WERE ABLE TO GET MORE INFORMATION BECAUSE THEY TOO WERE FELLOW KAYAYEI AND THEY WERE WILLING TO OPEN UP MORE. IF THE RESEARCHERS WERE OUTSIDERS THEY MAY NOT HAVE OPENED UP SO MUCH AND [GONE] INTO DETAIL ABOUT WHAT THEY GO THROUGH."



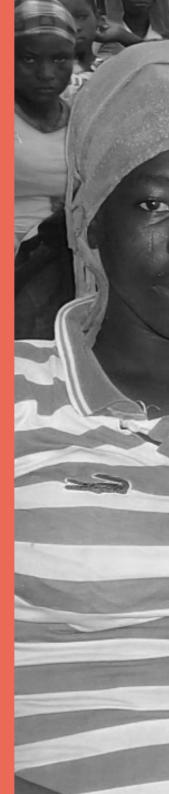




Policy makers and development NGOs alike have said that the Kayayei phenomenon is now a major concern. However, there are no initiatives with a holistic approach that would prevent young women and girls from becoming Kayayei and would protect current Kayayei.

The research has revealed the complex nature of the Kayayei phenomenon. The needs and realities of Kayayei, Kayayei returnees and those at risk of becoming Kayayei are distinct, each with their own set of interlinking and re-enforcing causes and consequences.

Young women and girls are also increasingly choosing to migrate to other places in the north of Ghana such as Tamale, rather than the traditional move to the south. The numbers of Kayayei could therefore increase further as it becomes even easier for girls to access the work more locally. Without strategic long-term interventions, this could lead to a huge increase of vulnerable young women working unsafely on the streets across Ghana.





FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WOMEN AND GIRLS BECOMING KAYAYEI

Kayayei come from all three regions in northern Ghana, but there are 'hotspots' from which high numbers of girls migrate. While around half of the girls both in the Northern Region and in the West Region said they were likely to become Kayayei, 90.9% of the girls interviewed in the Upper East region thought they would.

Many young women and girls migrate more than once in their lifetime to become Kayayei. While some migrate for years at a time, others do so only for months or even weeks. Those migrating long-term may become accustomed to Kayayei life and have little to return to at home, while those who work as Kayayei for shorter periods might do so in order to earn money for a specific need, and once this has been met they will return to the north.

Migration patterns might be changing in terms of destination location. One of the research's new findings was that the rapidly growing city of Tamale is also increasingly becoming a Kayayei destination for young women and girls from communities nearby. Due to the proximity, they can return home or stay with relatives in Tamale after each day's work unlike Kayayei in Accra.

This study has been able to expose some of the key push and pull factors in the girls' decision to become Kakayei. Migration peaks twice yearly, during the dry season and during the Christmas holidays; this indicates that many take the opportunity to be Kayayei when they think it is of the most benefit to themselves and their families and that they are likely to be influenced by the behaviour of others around them.

PUSH AND PULL FACTORS For at risk girls

PUSH FACTORS

- 1. To raise money to pay for school fees if their parents are unable to
- 2. Lack of other viable employment options, due to a lack of jobs or training opportunities
- **3.** Poor academic performance (and therefore little possibility to continue their education)
- **4.** Unpredictable rainfall leading to crop failures and increases in poverty
- **5.** The need to earn money to buy a trousseau (materials considered necessary for a bride to take into married life)
- **6.** Mistreatment and abuse from family members, including the threat of forced marriage and abusive fostering relationships within extended families

PUSH FACTORS

- 1. Perceived glamour of urban life (exaggerated by returnee Kayayei in many cases)
- 2. The pursuit of economic opportunities
- **3.** The chance to live independently and gain social skills to prepare them for adult life





'At risk' Kayayei, key informants and the current Kayayei all identified financial reasons as a push for migration. The lack of economic opportunities, along with the harsh and unpredictable climate means that if the girls stay in Northern Ghana they face a life of poverty. The threat of forced marriage and abusive relationships are also a reason to migrate.

"MY MOTHER ASKED ME TO COME AND WORK SO THAT I CAN HELP TAKE Care of the family"

The unified pull factor identified by all groups was the returnees had made Kayayei work seem like an attractive prospect. People often believe the 'glamourised' stories of returnees as they have no other reference information for what Kayayei life is like.

"FRIENDS MAY INFLUENCE THEM TO DO KAYAYEI WORK TO GET MORE Money to take better care of themselves and this will cause them to eventually stop schooling"

Financial incentives are also pull factors for migration to the more prosperous south. These financial incentives are tied in with a desire to become more independent and a chance to gain new skills. According to the PEER participants, another pull factor that keeps girls in Accra as Kayayei is having children. Some girls migrate to Accra as commercial sex workers, but once pregnant they become Kayayei as an alternative form of employment. After becoming pregnant, they may no longer be able to re-enter education or get married back in their home communities, and thus stay working in Accra for longer periods of time.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHALLENGES FACED BY KAYAYEI

All of the target groups had a similar understanding of the challenges faced by Kayayei. Despite this awareness, in all three regions, many still said they were likely to become Kayayei. Girls might feel they simply have no other choice even when they know about the potentially life-changing negative consequences of that choice. Yet programs designed to support 'at risk' Kayayei are still not based on coherent or focused interventions.



POTENTIAL CHALLENGES ACCORDING TO AT RISK GROUP

- Sexual abuse and associated reproductive health issues, including unintended pregnancy, abortion and the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- 2. General poor health, risk of accidents
- 3. Physical abuse
- 4. Hard working conditions
- 5. Poor living conditions
- **6.** Risk of earnings being stolen

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF KAYAYEI

Kayayei explained they are overworked, underpaid and often went hungry. While some of the Kayayei worked independently, others are employed by 'madams' to help them in their shops or work exclusively with a shop owner. In interviews, Kayayei stressed the precarious, informal nature of their work. It is either the cause of, or exacerbates, the hardships Kayayei face.

Madams abuse verbally and physically Kayayei and those facing this abuse have no form of recourse. The communities surrounding Kayayei also mistreat and stigmatise them.

"SHE WORKS WITH A MADAM WHO DOESN'T GIVE ANY MONEY AT THE END of the day despite all the work she does for her. She gets extra money only if she carries loads for people who patronise the shop. She is not even allowed to rest. She sells doughnuts for the madam she works for. She is always given GHS 50 [approx. £8.50] worth of doughnuts to sell and she has to give her madam GHS 35 [approx. £6.00]. Whether the doughnuts are bought or not, her madam takes her share of the money, GHS 35. So sometimes she loses money."

"THEIR MADAMS TREAT THEM LIKE SLAVES AND DO NOT ALLOW THEM TO REST ANYTIME, THEY ARE TIRED AND AT THE END OF THE DAY [THE MADAM] WILL NOT GIVE THEM ANYTHING."

In addition to direct mistreatment, there are challenges - the most severe being the lack of access to affordable and safe accommodation. As a result, many Kayayei live without clean water and those that have no choice but to live on the streets are particularly vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse.

The Kayayei have limited access to protection, support, health care and contraception, which increase the risks of STIs and unintended pregnancies. Despite the fact that they may have very little money, they are still victims of theft because they are known to keep what little money they do have with them when they sleep. This makes it hard for them to save money and send remittances to their families and they may have to stay working as Kayayei longer, to re-earn money lost.

"ONE DAY ONE OF HER ROOMMATES WENT OUT TO VISIT HER BOYFRIEND IN THE NIGHT AND LEFT THE DOOR **OPEN. A MAN CAME AND PEEPED** THROUGH THE WINDOW, WHEN HE SAW THE DOOR OPEN. HE WALKED **TO THE GIRLS AND WANTED TO RAPE** THEM; HE TORE ONE OF THE GIRL'S DRESSES, BUT RAN OUT AFTER TWO **OF THE GIRLS WOKE UP. RAPE CASES ARE MORE COMMON FOR THOSE WHO SLEEP OUTSIDE.**"

INTERVENTIONS AND PROGRAMMES

Neither past nor current programmes have specifically targeted Kayayei in the northern regions or in Accra. In the northern regions, initiatives regarding income generation for young women and their communities are clearly not adequate, since the number of Kayayei increases and new Kayayei destinations develop. Funding issues, politicisation of projects, stigma surrounding girls' involvement in training opportunities crippled programmes of training and income generation. For instance, lack of food provision for programme beneficiaries became a reason girls stopped attending projects.

None of these efforts have been holistic and they have not been implemented specifically for 'at risk' Kayayei or returnees. Only one project on the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of women and girls recognised the link between Kayayei work and SRH issues and mainstreamed it in their programme. Lack of/poor consultation of affected young women and girls when designing interventions contribute to their failure.

One of the major challenges identified during this research study is that of obtaining accurate figures of the number of young women and girls working as Kayayei in Accra and also finding relevant policy documents which are based on evidence and analyse how to protect and support these girls.

In Accra, PEER participants identified specific types of skills training they wanted to prevent girls becoming Kayayei, such as hairdressing or dressmaking. Alongside training, machines and resources are needed in order to start businesses.

"THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BUILD MORE SCHOOLS AND DO MORE TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SO THAT GIRLS WILL HAVE BETTER POSITIONS IN THE COMMUNITY. THEY WANT TO BE TAUGHT HAIRDRESSING TO SUPPORT THEIR PARENTS TO BUY FARM TOOLS." Girls want to raise their position in society through training in business development to become successful entrepreneurs. Others have more ambitious career goals including nursing or accounting and medicine, showing their desire to better themselves.

Participants also want societal level interventions to improve lives in their communities and tackle some of the reasons for becoming Kayayei. The subsidisation of education would ease the burden on parents who cannot afford the current levels of school fees for the girls and their siblings. Some of the girls also wanted more infrastructure interventions including the provision of farming tools, again to ease financial burden, but also mentioned the need for investment in the three northern regions, including in education and healthcare.

Kayayei participants identified other interventions, including the provision of safe accommodation, sexual and reproductive health and rights support. In addition, the improvement of police services – so that Kayayei can trust that law enforcement will protect and uphold their rights when they are the targets and victims of crime – was described as key to their well-being.

"GOVERNMENT AND NGOS SHOULD PROVIDE PLACES TO SLEEP FOR KAYAYEI. MOST OF THEM SLEEP ON THE STREETS AND IN FRONT OF STORES. THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN AS MUCH HELP AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THEY FEEL SORRY FOR THEMSELVES, SCARED, SAD AND UNCOMFORTABLE."

BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS TAKING PART IN THE PEER

For some of the participants, the experience gave them further confidence to talk about the specific issues affecting Kayayei and inspired them to continue learning or training. However, there were challenges, such as being teased for taking part in the study.



These recommendations suggest actions to slow down the phenomenon of migration for Kayayei work and to support existing Kayayei. They would benefit those who are at risk of becoming Kayayei and returnee Kayayei, and current Kayayei. All actors should adopt a holistic approach to address the multiple needs of Kayayei and those at risk. Sufficient funds must be made available.



REGARDING KAYAYEI RETURNEES AND THOSE AT RISK OF BECOMING KAYAYEI IN THE LOCATION OF ORIGIN

INCREASE INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN GHANA TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH

The government needs to invest heavily in initiatives, specifically in infrastructure, to develop the three northern regions from where Kayayei originate. It should put in place interventions to address the impact of increasingly erratic rainfall and other extreme weather events caused by climate change, such as how to create crop resilience.

"THE GOVERNMENT AND NGOS Should Help our fathers and Mothers with farm tools like Tractors and fertilisers."

"WE WANT TO SEE GOOD ROADS, Construction of more schools And health facilities."

INCREASE PROVISION OF SPECIFIC SKILLS TRAINING AND LIVELIHOOD Opportunities for young women and girls living in the Northern Regions

FORWARD's past successes in trainings for income-generating activities suggest that the most focused approaches are preceded by market research in the local area, to ensure that the enterprises created would be profitable and sustainable. For example, creating crèches not only creates childcare work for some, but also help mothers wanting to take part in education or other income-generating activities.

Ensure funding is sustainable, that projects do not become politicised and that girls are not mocked when involved in training and development. Make sure food is available for girls while undertaking training. Include the girls themselves in project planning and ask about their needs during project design.

"THEY SHOULD ORGANISE TRAINING PROGRAMS ON HOW TO MAKE SANDALS, BREAD, CAKE, CLOTH AND PREPARE FRUIT JUICE. THEY SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE NECESSARY MACHINES FOR THEM TO USE, SO THAT THEY CAN STOP KAYAYEI."

IMPROVE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND SUBSIDISE WHERE APPROPRIATE

Subsidise or waive school fees for those who simply cannot afford it. Funding for girls, especially returnees, to access education and training must be increased. It should cover the cost of school fees and also the associated indirect costs, for example uniforms, transport and school equipment.

"THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUPPORT EDUCATION BY PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO STUDENTS."

CREATE AWARENESS PROGRAMMES TO DISPEL MYTHS AROUND KAYAYEI

Raise awareness about what Kayayei work actually is and its hardships and risks. Radio broadcasts and outreach led by influential and respected community members, including faith and or traditional leaders, could be effective.

REGARDING KAYAYEI IN ACCRA

INCREASE PROVISION OF SAFE HOUSES AND STANDARDISED Accommodation for kayayei

Provide safe accommodation to Kayayei as part of their work. The government and/or the private sector could invest in building affordable accommodation for Kayayei and then allocate this to employers who would be required to pay to rent the accommodation on behalf of Kayayei. The accommodation should be subject to inspection by an independent authority to ensure conditions comply with health and safety regulations. Raise awareness among Kayayei of what appropriate accommodation is and empower them to report substandard accommodation to the relevant authorities.

"GOVERNMENT AND NGOS SHOULD PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR KAYAYEI. KAYAYEI DO NOT HAVE PLACES TO SLEEP, THEY SLEEP IN STREETS AND IN FRONT OF STORES."

MAKE SPECIFIC AND RELEVANT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO KAYAYEI

Ensure that health facilities, including family planning advice and related services, are available and accessible to Kayayei. Obstetric care must be available to all women – married or not. A regular, free and confidential drop-in service would provide the opportunity for Kayayei to get sexual health check-ups.

"THEY SHOULD BE TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL AND HELPED TO GET A JOB SO THAT THEY CAN TAKE CARE OF ANY PREGNANCY THAT MAY OCCUR."

IMPROVE POLICE SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Enforce existing laws and sensitise law enforcement officers to the specific needs of Kayayei such as violence and abuse. Respect signed protocols and agreements protecting women's rights.

"POLICE SHOULD SHOW MORE CONCERN AND TAKE RAPE CASES OF KAYAYEI MORE SERIOUSLY."

REDISTRIBUTE TAX TO Support kayayei

Use the tax collected daily from Kayayei by the local authority to finance interventions to support them.

ADDRESS THE CURRENT FLAWS IN THE 'MADAM' SYSTEM AND INTRODUCE LAWS TO PROTECT KAYAYEI FROM LABOUR EXPLOITATION

Extend the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651), including its provisions of minimum wage and appropriate price mechanisms, to cover the informal sector.







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