ECONOMIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT AMONGST LGBTQI+ PERSONS IN GHANA FOR GREATER IMPACT

RESEARCH REPORT

MARCH, 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report documents a cross-sectional study that was conducted in three implementing regions in Ghana among LGBTQI+ persons. Additional information was obtained from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Face-to-Face interviews and a desk review of published literature. We would like to gratefully acknowledge all the participants for participating in the interviews and providing valuable input for the report. A list of organizations has been documented below as part of their efforts to make this study a success.

DONOR

- HIVOS

STRATEGIC CONSORTIUM (SC) MEMBERS

- Hope Alliance Foundation
- OHF Initiative
- Social Action for Minorities Empowerment

OTHERS

- LGBTIQ+ community
- Community of Action - FREE TO BE ME PROGRAM

TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Majority of identified LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana face violence and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Advocacy for the well-being and human rights protection of LGBTQI+ persons over the years has been engendered based on individual stories gathered from the LGBTQI+ community. Until a recent study on Understanding the Issues and Experiences of LGBT Ghanaians by Solace Initiative (2019) which reported that 51% of all LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana experience some form of stigma and discrimination, abuse, and harassment at the workplace[1] getting scientific data on the problems that LGBTQI+ persons face in the labour market in Ghana is difficult. There exist little scientific or standardized data on economic needs, interest, and status of LGBTQI+ persons which sometimes negatively influence the allocation of resources towards the design and implementation of socio-economic development programs for these vulnerable groups. This study, therefore, sought to gather data in three regions (Greater Accra, Western and Central) with information of the economic needs and status of LGBTQI+ persons which will be used to influence programming and continuity of economic related interventions in Ghana.

A descriptive, cross-sectional study employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches was used in collecting primary data from the LGBTQI+ community in three (3) main implementing regions in Ghana. The design and implementation of the study were participatory with Strategic Consortium (SC) bringing together key stakeholders in the LGBTQI+ community in Ghana to agree on the data collection instruments used, the number of respondents allocated to each of the various categories of sexual orientation and gender identity, and to train peer leaders within the LGBTQI+ community in the three (3) regions of Ghana to undertake the data collection for the study.

A total of 435 participated in the quantitative study. Self-identification of respondents SOGIESC status is as follows; bisexual 25.7% (112), gay 22.1% (96), transman 10.1% (44), transwoman 9% (39), intersex 9% (39), Lesbian 20.9% (91) and Queer 1.6% (7). Only 1.6% (7) of participants declined to indicate their SOGIESC status. The mean age of the respondents was approximately 28 years and it ranged from 17 to 52 years. The study recorded 23.9% (104) as persons who have been employed for wages, 46.2% (201) as self-employed and 29.9% (130) as unemployed.

The study established that LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana faced several challenges in the labour market when their status is known or revealed. Some of which are low pay or salary, poor working conditions, stigma and discrimination, harassment, abuse, etc. It was revealed that 70.3% of the respondents believe that unemployment rate is high among LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana. Furthermore, 48.5% (210) of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana are engaged in the informal

[1] Understanding the Issues and Experiences of LGBT Ghanaians study by Solace Initiative an unpublished report in June 2019.

sector with formal sector accounting for 21.6% (94) of the respondents. Also, 78.2% of respondents indicated that they preferred to be self-employed. The study revealed a number of vocations that interest LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana such as artistry, catering, petty trading, dressmaking or tailoring, beauticians, mobile money vendors, morticians etc.

Key interventions established by the study to support socio-economic needs of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana include provision of start-up capital with accompanying training, mentoring, and coaching support for those who want to initiate or expand an enterprise activity and general advocacy against social exclusion. One key facilitator for socio-economic programs for LGBTQI+ persons established was the willingness of LGBTQI+ persons to be self-employed. This will help in designing key interventions towards the needs and interest of these persons.

Some barriers to developing socio-economic programs were also identified. These includes lack of capital or funds, high level of stigma and discrimination, low self-esteem by some LGBTQI+ persons and unfavourable environment.

Again, the passage of the anti-gay bill will further deepen stigma and discrimination, abuse, harassment etc. among LGBTQI+ persons in the labour market. To this end, all efforts must be made to halt the passage of the bill.

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSESMENT

1.0 Introduction

The Economic Needs Assessment is a research project that seeks to address the unavailability of comprehensive programmatic data on the economic needs, status, and interests of LGBTQ+ persons, which sometimes tends to negatively influence the allocation of resources towards the design and implementation of socio-economic development programmes for these vulnerable groups. The research also seeks to ascertain the level of and document the negative impact of existing discriminatory and punitive laws on the economic status of LGBTQI+ persons and how the proposed Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2022 (the "Anti-LGBT Bill") can further negatively impact the socio-economic inclusion and livelihood of LGBTQI+ persons if passed into law.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Assessment

The aim of this assessment is to put together a database with information on the economic needs and status of LGBTQI+ persons across the three main implementing regions (i.e., Greater Accra, Central, and Western), which will in turn influence programming and continuity of economic-related interventions.

1.2 Expected Output

In general, a survey report will be produced and disseminated after the exercise. Specifically, the following outputs are expected:

- A report on the findings and high-quality data on the economic needs, status, and interests of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana.
- Document appropriate socio-economic programs for LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana
- Document facilitators and barriers to socio-economic programs for LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana.

1.3 Report Organization

The report is organized into five (5) sections as summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Report organization

Sections	Description
Section 1.0	**Introduction and background** This section presents a brief introduction to the background and requirements of the assignment, objectives, and organization of the report.
Section 2.0	**Methodology** The section provides an overview of empirical activities such as sampling, research instrument, ethical considerations, limitation, and glossary of key terms
Section 3.0	**Presentation of Analysis and Findings** This section presents findings from the quantitative and qualitative assessment under the themes of demographic and socio-economic characteristics, employment history etc. These are presented in the form of perception and experiences.
Section 4.0	**Insights from the Findings** This section provides further insights from the findings obtained from the study.
Section 5.0	**Conclusion and Recommendation** The section presents recommendation based on the findings gleaned from the study

SECTION TWO: METHODOLOGY FOR THE ASSESSMENT

2.0 Introduction

This section of the report describes the methodological approach adopted for conducting this assessment. It explains the planning processes, sampling, data collection, and analytical approaches, as well as the limitations and ethical considerations adopted.

2.1 Preparatory, Inception and Planning Phase

This stage of the work entailed the review and finalization of the detailed methodology, study design, and instruments/tools used for data collection. A detailed work plan for the study was also developed. The consultant also conducted a comprehensive desk review of the available project documents and academic literature relating to the topic under study.

2.2 Selection and Training of Interviewers/Research Assistants

Seven (7) Research Assistants (RAs) with training and experience in both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were chosen and trained to do the field interviews. A two-day training session was conducted to re-orient RAs on correct interviewing techniques using the study instruments, sampling methods to be used on the field, accurate interpretation of the keywords in the study instruments into the local languages spoken in the selected areas, as well as ethical and confidentiality considerations while in the field. The RAs also went through a questionnaire pre-testing exercise at a selected site in the Greater Accra region as part of the training. Feedback from the exercise was used to finalize the study instrument.

2.3 Sampling and Sample Size in the 3 Selected Regions

For both qualitative and quantitative surveys, the consultant used convenience and snowball sampling to choose people to interview. There were three strata in the study sample: formal employment, informal employment, and being unemployed. The consultant worked closely with the Strategic Consortium to identify respondents for this assessment. A sample size of 500 respondents was targeted for this assessment. The targets interviewed were carefully selected based on the objective of the assessment. People who self-identified as Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian, or Intersex were interviewed for the study. The regions covered under each zone and the number of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: List of Regions visited

S/N	Region	Sexual Orientation Categories					Total
		Gay	Bisexual	Trans	Lesbian	Intersex	
1	Greater Accra	80	60	16	40	4	200
2	Central	60	45	12	30	3	150
3	Western	60	45	12	30	3	150
Total		**200**	**150**	**40**	**100**	**10**	**500**

Source: Data from Fieldwork, 2023.

2.4 Fieldwork/Data Collection in the 3 Selected Regions

A "concurrent triangulation design"[2] was used for this assessment. In this case, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed at the same time, but in separate ways. Quantitative and qualitative data sets are combined or changed at the level of interpretation to make it easier to use both types of data in the analysis. Data were collected in the three (3) main implementing regions of the Strategic Consortium, namely, the Greater Accra, Central, and Western Regions of Ghana. The Greater Accra and Western regions had three (3) RAs each, Central region had two (2) RAs. This is based on the number of study participants assigned to these regions. The trained research assistant administered the survey questionnaire and interview guides through face-to-face interaction with study participants. The RAs are members of the LGBTQI+ community. This approach facilitated the smooth gathering of data from the field. The data collection period lasted for two weeks between January 15 and 30, 2023.

2.5 Deployment of IT Solutions for Data Collection

An electronic means of data collection using a mobile App called Kobo Collect was deployed for the quantitative data collection. This approach used globally accepted digital data collection tools/or frameworks for the effective and efficient monitoring of field activities.

[2] Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, *209*(240), 209-240.

The electronic data collection tool used allowed for a well-designed field data collection instrument that can be set up quickly and easily on digital devices like phones, tablets, etc. so that data can be collected quickly and easily. This approach provided the consultant with an opportunity to monitor all online and offline data collection exercises closely and effectively.

2.6 Data Management, Verification and Analysis

Data cleaning was a continuous activity throughout the quantitative data collection period. Data uploaded to the server was constantly checked for illogical and inconsistent responses. In analysing the quantitative data, descriptive statistics were performed in the form of frequency analysis, means and standard deviations for variables measured as continuous variables, and cross-tabulation analysis. Some of the data were presented in tables, charts, and graphs. Data from the qualitative survey was transcribed, analysed, and presented in the report with the quantitative results. The qualitative result was triangulated with the quantitative result.

2.7 Challenges and Ethical Considerations

A major challenge the consultant anticipates in carrying out this consulting assignment is the non-availability of relevant stakeholders to respond to instruments. If this problem does come up, the consultant will work with the Strategic Consortium to solve it. Also, the consultant obtained informed consent from all the participants of the study. Before collecting data, the purpose of the study was told to all the participants, and they all agreed to it. They were also assured of the confidentiality of the information they gave, and that information will only be used for programmatic purposes and handled by only persons associated with the study.

SECTION THREE: PRESENTATION OF ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

3.0 Introduction

This section presents the analysis and main findings of the study. The findings are presented under demographic and socio-economic characteristics: respondent geographical location, work experiences, economic opportunities, condition of work, labour discrimination, human rights abuses, stigma, and discrimination of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana, as well as recommendations for LGBTQI+ led organisations.

3.1 Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents

This section gives an overview of the demographic characteristics that were compared to the sexual orientation of the respondents. This information serves as the basis for understanding the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of demographic characteristics by sexual orientation

Demographic Characteristics	Bisexual (%)	Gay (%)	I am a trans man (%)	I am a trans woman (%)	Intersex (%)	Lesbian (%)	Prefer not to say (%)	Queer (%)	Total (N)
Age									
<= 24	37.5	35.4	22.7	30.8	5.1	23.1	14.3	71.4	127
25 – 34	50	50	63.6	61.5	76.9	59.3	71.4	14.3	246
35 – 44	11.6	12.5	9.1	7.7	17.9	13.2	14.3	14.3	53
45+	0.9	2.1	4.5	0	0	4.4	0	0	9
Religion									
No Religion	9.8	9.4	6.8	10.3	0	14.3	14.3	42.9	44
Christianity	75.9	80.2	81.8	61.5	97.4	71.4	71.4	42.9	333
Islam	8	4.2	11.4	23.1	2.6	7.7	0	14.3	36
Traditional	2.7	3.1	0	5.1	0	1.1	14.3	0	10
Other	3.6	3.1	0	0	0	5.5	0	0	12
Marital Status									
Single/Never married	73.2	78.1	68.2	76.9	94.9	61.5	85.7	100	323
Cohabiting/Living together	8	5.2	2.3	10.3	0	1.1	0	0	20
Same sex cohabiting	7.1	9.4	18.2	7.7	0	27.5	0	0	53
Married	5.4	5.2	4.5	0	5.1	2.2	0	0	17
Widowed	0	1	0	0	0	1.1	0	0	2
Divorced	5.4	0	4.5	2.6	0	5.5	0	0	14
Separated	0.9	1	2.3	2.6	0	1.1	14.3	0	6
Total (N)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**435**

A total of 435 respondents participated in the study. Self-identification of respondents SOGIESC status is as follows; bisexual 25.7% (112), gay 22.1% (96), transman 10.1% (44), transwoman 9% (39), intersex 9% (39), Lesbian 20.9% (91) and Queer 1.6% (7). Only 1.6% (7) of participants declined to indicate their SOGIESC status. The age of the respondents ranged between 17 and 52 years and majority of the respondents were between 25 – 34 years. The mean age of the respondents was approximately 28 years. Majority of the respondents mentioned that they were single or never married. Only 10.1% (44) of the respondents did not indicate their religion. Christianity constituted 76.6% (333), Islam 8.2% (36), traditionalist 2.3% (10), and Other[3] 2.7% as presented in Table 3 above.

A total of 391 out of 435 respondents reported they had attended school. Of those who indicated that they had ever attended school, majority (144 out of 435) had completed SSS/SHS, followed by vocational/technical. Tertiary education (HND, diploma or undergraduate degree) constituted 92 persons and only 4 of the respondents had a master's degree. When asked about their employment status, 23.9% (104) said they were employed for pay, 46.2% (201) said they were self-employed, and 29.9% (130) said they were unemployed. Out of the 305 respondents who reported that they were in employment, 21.6% (94) and 48.5% (210) were in formal[4] and informal[5] work, respectively. The majority of the 210 respondents who reported that they were self-employed were gay men, representing 28.9% (58), also, many of the respondents in formal work were bisexual 23% (22), followed by lesbians 19.2% (20), and the least among them in formal employment were queer 1.9% (2) as shown in Table 4.

Of those who mentioned that they were either self-employed or employed for wages, the average salary mentioned was GHS 860.00, and the least was GHS 120.00. Majority of the respondents (44.6%) who indicated that they were unemployed reported that they were looking for work. Students and apprentices constituted 23% (30) and 16% (21) respectively.

[3] The others include Animist, Buddhist, Eckankar, Hindu and Humanist

[4] Formal employment for the purpose of this research refers to organizations that have organizational structure which clearly spells out the job to be performed by each employee, the authority, responsibility assigned to every individual, the superior, subordinate relationship, and the designation of every employee in the organization.

[5] Informal employment refers to largely self-employed persons who do not have a well-structured organizational structure.

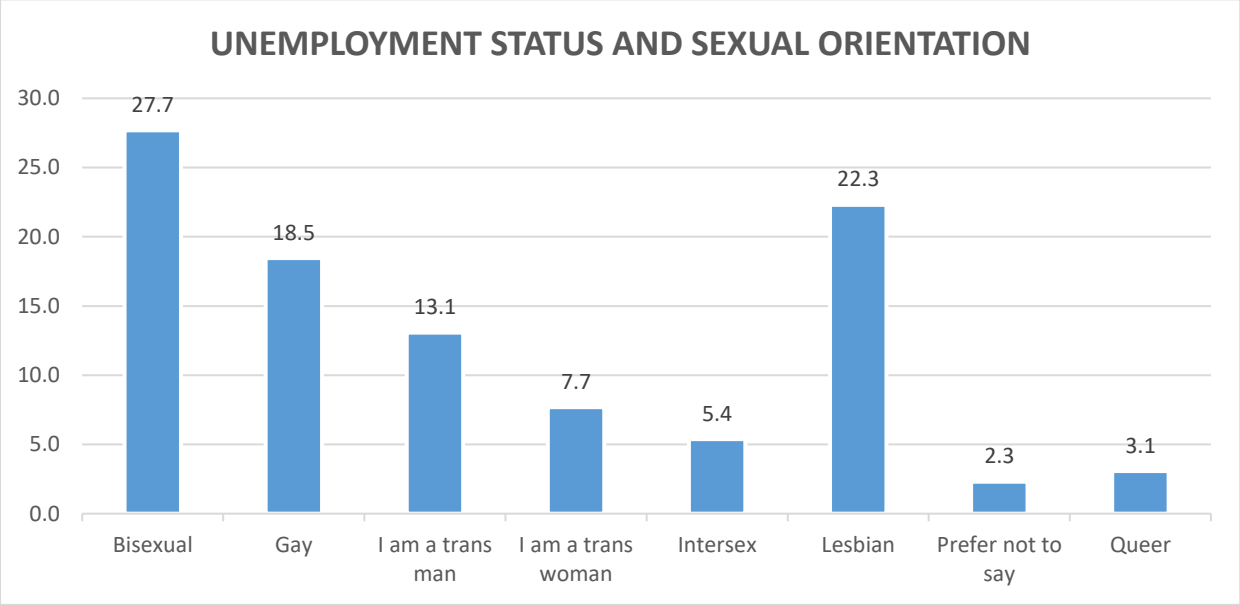
Table 4: Percentage distribution of socio-economic characteristics by sexual orientation

Socio- Economic Characteristics	Bisexual (%)	Gay (%)	I am a trans man (%)	I am a trans woman (%)	Intersex (%)	Lesbian (%)	Prefer not to say (%)	Queer (%)	Total (N)
Ever Attended School									
Yes	95.5	93.8	65.9	69.2	97.4	94.5	100	100	391
No	4.5	6.2	34.1	30.8	2.6	5.5	0	0	44
Highest level of School Completed									
Completed Primary	4.5	6.2	34.1	30.8	5.2	5.5	0.0	0.0	45
Some Primary	3.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	18
Middle/JSS/JHS	9.8	7.3	6.8	2.6	7.7	13.2	0.0	0.0	37
Some Junior/Middle	5.4	10.4	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	18
SSS/SHS	34.8	27.1	29.5	30.7	53.8	27.5	42.9	71.4	144
Some SHS	9.8%	7.3	6.8	2.6	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	27
Vocational/Technical	13.4	11.5	6.8	10.2	10.2	12.1	0.0	0.0	48
Some Vocational/Technical	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	2
HND/Diploma	8.0	9.4	9.2	10.2	2.6	17.6	42.8	0.0	46
Undergraduate Degree	9.8	7.3	6.8	7.7	15.4	14.2	14.3	28.6	46
Masters/PhD	0.9	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	4
Employment Status									
Employed for wages	21.4	14.6	36.4	38.5	33.3	22	0	28.6	104
Self-employed	46.4	60.4	25	35.9	48.7	46.2	57.1	14.3	201
Unemployed	32.1	25	38.6	25.6	17.9	31.9	42.9	57.1	130
Monthly Earnings									
< 501	42.9	38.5	45.5	38.5	20.5	45.1	57.1	57.1	177
500+	57.1	61.5	54.5	61.5	79.5	54.9	42.9	42.9	258
Total (N)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**435**

3.2 Assessing the Situation of Unemployed LGBTQI+ Persons

In all, 130 out of 435 respondents indicated that they were unemployed. Bisexuals made up the majority of those who reported being unemployed, at 27.7% (36), with gays coming in second with 22.3% (29), and lesbians third with 18.5% (24). The remaining people were 13.1% (17), 7.7% (10), 5.4% (7), and 3.1% (7) transmen, transwomen, intersex, and queer, respectively. Figure 1 shows that the other 2.3% (3) did not say if they were working or not.

Figure 1: Unemployed Status and Sexual Orientation



Source: Data from Fieldwork, 2023

Of all those who reported that they were unemployed, 35.2% (45) of the respondents indicated that they have never worked before. The majority (64.8%) of them indicated that they were in employment, and insufficient pay or salary was the main reason why they left their previous jobs. Other reasons include, poor working conditions, stigma and discrimination based on their SOGIESC, harassment/abuse, further education, change of job, travel, started apprenticeship/ attachment/ NSS /Contract etc. In the qualitative study, a similar question was asked to find out what accounts for unemployment among LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana. Some of the quotes from the respondents have been summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Factors that account for unemployment among LGBTQI+ persons

"What accounts for unemployment among LGBTQI+ persons are stigma and discrimination. What accounts for the stigma and discrimination includes improper dressing, and how we portray and present ourselves wherever we find ourselves also accounts for such stigma and discrimination". – (FGD, Accra)

"The high unemployment among us is because the LGBTQI+ community is frowned upon in the country and this makes it difficult for others to employ us. They see us as undesirables and would not want to employ us". – (FGD, Cape Coast)

"What has caused an increase in unemployment in the SASO (LGBTQI+) community has something to do with the way we talk, walk, and behave. It makes it difficult for people to employ us. Some of our members sometimes hinder us from getting a job." (FGD, Takoradi)

"An effeminate LGBTQI+ person may be disqualified for a job because of how they walk and behave. Such persons may be called all kinds of names. Even when an LGBTQI+ person gets a job, their colleagues may bully them because of who they are. People discriminate and can sometimes harass you for no reason. That is a major reason why a lot of LGBTQI+ person is unemployed. Religion is another factor. For example, a company owned by a Muslim may never accept an LGBTQI+ person because they see it to be a bad omen". – (FGD, Accra) (sic)

Majority of the respondents have been unemployed for more than one year and most of them indicated that they have never applied for any social assistance ever since they became unemployed. Unavailability of social assistance support scheme, no knowledge on the existence of social assistance support, lack of collateral etc. were the reasons that accounted for their inability to apply for social assistance support. Only 7.5% (9) mentioned that they have ever applied for social assistance ever since they became unemployed.

Furthermore, they were asked to indicate if they had tried setting up any enterprise activity in the past. Most of them, representing 62.5% (80), said they have tried setting up an enterprise activity in the past. Some of the enterprise activities mentioned were delivery services, soap making, sales of goods (online and in-person), petty trading, beauticians, mobile money vendors, etc. Key challenges faced in the processes included lack of initial

capital, poor management, lack of operating places, lack of collateral, lack of raw materials, SOGIESC status, etc.

Respondents were asked to indicate the kind of work they would prefer to do when given the opportunity. The following enterprise activities were mentioned; bead making, dressmaking, cocktail and fruit juice production, hairdressing, mobile money services, petty trading, food vending, poultry farming, vegetable farming, etc. This was confirmed in the qualitative study, where respondents were asked during a focus group discussion, to mention the kind of job most LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana find themselves doing most often. Across all nine (9) FGDs conducted, participants mentioned make-up artistry, dressmaking, catering services, petty trading, morticians, etc. They were asked to indicate how safe they would be if given the opportunity to carry out an income-generating activity or enterprise activity, and most of them mentioned they would be very safe.

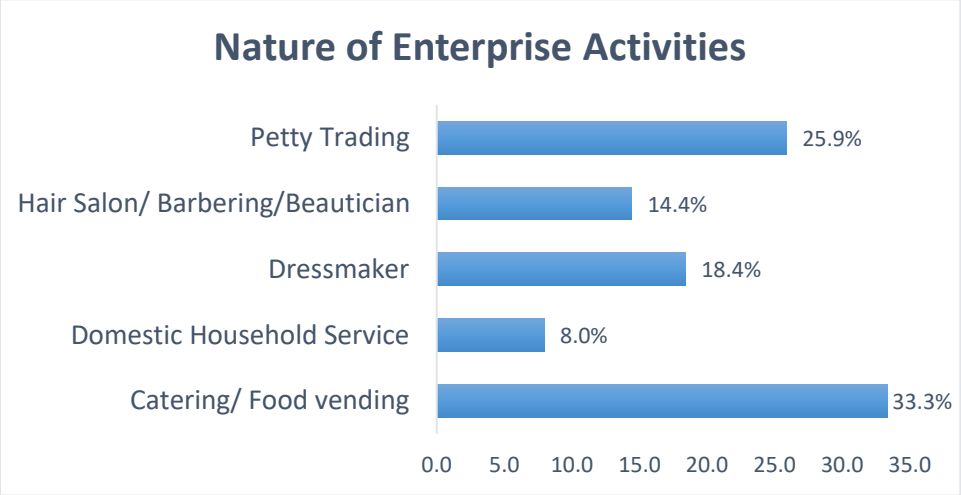
3.3 Assessing the Situation of Self-Employed LGBTQI+ Persons

All 210 of the respondents indicated that they were self-employed. Majority of the respondents who were self-employed have been in operation for more than 2 years, representing 80.1% (168) of all responses. The following were the nature of their enterprise activities: petty trading[6], hair salon/barbering[7], food and beverages, etc. as shown in Figure 3. Respondents were asked to indicate the kinds of challenges they face as self-employed persons based on their SOGIESC status. Out of the 210 self-employed, majority of them, representing 60.2% (126), reported that they have not faced any challenges in their operations because of their SOGIESC status.

[6] This enterprise activity consists of sale of phone accessories, online shopping, sale of wood carvings, provisions, electrical appliances, cosmetics, vegetables, smoked fish etc.

[7] It includes nail technicians, make over, make up, etc.

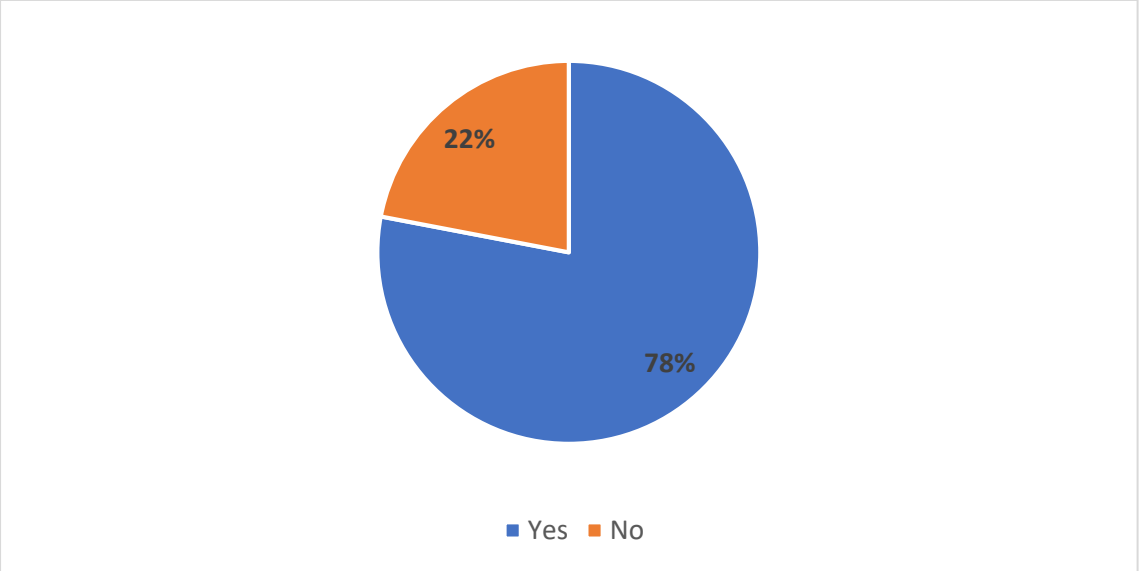
Figure 3: Nature of enterprise activities among the Self-Employed



Source: Data from Fieldwork, 2023

People were asked if people don't buy their goods or use their services because they are LGBTQI+ persons. Majority of them said they have not experienced any such situation as presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Non-Patronage of Enterprise because of SOGIESC Status



Source: Data from Fieldwork, 2023

The remaining 22% who reported that they have experienced such instances recounted their situation, which has been summarised below in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Experiences of LGBTQI+ **persons as it relates to their work**

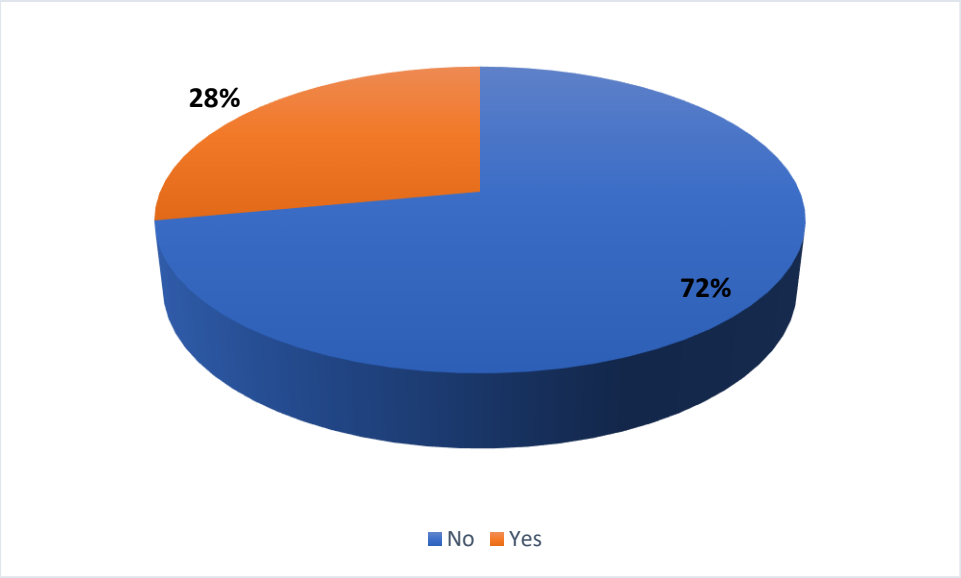
"Am a phone tech sometimes people take the items from me when they see my dressing". – (Gay, Accra)

"Because of the discrimination and stigma, I have been going through, made my customers to leave solely because they don't want to be pointed out as my favourite customers". – (Gay, Cape Coast)

"Because of the name calling and co that I have gone through has contributed negatively to the rate at which my customers patronize my service of late" (Transman, Takoradi)
"Most people who know that I'm openly bisexual don't patronize my products". – (Bisexual, Accra)
"People pass discriminatory comments about me which deter people from buying from me". – (Transwoman, Takoradi)

They were asked to indicate if they had tried accessing a loan to expand their business. This has been presented in Figure 6. The data revealed that 28% (56) of the respondents indicated that they have ever applied for a loan to expand their business in the past.

Figure 6: Ever Access Loan to Expand Business

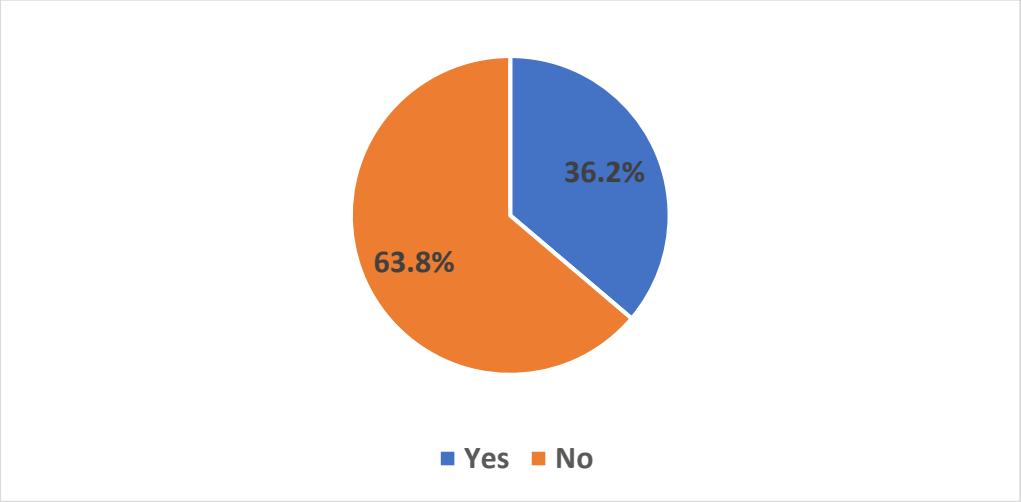


Out of 56 respondents who have ever applied for a loan, only 35 of them, representing 62.5%, said they were able to access one. The remainder was not able to access the loan. The

following reasons were attributed to their inability to access a loan; lack of collateral, lack of knowledge on where to access a loan, because of their SOGIESC status etc.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had been able to make any savings in the past 12 months. Their responses have been presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Ability to save in the Last 12 Months



3.4 Assessing the Situation of LGBTQI+ Persons in Formal Employment

The data shows that out of the 94 respondents who reported that they work in the formal sector, most of the respondents, representing 53.2% (50), work in the private sector. The government sector accounted for 28.7%, non-governmental organisations 12.8% (12), and family businesses 5.3% (5). Majority of the respondents in the formal sector reported that none of their colleagues at work knew their SOGIESC status. Only 9.7% mentioned that they have disclosed their status to their colleagues at work. They were asked to indicate if they had experienced any form of discrimination in the workplace in the past 12 months. The data gathered showed that 83.9% (78) of the respondents had not experienced any form of discrimination in the past 12 months.

3.5 General Economic Conditions and Challenges

Respondents were asked a series of questions to find out about the economy as a whole and the problems it faces. Data gathered revealed that 98.6% (429) reported that prices of goods and services have increased, and 86.7% (377) indicated that the price increase has brought some level of stress upon themselves. They were asked to indicate if cost had prevented them from accessing healthcare in the past year. 28% (122) of the people who answered the survey said that cost kept them from getting health care in the past year. The majority (78.9%) of the respondents mentioned that there has never been a time in their lives where they have experienced accommodation challenges because of their SOGIESC status; only 20.2% responded in the affirmative, and some of the reasons have been summarised in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Challenges being faced by LGBTQI+ persons with respect to accommodation

"I was judged based on my physical appearance and refused accommodation". – (Gay, Takoradi)

"My land lady complained that she hasn't seen any man there since I rented the room. Meaning all the ladies that visit me have something to do with me – (Lesbian, Cape Coast)

"My landlord heard rumours about me being gay and I was ejected from my place". – (Gay, Accra)
"There was this place I had wanted to stay but because of my looks they rejected me the place – (Transwoman, Accra)

Also, they were asked to share their opinion in relation to the labour market for LGBTQI+ persons. The data gathered revealed that 70.3% (306) of the respondents believed that the unemployment rate is very high among LGBTQI+ persons and that those who are also fortunate to get a job receive lower wages. They also believed that job losses normally occur among LGBTQI+ individuals when their status is known among colleagues or management. In relation to harassment, 67.4% (293) and discrimination, 73.3% (319) of the respondents believed that LGBTQI+ persons often experience a high degree of these in the labour market when their status is known or revealed.

3.6 Perception on Anti LGBT Bill on Livelihoods/Socio-Economic Inclusion of LGBTQI+ Persons

Respondents were asked to indicate if they have heard about the proposed Anti-LGBTQI+ bill. Data gathered shows that 70.8% (308) of the respondents have heard about the bill. They were asked to share their opinion on the effect the passage of this bill will have on their socio-economic fortunes. Figure 9 shows a summary of the views of the respondents.

Figure 9: Sample quotes on the passage of the Anti-Gay Bill

"A lot more attacks which may even lead to the collapse of my business". – (Gay, Accra)

"Already am facing a lot of discrimination and imagine such a bill is passed I would be doomed. We need to try our best to prevent this – (Lesbian, Cape Coast)

"High level of insecurity will stop us from stepping out and carrying on with our daily jobs". – (Gay, Accra)

"I don't think it will affect me because I am discreet about my LGBT status – (Bisexual, Accra)

"I may be sacked from work because people are going to find out about me". – (Gay, Cape Coast)

"I may not get job after school because of my status as an intersex person". – (Intersex, Accra)

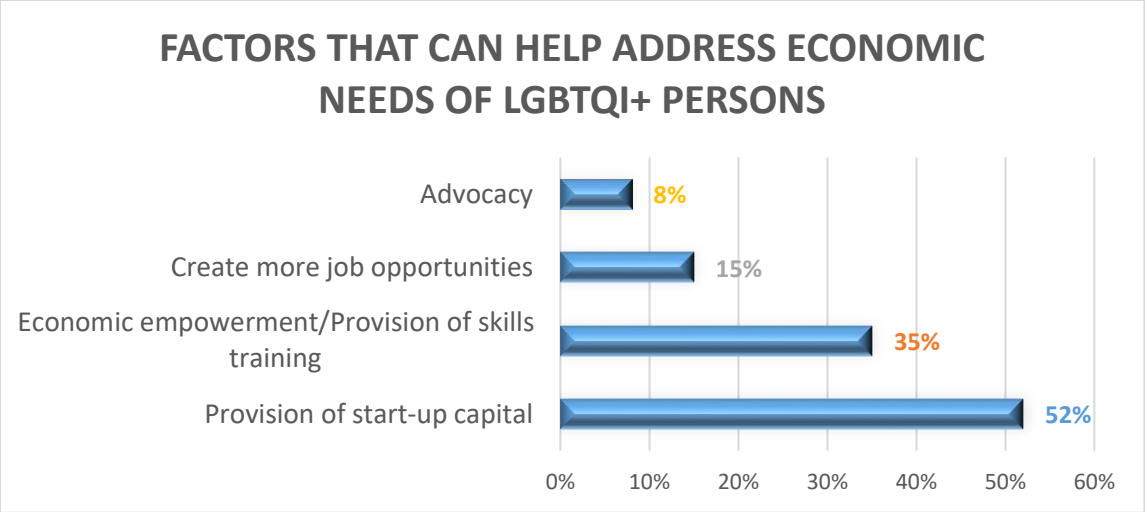
"I will just lose my job and be left with nothing, I will be laid off work, I will lose my job, my family and mental health. I will lose loved ones including myself and even blackmailed and this can affect the nature of my work". – (Lesbian, Takoradi)

"I won't be patronized and there won't be a safe space for the LGBTQ community. I won't get a job". - (Gay, Accra)

"It will create unnecessary fear and panic. It will criminalise my work. Intensify homophobia attacks towards me". – (Transwoman, Accra)

They were asked to come up with some ideas for how to help meet the social and economic needs of LGBTQI+ people in Ghana. The data below shows that most of the respondents mentioned the provision of start-up capital, followed by economic empowerment or skills training, and advocacy was the least mentioned, as presented in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Factors that can help address the economic needs of LGBTQI+ persons



Source: Data from Fieldwork, 2023

SECTION FOUR: INSIGHTS FROM THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The study sought to achieve three main objectives. The first was to generate high-quality data on the economic needs, status, and interests of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana. This objective was derived by assessing the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana, including their employment history, preferred vocation, challenges in their chosen vocation, etc.

The second objective was to document appropriate socio-economic interventions for LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana. To achieve this objective, respondents were asked to determine the kind of job they would like to be engaged in, the skills that are required to do that, etc.

The third objective was to document facilitators and barriers to socio-economic programs for LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana. This was achieved by analysing the current working conditions of LGBTQI+ persons as well as the challenges they face in their work.

4.1 Economic needs, status, and interest of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana

One of the major development issues in Ghana is unemployment. The Ghana Living Standard Survey Six (GLSS6), undertaken by the Ghana Statistical Service in 2012/13, pegged the unemployment rate at 5.2% for Ghanaians aged 15 years and older[8]. The study showed that 29.9% (130) of the LGBTQI+ persons interviewed were unemployed and of this number, 35.2% (45) of them said they had never worked before. Majority of the respondents who indicated that they have worked before said they left their previous jobs mainly because of low wages.

The study established that LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana faced several challenges in the labour market. Some of which are low pay or salary, poor working conditions, stigma, and discrimination based on sexual orientation, harassment, abuse, etc. All the above stated reasons explain why LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana do not have many job opportunities. This was confirmed in the FGDs conducted where one of the participants said *"An effeminate* LGBTQI+ *person may be disqualified for a job because of how they walk and behave. Such persons may be called all kinds of names. Even when a* LGBTQI+ *person gets a job, their colleagues may bully them because of who they are. People discriminate and can sometimes harass you for no reason" – (FGD, Accra).* The study also revealed that 70.3% of the respondents believe that there is high unemployment rate among LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana.

Furthermore, 48.5% (210) of LGBTQI+ persons are engaged in the informal establishment with formal establishments accounting for 21.6% (94) of the respondents. This confirms a report by FES Ghana (2011) which reported that 80% of the Ghanaian workforce is employed in informal establishments[9]. Informal establishments are largely self-employed persons such as petty traders, artistry, farmers, craft workers, food vendors etc. The informal sector is mostly characterized by underemployment, bad working conditions, uncertain work relationships and low wages and most people in this sector are living with high-income insecurity[10]. All these challenges apply to people in the informal sector irrespective of the person's SOGIESC status. From the study, LGBTQI+ persons in the informal sector face several challenges in

[8] Ghana living standards survey round 6 (GLSS 6), Ghana Statistical Service (2014)

[9] Https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10496.pdf

[10] Https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10496.pdf

addition to those established in the report by FES Ghana (2011). This highlights the several challenges LGBTQI+ persons face in the labour market, and this limits the number of opportunities available to them.

The study went on to establish the kind of work LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana are interested in. The study revealed that the majority of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana would prefer to work in the informal sector. The data gathered shows that 78.2% (340) of respondents indicated that they preferred to be self-employed. This was confirmed in the FGDs conducted where participants were asked to mention the kind of work, they would normally find LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana engaged in and most of them mentioned artistry, catering, petty trading, dressmaking etc.

4.2 Facilitators for socio-economic programs for LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana

Willingness of LGBTQI+ *persons in Ghana to be self-employed*

The data gathered indicates that 78.2% of the LGBTQI+ persons would like to be self-employed. Given this, it will be easier to put strategies in place to support them in their chosen enterprises. The study shows that the LGBTQI+ persons who were interviewed had their preferred choice of enterprise activity they wanted to be engaged in. This makes it easier to develop training tailored towards the needs of these persons.

4.3 Barriers to developing socio-economic programs for LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana

Lack of Capital or Funds

The unavailability of credit facilities with low interest rates makes it difficult to support these people in their chosen careers. Also, the demand for some collateral before these loans are granted makes it difficult for LGBTQI+ persons to access them.

Stigma and discrimination

Stigma and discrimination pose challenges to LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana. The study revealed a high level of stigma and discrimination in the workplace, which poses a serious challenge for LGBTQI+ persons in the labour market. More advocacy is required to educate people to desist from this practice.

Low self-esteem by some* LGBTQI+ *persons

The study recorded some level of low self-esteem among LGBTQI+ persons. This sometimes affects the implementation of interventions as more education and psycho-social support are required to support them to build their self-esteem.

Unfavourable Environment

A large section of Ghanaian society has still not accepted the lifestyle of LGBTQI+ persons. This makes it difficult to roll out interventions to support their socio-economic needs. The study revealed high levels of stigma, discrimination, abuse, and harassment of LGBTQI+ persons in the workplace. There is the need to intensify sensitization during advocacy work to improve inclusivity in all regards.

SECTION FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Conclusion

Generally, LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana face all kinds of harassment, abuse, low remuneration, stigma, discrimination, etc., as established in this study, and this limits their level of opportunities in the labour market. The data gathered revealed that 70.3% of the respondents believed that the unemployment rate is high among LGBTQI+ persons and that the few who are fortunate to get employment experience stigma and discrimination, and in some cases are paid less. Job losses also occur more often among these persons. Informal establishments emerged as the main form of livelihood for LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana, as the study recorded 78.2% of the respondents indicating that they prefer to be self-employed.

The findings of the study also highlighted how self-employed LGBTQI+ persons make a living, which could help plan social and economic programmes for the LGBTQI+ community in Ghana. Challenges associated with this sector, such as a lack of capital, a high level of job insecurity, a lack of collateral, etc., were also established, which could aid in planning interventions for LGBTQI+ persons.

The proposed Anti- LGBTQI+ Bill was seen as a major threat to the LGBTQI+ community in Ghana. This bill, when passed, will further increase the risk for these persons in the labour market. Some key facilitators for socio-economic programmes for LGBTQI+ persons were also established by the study, such as the willingness of LGBTQI+ persons to be self-employed and come up with their preferred livelihood sources. Barriers to the development of socio-economic programmes for LGBTQI+ persons include but are not limited to, a lack of capital, stigma and discrimination, an unfavourable environment, and low self-esteem.

5.2 Recommendation

To the State

1. Create an enabling and inclusive environment to influence the thriving of LGBTQI+ persons through advocacy and enactment of favourable laws.
2. Fulfil obligations to include LGBTQI+ persons in developing SDG policies.

Donors/Development Partners

1. Increase financial and technical assistance to LGBTQI+-led organizations whose work is focused on economic empowerment and vocational skills development.
2. Provide start-up capital to LGBTQI+ persons who can establish an income-generating activity (IGA)
3. Empower LGBTQI+ organizations by providing resources to fund activities and remunerate volunteers and staff.

Implementing Partners

1. Need to design well-tailored interventions to address the socio-economic needs of LGBTQI+ persons in Ghana.
2. Provide logistical support, capacity building, and mentoring and coaching to assist those who want to establish their own income-generating activity.
3. Intensify advocacy against social exclusion in all forms in Ghana.