

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



**PROMOTING REGULAR LABOUR MIGRATION IN GHANA: A CASE OF THE
GHANA-AN-EUROPEAN CENTRE**

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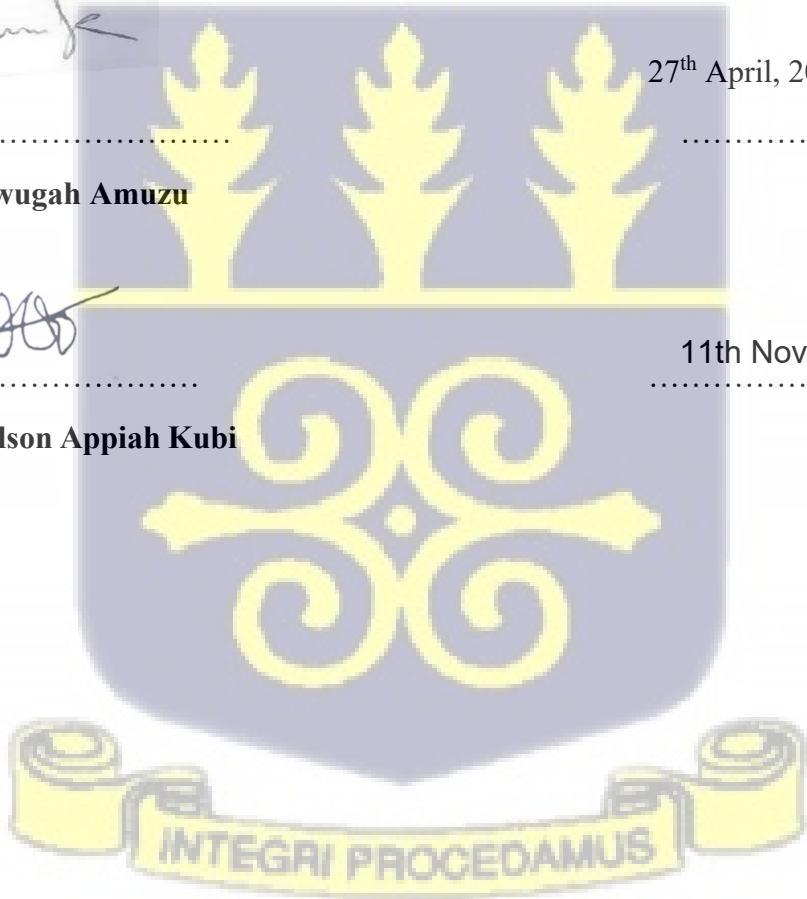


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DECLARATION

I, Frederick Amewugah Amuzu, hereby declare that, apart from the references to work of other people, which have been acknowledged duly, this thesis is a product of an independent work I conducted at the Centre for Migration Studies, university of Ghana, Legon. The work was supervised by Dr. Johnson Wilson Appiah Kubi. On this note, I declare that this thesis has not been presented to any other institution, either in part or whole, for academic award.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the Greater Glory of God through whose abundant blessings, mercy and love has brought me this far. I also dedicate it to my Family, especially my mother, Mrs. Mary Yankson, and My wife and Children, Mrs. Diana Gyamerah Amuzu, Jason Amuzu, Prince-Euriel Amuzu, Zendaya Amuzu and Angiebelle Amuzu, for their support and encouragement. Not forgetting all my friends who encouraged me to pursue this course.

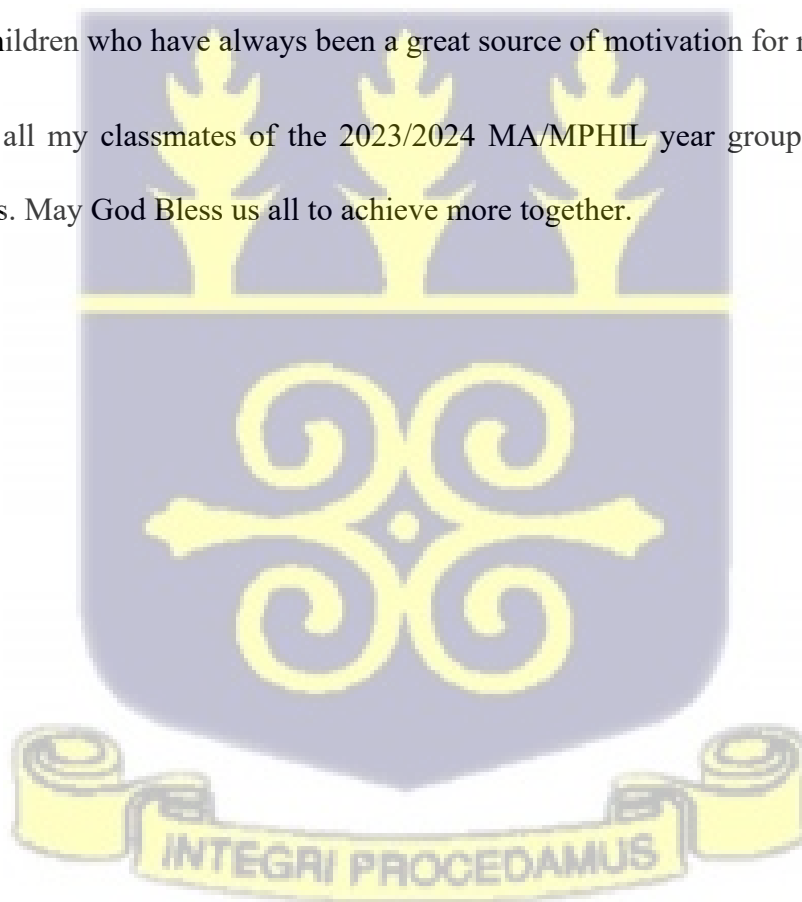


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Finally, I thank all my classmates of the 2023/2024 MA/MPHIL year group at the Centre for migration studies. May God Bless us all to achieve more together.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHTU	Anti Human Trafficking Unit
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GEC	Ghanaian-European Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LD	Labour Department
MELR	Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
MEP	Migration and Employment Promotion
NELM	New Economics of Labour Migration
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEA	Private Employment Agency
PEC	Public Employment Centre
PSED	Programme for Sustainable Economic Development



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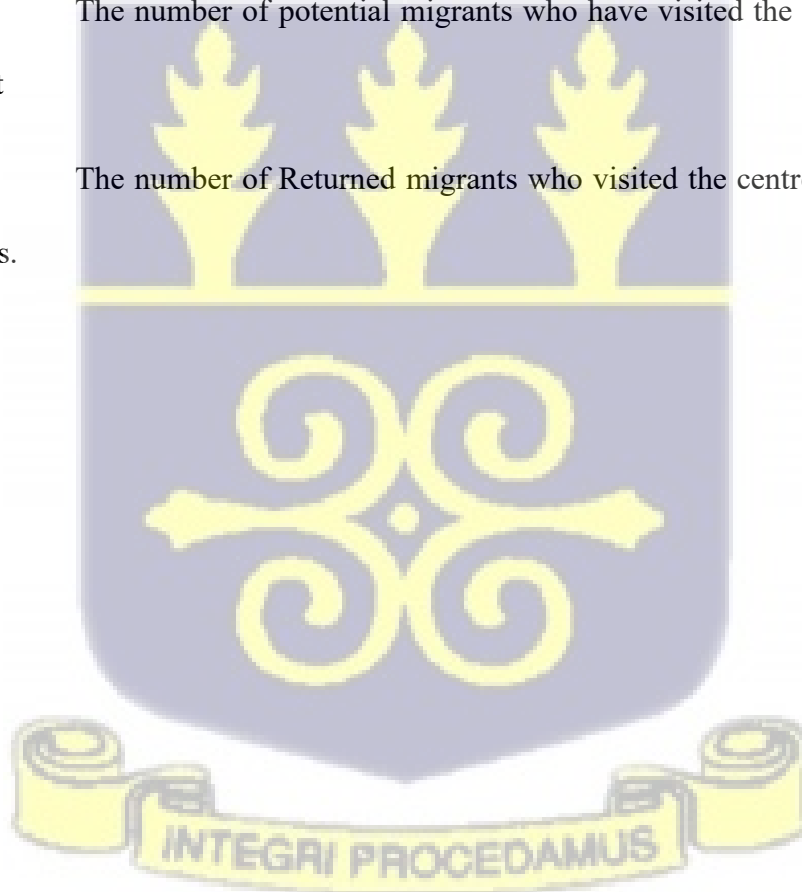
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ABSTRACT

Labour migration has been a topical issue in Ghana just as in many parts of the world. Considering the impact of labour migration on the lives of the migrants and their families as well as the community and the state, it has become very necessary that the state put out measures to promote safe and regular migration.

This study sought to identify the contribution of the Ghanaian-European Centre in the promotion of regular labour migration in Ghana. Generally, the research sought to study the contribution of the Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana. Qualitative approach was used in this study. Three sets of respondents were interviewed. These respondents included employees of the Ghanaian-European Centre, individual beneficiaries of the services of the Ghanaian-European Centre and Senior Officers of the Labour Department. The Labour Department is a major beneficiary of the GEC- Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations partnership.

Through thematic analysis, the qualitative data generated was analyzed. The findings from the study indicated that the GEC is involved in the provision of a comprehensive services which affects every aspect of the migration process (i.e. pre-departure, departure, settlement at destination and return and reintegration). It was found out that the Centre provides person centred pre departure counselling for prospective labour migrant, public awareness creation and sensitization on regular migration pathways, skills training and capacity building for returned migrants and collaborating institutions. All these combine to address key challenges in the labour migration management landscape in Ghana. Despite all the laudable efforts of the Centre to promoting regular labour migration, the Centre faces some pressing challenges which mitigate against its smooth and

effective operations. This include bureaucratic bottlenecks, skills mismatch among others. The study concluded that the GEC continues to shape migration and the national migration discourse by bringing together all stakeholders, engaging them on key policy issues and building their capacities to use modern trends to handle migration related concerns. The study made several recommendations such as the GEC advocating for the establishment of work Programme that will recognize the skills set and experiences of Ghanaian Labour migrants as well as ensuring the protection of Ghanaian migrants at the European Destinations.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

International labour migration is a critical driver of economic and social transformation globally. Recent estimates indicate that 281 million people, representing 3.6% of the global population, resided outside their countries of origin in 2020, a figure that has steadily risen over the last three decades (IOM, 2021; UN DESA, 2022). Migration fosters economic growth, alleviates labour shortages, and facilitates the exchange of ideas and skills across borders (OECD, 2023). Remittances from migrants reached \$626 billion in low- and middle-income countries in 2022, surpassing foreign direct investments and providing critical financial support for healthcare, education, and entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2022). However, irregular migration, characterized by unsafe and unregulated movements, continues to jeopardize migrant safety and diminish the socio-economic benefits of migration (ILO, 2023).

Africa plays a significant role in global migration flows, with an estimated 40 million international migrants originating from the continent (World Migration Report, 2022). Migration within Africa accounts for approximately 80% of these movements, driven by economic disparities, political instability, and climate variability (African Union, 2021; Adepoju, 2022). For example, droughts in the Sahel region have exacerbated internal and cross-border migration trends (IPCC, 2023). Despite the predominance of intra-regional migration, external migration to Europe, North America, and the Gulf states has increased significantly, influenced by labour shortages in destination countries and limited opportunities in origin countries (IOM, 2023). Policies such as the African Union's Migration Policy Framework for Africa emphasize regular migration pathways to harness migration's developmental potential and reduce vulnerabilities associated with irregular migration (African Union, 2021).

West Africa illustrates migration's multifaceted role in development, with Ghana serving as a prominent example. Ghana has historically attracted migrants from neighboring countries like Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, drawn by opportunities in agriculture, mining, and trade (Anarfi et al, 2021). Over the last two decades, Ghana has also emerged as a significant migrant-sending country. Data from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) shows that 1.5 million Ghanaians currently reside abroad, with remittances contributing \$4.7 billion to Ghana's GDP in 2022 (Bank of Ghana, 2023). Remittances have improved household incomes and supported national economic stability, although challenges such as brain drain in critical sectors remain (Mensah & Adjei, 2022). For instance, over 6,500 Ghanaian nurses are currently employed in the United Kingdom, addressing labour shortages there but straining Ghana's healthcare system (UK Home Office, 2023).

The European Union (EU) remains a preferred destination for many Ghanaian migrants. The EU's demand for skilled labour has created opportunities for healthcare workers, agricultural labourers, and domestic service providers from Ghana (European Commission, 2023). Programs such as the EU-Ghana Migration Compact have facilitated skills training and legal migration pathways while addressing irregular migration risks (ILO, 2023). However, barriers such as high application costs, inadequate dissemination of information, and stringent visa requirements limit access to these pathways (Asare, 2023). Furthermore, irregular migration persists as many Ghanaians resort to unsafe routes due to limited awareness of existing legal options (UNHCR, 2023).

According to Kandilige et al (2023), the landscape of the migration policies of Ghana has linkages with regional AU/ECOWAS and European (EU) framework. The ECOWAS free movement protocol aligns with the AU free labour mobility framework. Therefore, as a member of the AU and ECOWAS, Ghana's migration policies align and brings to effect the AU/ECOWAS led framework which protects the rights of migrants and promotes the developmental linkages of

migration and its governance. Thus, Ghana perceives migration as potential resource for development, despite its existential challenges such as irregular migration and policy implementation bottlenecks.

Moreso, the EU and some European countries have collaborated with and supported Ghana in managing migration and its related issues. This adds to shaping the migration governance in Ghana (Kandilige et al, 2023). For instance, in November 2023, the EU, through its 'Building Partnership Programme' supported Ghana to launch the National Coordinating Mechanism on Migration to implement the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration (United Nation in Ghana, 2023). The strategies of the EU have largely been centered on Capacity Building, Return and Reintegration, governance mechanisms and externalizing migration management. These strategies basically aim at preventing irregular migration by reducing onward flows to Europe. While the externalization strategy by the EU protects and prioritizes EU interest, For Ghana, this represents an external resource for migration governance, development of data systems, policy frameworks among others.

As an offshoot of EU and Ghana partnership, the Ghanaian-European Centre for Jobs, Migration, and Development was established in Accra to address pertinent issues of labour migration in Ghana. The center collaborates with European and Ghanaian institutions to promote skills development, provide job placement opportunities, and educate Ghanaian youth about migration-related challenges (Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, 2023). The center also aims to reduce irregular migration and enhance the developmental benefits of labour migration for Ghana. However, studies assessing its effectiveness remain scarce. Existing literature has predominantly focused on migration trends and remittance patterns, neglecting institutional interventions' impact on migration governance (Quartey et al., 2021; Agyei et al., 2022).

This study examines the role of the Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting regular labour migration and addresses the gaps in existing literature by evaluating its strategies and effectiveness. It also aims to provide actionable recommendations to improve the center's operations and contribute to migration policy discourse in Ghana.

1.2 Problem Statement

Over the past decade, Ghana has made commendable progress in managing migration to harness its developmental potential. Labour migration remains integral to Ghana's socioeconomic fabric, generating employment and contributing to national growth through remittances. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2023), remittances to Ghana exceeded US\$4.7 billion in 2022, representing roughly 5 percent of GDP, thereby sustaining household livelihoods and reducing poverty. Despite these gains, the institutional frameworks governing regular labour migration face persistent structural and operational challenges.

Existing migration governance in Ghana is characterized by weak inter-agency coordination, inadequate bilateral labour agreements, and limited institutional capacity to monitor and regulate labour recruitment practices (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021; IOM, 2020). The Labour Department within the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR), which is responsible for overseeing international recruitment, continues to face severe logistical and technical constraints (Korletey et al., 2010). Consequently, the state struggles to effectively monitor private employment agencies and unlicensed intermediaries who facilitate overseas job placements. These gaps have allowed the proliferation of illegal recruitment practices and increased the vulnerability of Ghanaian migrant workers to exploitation, human trafficking, and unsafe working conditions abroad (United States Department of State, 2024).

Although Ghana adopted the National Migration Policy (2016) and a Labour Migration Policy (2020) to provide strategic direction for migration management, policy implementation remains fragmented. Coordination among key ministries—such as the MELR, Ministry of the Interior, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration—has been inconsistent, often due to overlapping mandates, limited resources, and weak accountability mechanisms (de Haas, 2020; Ghana Statistical Service [GSS] & IOM, 2023). Moreover, institutional responses to irregular migration and reintegration have been reactive rather than preventive, lacking sustainable funding and systematic evaluation.

Empirical evidence highlights these institutional shortcomings. For instance, while more than 77,000 Ghanaian emigrants reside legally in OECD countries, an estimated 15–20 percent of total emigrants migrate through irregular channels (World Bank, 2023). These migrants are often exposed to labour exploitation, forced labour, and abuse in destination countries (ILO, 2022). In 2023 alone, over 3,000 Ghanaian migrants were assisted by IOM to return voluntarily from Libya, Niger, and other North African transit points (IOM Ghana, 2023). This underscores the magnitude of irregular migration and the urgent need for effective, sustainable governance structures that promote regular migration pathways.

Ghana's bilateral cooperation on labour migration remains limited despite efforts to diversify opportunities abroad. Although the country has concluded bilateral agreements with nations such as Qatar, Barbados, and Germany, implementation is uneven, and the benefits have not been equitably distributed (African Union, 2023; ICMPD, 2024). Furthermore, migration institutions often depend heavily on donor funding—particularly from the European Union and the German

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)—raising concerns about institutional sustainability and ownership once external funding cycles end.

In this context, specialized institutions such as the Ghanaian–European Centre have emerged as pivotal actors. The Centre provides pre-departure orientation, job-matching services, skills development, and reintegration support for returnees. Studies by Ofori-Atta (2017) and Atta (2018) show that these initiatives enhance awareness of regular migration channels and reduce the risk of irregular migration. However, existing research has not critically examined the scalability, institutional sustainability, or long-term effectiveness of such interventions amid Ghana’s evolving economic and political landscape.

While scholarship has extensively addressed remittances, diaspora engagement, and regional integration, there is limited empirical attention to institutional performance and coordination in promoting regular migration. The literature lacks comprehensive evaluation of how Ghana’s migration governance architecture—particularly multi-stakeholder institutions like the GGC—functions to ensure regular, safe, and sustainable labour mobility. This gap constrains evidence-based policymaking and undermines Ghana’s ability to meet its obligations under international migration frameworks such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the ECOWAS Labour Migration Strategy.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill these empirical and institutional gaps by critically examining the role and effectiveness of the Ghanaian–European Centre in promoting regular migration. Specifically, it explores how institutional coordination, resource sustainability, and service delivery mechanisms influence the Centre’s capacity to promote safe, legal migration and mitigate irregular departures. The findings are expected to contribute to the discourse on migration

governance reform in Ghana, offering actionable policy recommendations to strengthen institutional frameworks, enhance inter-agency collaboration, and align Ghana's migration management systems with global best practices.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

To assess the contribution of Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To identify how the various services of the Ghanaian-European Centre come together to promoting regular labour migration in Ghana.
- ii. To identify how the Ghanaian-European Centre is using collaboration and partnership, particularly, with the Labour Department in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana.
- iii. To ascertain the challenges and identify areas for improvement in the future direction of the Centre in promoting regular labour migration.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the various services, the Ghanaian-European Centre offers in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana?
- ii. What are the collaborative efforts, the Ghanaian-European Centre adopts to achieving its objectives?
- iii. What are the challenges and identify areas for improvement in the future direction of the Centre in promoting regular labour migration?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of the Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting legal labour migration and mitigating irregular migration, with a focus on Ghana's labour migration landscape. Therefore, the findings will inform policymakers about the challenges and gaps in existing migration policies, particularly in relation to managing both legal and irregular migration. By providing evidence-based recommendations, this research aims to contribute to the development of more coherent and effective migration policies that can enhance socio-economic outcomes, including poverty reduction and regional integration, while ensuring that migration processes are safe and orderly.

For government agencies such as the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, the Ghana Immigration Service, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this study will provide valuable information to strengthen institutional capacity and improve inter-agency collaboration. The research will highlight specific institutional gaps, offering practical recommendations to enhance migration management. This, in turn, will allow these agencies to better regulate migration flows, improve the implementation of international agreements, and ensure that migration contributes more effectively to national development goals. The findings will also assist in optimizing the use of remittances to boost household welfare.

International organizations, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), will benefit from this research by gaining a better understanding of the institutional challenges and policy gaps that affect labour migration in Ghana. The study's insights will contribute to global migration frameworks and inform strategies to address irregular migration, human trafficking, and exploitation. Additionally, the study will provide researchers with a comprehensive framework to further explore labour migration

dynamics in Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa, expanding the literature on migration governance and its impact on development.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is structured to provide an analysis of the contribution of the Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting regular labour migration from Ghana to European and GCC countries. The first chapter introduces the study, outlining the background, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, and significance. It provides a foundational understanding of the topic and sets the stage for the research by establishing the context in which labour migration occurs. The second chapter presents a detailed review of existing literature on international labour migration, focusing on global, regional, and national trends. This chapter reviews key studies, theories, and frameworks that have shaped the understanding of labour migration, with an emphasis on institutional effectiveness and the role of policy in promoting legal migration channels. Gaps in the literature are also identified to justify the need for the current study.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology, detailing the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. It explains the selection of the study area, the sample size, and the sampling procedure, as well as the instruments used to collect both primary and secondary data. This chapter also highlights the limitations of the study and defines key terminologies used.

In chapter four, the findings from the fieldwork are presented and analyzed. This chapter discusses the responses from policymakers, migration experts, and migrants, and evaluates the contributions and effectiveness of the Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting regular labour migration. It also explores the challenges and successes in managing labour migration and the role of the institutions in mitigating irregular migration. Chapter five concludes the study by summarizing the key

findings and offering recommendations for policymakers, governments, and international organizations. This chapter provides a synthesis of the research and explores the implications for future research and practice in the area of labour migration.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews various theories on labour migration, and presents a historic overview and the current trends and patterns of migration in Ghana. It further highlights some of the challenges of promoting regular labour migration in Ghana as it also looks at some of the developmental benefits of labour migration in Ghana. another portion is dedicated to the national and international policy interventions to promoting regular labour migration before the conclusion.

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

Migration is usually not a simplistic individual action. It is an interplay of multiplicity of actions that culminate into a person leaving their usual residence to another, either temporary or permanently. Migration is often a collective action which arises as a result of social, economic and political changes that affect individuals and the society (de Haas et al, 2020). The ordinary reason for migration is associated to the geographical disparities in income, employment and general opportunities across the globe. But the twist of the matter is that improvement in people's standard of living, economic development, increased education, skills, social capital and financial resources increases people's aspiration and capacity to migrate (de Haas, 2014). This explains why the poor countries have the lowest level of long distance mobility, and the advanced countries on the other hand have a higher rate of long distance (international and internal) migration. People from the poor or developing countries do not usually have the financial resources to fund long distance movements. With that said, migration continues to be an agent of social transformation for the

individual migrants, the families they leave behind, and the wider community (Ajero and Onokala, 2013)

The late nineteenth century witnessed various social science scholars devising theories to explain the migration phenomenon. They worked to understand the causes and the nature of the migration process. But there were glaring disparities in their assumptions, levels of analysis and the thematic focus regarding binaries such as international or internal migration, destination or origin etc. (de Haas et al, 2020). However, migration can be explained as multidimensional social process which affects many facets of the society. Research on migration must be interdisciplinary and should take into consideration the economy, politics, geography, psychology, demography among others (see Brettell and Hollifield, 2014).

That notwithstanding, the most profound contribution in the period was the work of the nineteenth century geographer, Ravenstein. In his two studies (1885; 1889), he formulated what he described as the laws of migration. In that, he believed migration and the economy were inseparable. Ravenstein asserted that migration is a consequence of economic development. Therefore, people migrated for economic reasons. While issues of taxation, oppressive laws, unwelcoming social environments and even compulsion have all resulted in migration, none can be compared to the inherent desire for men to materially better themselves (Ravenstein, 1888/1889). Lewis (1954) goes on to explain that in a dual economy unlimited supply of labour is very influential to achieving economic development. Outmigration is the surest way of getting rid of surplus labour. Therefore, labour migration is a precondition to assuring economic development. For this to be possible, however, the decision to migrate is determined by myriads of favourable and unfavourable factors in the country of origin and destination countries as well as other intervening factors. These intervening factors include immigration laws, distance, barriers and even personal factors of the

prospective migrants (Lee, 1966). This explains the reasons behind the migration decisions of people. Ravenstein and Lee's work provide basic insight to migration which still remains very valid till now. Lee's work grew to be known as the Push-Pull model of Migration.

Owing to the sharp differences among scholars, migration theories are broadly classified into two main paradigms, i.e. The Functionalist and the Historical-structural theories. The functionalist theories usually see migration from a positive perspective as a means of increasing productivity contributing to greater equality among people and societies. The historical structural theories on the contrary views migration as an exploitative mechanism. This theory is rooted in neo-Marxist ideology which considers social, political and economic arrangements as a way of constraining the behaviours of people which does not lead to equilibrium. But it fosters inequalities among people in society (Arango, 2000).

The migration decision making, agency, trend and the entire nature of migration in Ghana can be described by either the functionalist or historical-structural theories.

2.1.1 Neo-classical migration theory

As part of the functionalist theory, the Neo-classical theory is deeply grounded in the modernization theory (Rostow, 1960). This theory considers migration as part of the development process (Todaro, 1996). It posits that migration is compelled by disparities in wages and employment opportunities between regions or countries. It is founded on the assumption that people are rational decision makers. Therefore, people make rational decisions to maximize their income by migrating from areas with lower wages and fewer job opportunities to areas with better wages and employment prospects. From the micro perspective, people move from the rural areas

which are blessed with abundant and underutilized labour to the industrialized urban destinations. After a thorough cost benefit analysis, the migrant does not only decide to migrate but decides on where to migrate as well (Borjas, 1989;1990). This theory stresses that migration is often an individual decision, and it is based on the economic incentives available in different locations. The individual migrant is therefore the agency of migration. It was further enhanced to explain international labour migration from developing countries to the advanced countries (Todaro and Maruszko, 1987).

At the macro level, this theory assumes that labour will be scarce at the destination countries as the under-utilized abundant labour from the origin migrates to the destination to augment the already existing factors of production at the destination. Capital, on the other hand, travels the opposite direction in search of cheap labour which will eventually lead to an equilibrium in wage (Harris, and Todaro, 1979; Ranis and Fei 1961; Schiff, 1994). To the proponents of this theory, migration will continue to perpetuate as long as there still exist differences in income at different places (Todaro, 1969).

This model was selected for the study because it explains the structural economic forces that drive both legal and irregular labor migration from Ghana. By applying the neo-classical model, the study can effectively assess how economic factors such as income disparities and employment opportunities shape migration patterns, thereby offering critical insights into the effectiveness of current institutional frameworks and policies in managing labor migration in Ghana.

2.1.2 The Push-Pull Model

The push-pull model is one of the most popular analytical frameworks of migration. This model assumes that economic, environmental and demographic factors influences people's migration decisions. These factors push people from an origin country or pull them to a destination country. In this instance, the push factors may include lack of economic opportunities, growth of the population, political instability at the origin place. While the pull factors at the place of destination would include better economic opportunities, stable political environment, demand for labour among others (Passaris, 1989).

Zimmermann and Bauer (1998), observe that, the push-pull model presents an attractive explanation to migration decisions because it includes all the major factors which affect migration decisions. However, this assertion was sharply contended by Skeldon (1990), who describes the Push-Pull as very inadequate, as there are other reasons for migration which are not captured by the model. He further opines that the model does not explain how the various factors come together to cause people to migrate.

The push-pull model does not explain the reasons why some people do not migrate even though unfavourable conditions prevail in the society. The question of why people return to the origin place even though the unfavourable conditions that pushed them out could still exist is also not answered by the Push-Pull model. People have varied perceptions and have different ways of reacting to issues. What causes someone to move might not compel the other to do same. There are many reasons why people to remain in the origin areas (Lee, 1966).

It is also true that other factors such as population growth, scarcity of resources and environmental issues do not always result in population movement. It actually also helps to make people more

innovative which in turn could increase productivity (Boserup, 1965). For instance, the introduction of fertilizers, mechanized irrigation systems in the face of land scarcity have boosted agricultural production.

Scarcity can prevent migration as people do not have the resources to migrate (Henry et al, 2004). But in Ghana, that could be true for only those who are involuntarily immobile. They have no option than to stay and suffer as migration usually requires some level of capital or investment. Cheswick (2000) realized that people's investment in migration is same as they would invest in Education. Especially if they know the benefit to be gained from migration is worth the investment. The expected return on such migratory investment which is worthy to the potential migrant explains why people go to every extent including irregular means to migrate (Sjaastad, 1962). It also explains why they choose certain destinations.

This model was selected for the study because it highlights the economic rationale behind migration, including the expected returns on migratory investments (Sjaastad 1962; Cheswick, 2000). The model also underscores the need to consider additional factors—such as social, cultural, and resource-based constraints—that might inhibit migration for certain groups as well as encourage irregular migration.

2.1.3 New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM)

The New Economics of Labour Migration evolved as an opposition to the Neo-Classical theory. Stark (1978;1991) contends that during the processes leading to migration in developing countries, the decision to migrate is not reserved to the individual migrating alone. But members of the family or the household are involved in the decision making process. Contrary to the Neoclassical theory,

NELM considers other reasons aside income maximization as the reason that influence people's migration decision.

To start with, the NELM perceives migration as a household or family risk-sharing strategy where a family or household permits that one or some members migrate, particularly not to earn higher wages, but as an approach to diversify household income source and to minimize income risk on the family (Stark and Levhari, 1982). Remittances from the migrant family members become income insurance for the families and households.

Secondly, the NELM considers migration as a strategy of securing resources for family investment into economic activities such as family farm, shop, or any family business. In developing countries, the family is a source of capital and an insurance against risk (Taylor 1999; Lucas and Stark 1985). Remittances from migrant family members help to generate the needed capital and insurance to avert economic risks or hardships that could arise.

Thirdly, the crucial motivation for migration, according to the NELM theory, in developing countries is relative deprivation rather than absolute poverty. People migrate in order to improve upon their economic condition as opposed to them being absolutely poor. Absolute poor people may not be able to afford the cost involved in long distance migration (de Haas et al., 2020). Community income inequality is another motivation for migration under this theory. The feeling of being worse off than other community people makes people to migrate. So that they can also attain an appreciable socioeconomic status (Czaika and de Haas, 2012). This theory has close similarity with the livelihood approach that evolved in the late 1970s among sociologists and anthropologists who conducted research in developing countries. They observed that the poor are

not passive victims of capitalist forces but rather strive to improve their livelihood (Lieten and Nieuwenhuys, 1989). Migration, thus becomes a strategy for them to improve their livelihood.

In Ghana, the decision to migrate may not be the prerogative of an individual. Families sometimes strategize on who to go and even the destination. The family sometimes raises the needed resources for the travel. The migrant remits home to support family members in terms of education, health, and even marriages and funerals (Awumbila, 2019).

Therefore, the GEC, as an institution established to promote regular labour migration, is very important for it to understand and appreciate the socio-cultural, political and economic dynamics of the country. This invariably shape the migration aspirations of the people as well as how the benefits of migration is perceived by the individuals and the society in general. The migration phenomenon must be perceived wholistically.

2.1.4 Theoretical Synthesis and Relevance to the Study

The three theoretical perspectives discussed above—the Neo-classical Migration Theory, the Push–Pull Model, and the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM)—collectively offer complementary and contrasting explanations for the determinants, processes, and implications of labour migration. Synthesizing these theories provides a more holistic understanding of the structural and individual factors shaping migration dynamics, particularly in developing contexts such as Ghana. Each theory captures essential dimensions of migration behaviour, from economic rationality to household decision-making, and together they illuminate the multi-layered nature of regular and irregular labour migration within Ghana's socio-economic and institutional context.

The Neo-classical Migration Theory situates migration within the broader framework of labour market equilibrium and economic development. From this standpoint, migration decisions are

primarily driven by wage differentials and disparities in employment opportunities between origin and destination regions (Harris & Todaro, 1979; Todaro, 1969). The theory assumes that individuals are rational actors who migrate to maximize their income, and that, over time, labour movements help to balance global economic inequalities. In the context of Ghana, this theory explains the strong economic motivations underlying both internal and international labour migration. Persistent unemployment, underemployment, and income disparities between Ghana and industrialized nations create powerful incentives for migration. However, the Neo-classical model has been criticized for its overreliance on economic determinism and its neglect of non-economic variables such as social networks, household dynamics, and institutional constraints (de Haas et al, 2020). It also fails to adequately address the persistence of migration even when wage differentials narrow or the risks of migration increase. Nonetheless, its focus on structural economic imbalances provides a critical foundation for understanding the economic rationale behind both regular and irregular labour migration.

The Push–Pull Model extends the Neo-classical logic by emphasizing the interplay of multiple forces that either “push” individuals from their home countries or “pull” them toward specific destinations. Push factors such as unemployment, poverty, political instability, and environmental degradation interact with pull factors like higher wages, labour demand, and political stability in destination countries (Passaris, 1989; Lee, 1966). This framework offers a broader and more flexible explanation of migration decision-making by integrating social, political, and environmental considerations alongside economic ones. For Ghana, the Push–Pull Model effectively explains the continuous outflow of migrants, especially youth, toward countries such as Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, where perceived opportunities are greater. However, as Skeldon (1990) and Boserup (1965) have argued, the model tends to oversimplify migration by

treating these push and pull factors as static, without explaining the complex interactions between them or accounting for individual agency and social context. Despite these limitations, the model remains useful for identifying the range of factors that influence Ghanaian migration, including the structural constraints that make regular migration pathways more difficult to access.

The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) introduces a more sociologically grounded dimension by situating migration decisions within the collective strategies of households rather than the isolated choices of individuals (Stark & Levhari, 1982; Taylor, 1999). This perspective argues that migration is often a family-level response to market imperfections, such as the absence of credit, insurance, or labour markets in developing countries. In Ghana, where families frequently contribute resources to support a member's migration, the NELM framework provides an especially relevant explanation. Remittances, in turn, function as an informal insurance mechanism and a source of capital for investment in family enterprises, education, and social obligations (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Awumbila, 2019). The theory also underscores the role of relative deprivation and social comparison within communities as key motivators for migration (Czaika & de Haas, 2012). Nevertheless, while NELM captures the social embeddedness of migration decisions, it offers limited insight into the institutional and policy contexts that facilitate or restrict regular migration, which is a critical issue in Ghana's current migration governance landscape.

Synthesizing these theories reveals that no single framework sufficiently explains the complexity of labour migration in Ghana. The Neo-classical and Push-Pull theories are largely economic, emphasizing income disparities and structural imbalances, while NELM integrates social and household-level considerations. Taken together, these models underscore that migration is

simultaneously an individual, household, and systemic phenomenon—driven by economic incentives, reinforced by social structures, and shaped by institutional and policy environments. In the Ghanaian context, this multidimensional understanding is vital for analyzing why many people pursue migration even under restrictive regulatory frameworks and limited regular migration channels. The combined insights of these theories also explain the coexistence of both regular and irregular migration: while economic and opportunity-based factors propel individuals to move (as highlighted by Neo-classical and Push–Pull perspectives), household strategies and relative deprivation (as emphasized by NELM) sustain the aspiration to migrate despite institutional barriers.

For this study, which focuses on promoting regular migration in Ghana through the Ghanaian–European Centre, these theoretical perspectives are invaluable. The Neo-classical and Push–Pull frameworks help to contextualize the economic and structural conditions that make migration an attractive livelihood strategy. NELM, on the other hand, provides a micro-sociological lens for understanding how family and community dynamics influence the decision to migrate and the choice of migration channels. By combining these perspectives, the study adopts a comprehensive analytical framework that bridges the gap between individual motivations, household strategies, and institutional structures. This synthesis is particularly relevant in assessing how organizations such as the GEC can enhance the effectiveness of policy interventions, improve access to regular migration opportunities, and mitigate the risks associated with irregular migration.

In summary, the integration of these three theoretical approaches offers a balanced and contextually grounded foundation for this research. While the Neo-classical and Push–Pull models illuminate the macroeconomic and structural dimensions of migration, the NELM approach brings

in the meso-level and micro-level social realities that shape migration behaviour in Ghana. Their synthesis thus provides a multidimensional lens through which to examine the drivers, implications, and policy interventions surrounding regular labour migration, ensuring that the study's analysis remains both theoretically robust and empirically relevant.

2.2 Labour Migration in Pre-colonial and Post-Colonial Ghana

Movement of people is an age-old phenomenon in Ghana and in the west African sub region (Teye et al, 2015). But in recent years' population movement in the sub region has become focal in policy discussions on migration because of the high rate of labour migration (Olsen, 2011). West African countries are experiencing what is described as mixed migration where there is a cross-border movement of people including those who want to better their lives by seeking opportunities in different countries (Mixed Migration Centre, 2021). The various population movements are the responses to the economic, political and security situations in the continent recorded over time (Hence, 1970). Awumbila et al (2014), realized in his study that current mobility pattern in Ghana and many west African countries are rooted deeply in historical antecedents. Economic factors such as the search for arable lands and trade were driving mobility in the era before colonialism. However, the mobility in the pre-colonial era was a borderless movement where people and goods moved freely. There was no demarcation of national boundaries to distinguish one country from the other (Adepoju, 2003; Manuh, 2005). Colonialism, demarcation of national borders and the economic policies of the colonial government have greatly impacted on the pattern of migration within Ghana and outside of Ghana.

Millions of West Africans were forcibly migrated to North America, Europe and the Caribbean during the period of the transatlantic slave trade. The construction of roads and railway systems

by the colonial administrations foresaw the cross border movement of labour within the sub-region. Labour moved from the savannah regions down south to the countries like Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal and others where agriculture and the mining industries were booming. For instance, Plantations and mines were in Ghana and attracted labour from Burkina Faso, Mali and others (Anarfi and Kwankye, 2003). Despite the different phases of West African history, migration continues to take centre stage in terms of trend, pattern, volume and its effects on the African and the Ghanaian Society and economy (Adepoju, 2003).

2.3 Current Trend and Pattern of Labour Migration in Ghana

Ghana then was a net labour receiving country until the late 1970s and early 1980s where political, economic and environmental factors diverted the fortunes of the country. This period saw the exodus of many Ghanaian labourforce to nearby African countries like Nigeria, and others to Europe and North America. Adepoju (1989) claims that about 60% of the doctors trained in Ghana had migrated out of the country by the late 1980s. This trend has continued till date making Ghana one of the high labour emigrating countries in West Africa. Outside Africa, Europe is the most preferred destination for Ghanaian Labour migrants. Teye et al (2015) stresses that labour emigration from Ghana follows the north-south direction, and Ghana has been sending many highly skilled professionals such as doctors and nurses to Europe and North America since the 1980s. But it is also true that low and semi- skilled labour migrants from Ghana also end up in destinations either regularly or irregularly. Irregular migration from Ghana and other west African countries though not a new phenomenon it has received increasing media reportage and policy consideration. IOM (2020) data shows that there is quite a sizable proportion of west African irregular labour migrants who are received in Spain, Italy, Greece and Malta. They travel across the Sahara Desert and make it to Europe after crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

Ghanaian skilled males and professionals migrated to the middle east and the Gulf countries to work in the petrochemical industries. However, owing to the strict visa regimes of the popular European destination countries, recent data suggests that more unskilled females and males travel to the middle east and the gulf countries to work in the construction sector and as a domestic worker (Kandilige et al, 2020). In spite of the limited data on the trends and pattern of migration of these migrant domestic workers to the gulf countries and the middle east, The Ghana Immigration Service reports that there is a tremendous increase in the number of migrants to these destinations. The most preferred destinations include Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. According to Awumbila (2019), in 2015, about 1550 Ghanaians were recruited to work as domestic staff at the Gulf countries by Private Recruitment Agencies (PEAs). This further increased to 2372 in 2016, and between January to May 2017 it was already 1589. It is reported that the numbers could be higher due to the activities of the unlicensed PEAs who also recruit to same destinations. Females constitute the higher proportion of workers who are recruited to the middle east and the gulf countries as domestic workers (Labour Department 2017). IOM (2019) explains the increased number of female migrants to the gulf countries as being an increased demand for female domestic workers.

The increased feminization of migration in Ghana is reflecting in the global and west African pattern. Ghanaian females are migrating using regular and irregular means in search of better opportunities elsewhere (Awumbila, 2019). Many developing countries are also experiencing this situation where female migrants use regular and irregular means to travel to other countries where they perceive have better life and work opportunities (spencer, 2009; Xiang and Lindquist, 2014). Despite the sparsity of data, reports indicate that the percentage of female migrants from countries

across the west African sub region is around 46.7% (Bisong, 2019). This indicates an increase compared to 45.3 in 2010 and 46% in 2015 (Setrana and Kleist, 2022).

The migration industry has grown tremendously over the years. There are many players in the industry which go beyond just the national government because of the cross-border impact migration can bring. There is also a wide spread involvement and activities of illegitimate and unscrupulous actors which include traffickers and smugglers, fake employment agencies as well as corrupt public officials. Their activities coincide to further complicate the already complex migration phenomenon. The activities of the illegitimate actors continue to pose serious risk on the lives of the migrants. It raises issues of safety and security concerns to not only the migrants (especially the low skilled and irregular migrants) but the states in general.

The growing involvement of many illegitimate intermediaries has put the livelihood of many low-skilled irregular migrants in danger (Chan Unger, 2015; Agunias, 2013; Chrouchi, 2002). Sensational media reports have further heightened the tension between locals and the migrants at the destination. The already rancorous and abusive relationship is further escalated owing to media reportage on migration which portray migrants as the cause of crime, unemployment and diseases. Ghanaian emigrants (especially females and irregular migrants) suffer all manner of abuses such as rape, assault, discrimination, physical and emotional torture. As noted by Labadie-Jackson (2008) and Castles et al (2014), the increasing involvement of women and the security issues associated with smuggling, trafficking, abuses and exploitation of female migrants requires serious examination. The minister of employment and labour relations, in June 2017 put a temporary ban on the recruitment of domestic workers from Ghana to the Gulf States. But it has not entirely deterred people from migrating irregularly.

2.4 The framework for Labour Migration Governance in Ghana

In their introductory writing, Kandilige, Teye, Talleraas and Gospill (2003) assert that Ghana's migration framework has linkages with the migration framework of the AU, ECOWAS and the EU. The ECOWAS free movement protocol mirrors the AU free labour mobility framework. This seeks to ensure the protection of the rights of migrants and leverage on migration for development. On the other hand, the EU approach is an externalization strategy that prioritizes prevention of irregular migration to the EU. Thus, the EU has been involved in capacity building programmes in partner countries, border control and strengthening of migration governance processes. For instance, through the 'Building Partnership project', the EU supported Ghana in 2023 to launch the National Coordinating mechanism on migration to implement the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (United Nation in Ghana, 2023). It is in light of this that the GEC has been established in Ghana to further promote and encourage safe, regular and orderly migration. Migration has been a cross-cutting phenomenon which has a massive impact on the development of Ghana. To properly govern and maximize the developmental benefit of migration, the country adopted the National Migration Policy since 2016, the Labour Migration Policy, and recently, the Diaspora Engagement Policy.

In Ghana, there is no single lead agency overseeing the coordination of migration-related activities. Instead, various government ministries, departments, and agencies are involved in shaping policies that address different facets of migration. Key governmental actors in migration management include eight ministries—Interior, Foreign Affairs, Employment and Labour Relations, Trade and Industry, Tourism, Gender, Health, and Finance. Additionally, two offices under the presidency—Diaspora Affairs and the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre—contribute to migration governance. Three sub-ministerial bodies also play important roles: The National

Disaster Management Organization, the Ghana Immigration Service, and the Ghana Refugee Board. Other relevant institutions include the National Population Council, the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Statistical Service, and the Centre for Migration Studies. Furthermore, a range of non-governmental and non-state actors are actively involved in shaping migration governance across the country.

Political Parties, NGOs as well as civil Society Organizations were instrumental in shaping these policies and continue to play more important roles in the implementation of same policies. In Ghana, the day-to-day implementation of various migration related policies is not carried out solely by national bodies such as the Labour Department, it involves close collaborations with international organizations as well. International organizations such as the IOM, ILO, and other UN agencies—and more recently, GIZ—play an active role in migration governance in Ghana. GIZ has supported capacity building efforts for key government institutions responsible for implementing migration policies, including the Labour Department and the Ghana Immigration Service.

2.4.1 The National Migration Policy

The National Migration Policy, having been introduced in 2016, serves as the primary tool for harnessing migration to support national development while mitigating associated risks and costs. The policy highlights key issues related to migration in Ghana, including the proposal to establish a central body—the Ghana National Migration Commission—to coordinate the implementation of the policy and oversee all migration-related activities. However, for various reasons, this commission has yet to be established

2.4.2 The National Labour Migration Policy

The National Labour Migration Policy became valid and an operational policy by 2020. The policy seeks to improve the general management conditions and structures regarding labour migration in the country, and to leverage on it for the socioeconomic development of the country. It has four major policy objectives which include: (i) promotion of good governance of labour migration (ii) strengthening of systems for the protection and empowerment of labour migrants (iii) to enhance the approaches for maximizing the developmental impact of migration and (iv) to improve labour market information management systems.

2.4.3 The Diaspora Engagement Policy

In 2023, the Diaspora Engagement Policy was introduced and implemented as an active framework to connect and involve the Ghanaian diaspora community. This aims to leverage their expertise, financial resources, networks, and skills to support sustainable national development.

It is reported by the World Bank (2020) that the rate of remittances to the country's GDP was around 6%(\$4billion). This therefore means that the Diaspora can offer more to the country's development. By ensuring a conducive environment this policy aims to encourage diaspora investments, and use effectively using remittances to invest in entrepreneurial ventures and innovations in Ghana. The policy outlines legal guidelines to extend certain privileges and rights to Diaspora Ghanaians thereby fostering some sense of belonging to the country.

The coordination and implementation of the Diaspora Engagement Policy is principally done by the Diaspora Affairs Office at the Presidency. It is the central unit for diaspora engagement activities, and ensures that those activities align with the national development plan. Other

ministries and agencies are tasked to collaboratively work together to implement diaspora engagement initiatives.

2.5 Other Regulatory Frameworks

In addition to the earlier mentioned policies, Ghana has other several specific regulations that contribute to managing migration. The table below outlines some of these key regulations with the institutions for implementation.

Table 1: Some of the Specific Institutions and their regulations.

S/N	Regulation	Implementing Institution
1	Citizenship Act, 2000(Act 591), Immigration Act 2000(Act 573), Immigration Service Act, Act 908, 2006	Ghana Immigration Service(GIS)
2	Labour Act, Act 651, 2006 Labour Regulation ,LI 1833, 2007, Domestic Workers Regulation 2020, LI 2408	Labour Department
3	The Human Trafficking Act, Act 694(2005). Amended in 2009, Act 784	GIS, Ghana Police
4	Representation of the People's Act, Act 669(2006). Dual Citizenship Act, Act 527, 1996	GIS, Diaspora Affairs, EC
5	Refugees Law, 1992 Asylum Seekers and Refugees	The National Refugee Board, GIS
6	The 1992 Constitution	All relevant Public Institutions

Source: field Survey, 2024

2.6 Regional and International Collaborations and Partnerships

In today's interconnected world, effective migration management increasingly depends on multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Ghana actively participates in a range of international, regional and sub-regional organisations, the decisions of which strongly influence the country's

approach to migration governance. As a member of such bodies, Ghana is obliged to uphold international treaties, agreements, protocols and frameworks. For example, the government has contributed to initiatives such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCSORM) and participates in forums including the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

In collaboration with countries across Europe, Africa and Asia, Ghana has entered into bilateral arrangements covering labour migration, cooperation, tourism, trade and investment. A noteworthy example is the reciprocal visa-waiver agreement signed with South Africa, enabling citizens of both countries to travel visa-free for up to 90 days. This kind of bilateral mobility arrangement supports enhanced economic, social and human capital flows (Ghana & South Africa, 2023).

At the regional level, as a member of both the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ghana has played a central role in promoting regional and sub-regional dialogue and cooperation on migration issues. In West Africa, Ghana has engaged in forums such as the Migration Dialogue in West Africa and the Mediterranean (MIDWA) established in 2001, which provided a platform to address migration challenges in the sub-region.

The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment has enabled Ghanaian citizens to travel, reside and settle in other ECOWAS member states under conditions of reciprocity. Ghana has also actively participated in implementation dialogues around the AU Free Movement Protocol, which builds on regional integration aspirations under Agenda 2063 (AU, 2023; ICMPD, 2025).

Furthermore, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2021 – with its secretariat located in Accra, Ghana – has created opportunities not only for the movement of goods and services, but also for labour mobility across the continent (AU, 2021). This continental framework encourages Ghanaian citizens to engage in emerging cross-border partnerships and strengthens Ghana's role in Africa-wide migration governance.

2.7 Return and Reintegration

There is no specific government agency tasked with overseeing the return and reintegration of migrants. In the past, returning migrants and their families were solely responsible for managing these processes. However, since 2015, collaborative efforts with European Union-funded projects have emerged to support return and reintegration activities within the country. Notably, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the German Development Agency, GIZ have played significant roles. Through the IOM-EU Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme, numerous Ghanaian migrants who have voluntarily returned from Europe have received assistance. This aid aims to ensure that returnees can lead dignified and humane lives back home. Support measures include financial assistance, skills training, temporary housing, and mental health and psychosocial care. Additionally, the program consistently incorporates community outreach to raise awareness about the risks of irregular migration.

In 2020, the EU-IOM partnership developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to streamline and unify the reintegration process for returnees in Ghana, ensuring a consistent approach for all types of returnees. The German Development Cooperation (GIZ) has played a significant role in supporting the return and reintegration process through the Ghanaian-German Centre (GGC). The Centre collaborates with various stakeholders to enhance returnees' skills and build their

capacities. Additionally, the GGC served as an information hub for safe migration and actively educated potential migrants about the risks associated with irregular migration.

Notwithstanding the various initiatives by the international community, the Ghanaian government has shown little genuine interest in cooperating with the EU or IOM on return programmes. Although a joint declaration was signed with the EU in 2016 to facilitate the repatriation of undocumented Ghanaian migrants from Europe, the government's response has remained largely evasive and disengaged (Arhin-Sam et al, 2021). The IOM still coordinates and ensures the safe return of Ghanaian migrants trapped in places like Libya and Algeria together with their partners. The organization also grants reintegration support to the returnees in the country.

2.8 Challenges to Promoting Regular Labour Migration in Ghana

Although Ghana has introduced significant legislation to support regular labour migration, the implementation of these laws remains lacking. For example, the National Migration Policy proposed the creation of a National Migration Commission, but this recommendation is yet to be realized even after several years. The Migration Commission was supposed to play coordinating role among the various migration related institutions (Mouthaan, 2019). This brews weak institutional collaborations to effectively implement the policy.

Secondly, the staff within the implementing agencies lack sufficient technical capacity and require significant improvement in this area (Korletey et al., 2010). Some employees are unaware of the existence of these policies, let alone how to apply them in their routine duties. They have not received the necessary training to understand, value, and effectively implement the policies. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure and logistical support continue to hinder the successful execution of these policies. Some key departments responsible for implementation lack even the

most basic office resources, such as computers, internet access for effective communication, and vehicles, among others. It is therefore necessary to enhance the technical expertise of staff within the various implementing agencies. Regular training sessions should be organized to keep them updated on recent developments related to the laws they enforce. Additionally, capacity building should also involve the provision of adequate working resources and improved compensation to help reduce the likelihood of corrupt practices.

Another concern is the poor enforcement of regulations. A notable example is the continued transfer of domestic workers to Gulf States by dishonest individuals and unlicensed Private Employment Agencies, despite a ban imposed by the sector Minister in 2017. The mistreatment of some labour migrants in the Gulf States can be partly attributed to the failure of the relevant agency to effectively oversee labour recruitment, which has allowed fraudulent recruiters to operate secretly (Kandilige et al., 2023).

There are inconsistencies within certain areas of the regulatory frameworks. For example, in Ghana, the issuance of work and exit permits highlights this issue—while the Ministry of Interior is responsible for issuing work permits, it does not oversee labour-related matters. This situation underscores the need to clarify and review the current regulatory frameworks to better respond to existing concerns and evolving trends in migration management across the country.

Political interests and the government's will can sometimes hinder effective migration governance in the country. The level of attention given to migration issues often depends on the priorities of the ruling administration, and a change in leadership can lead to a shift in focus or commitment to specific initiatives (Mouthaan, 2019). For example, the implementation of the labour migration policy has faced delays. Despite signing a cooperation agreement with the EU to facilitate the safe

return of irregular Ghanaian migrants from EU countries, the Ghanaian government has demonstrated minimal commitment and engagement (Arhin-Sam et al, 2021). The government's limited commitment may suggest that it prioritizes the remittances sent by emigrants over their deportation. It is essential for the state to demonstrate genuine commitment by allocating resources and mustering the political will necessary to implement agreements, plans, and policies.

More so, the cost of migration keeps going up over the years in Ghana, making it very expensive and unaffordable to many ordinary Ghanaians. Acquiring visa for international travels, travel fees and service charges for recruitment continues to be very expensive for ordinary prospective Ghanaian labour migrants (Awumbila et al. 2011). The processes involved in the acquisition of work permit is not only lengthy and bureaucratic but also expensive. Thus, discourages potential Ghanaian labour migrants from pursuing the appropriate regular channels (Owusu-Ankomah 2020).

2.9 Empirical Review

2.9.1 Assessing the Effectiveness of Current Institutional Frameworks in Managing Labour Migration in Ghana

Mensah and Asamoah (2016) conducted a comprehensive survey of 350 migrants and migration officials to evaluate Ghana's institutional frameworks for managing labour migration. Their findings revealed that while multiple agencies exist, coordination among them is fragmented, leading to bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies in service delivery. The study highlighted that overlapping mandates and unclear operational guidelines significantly reduce overall effectiveness. However, it did not examine the potential role of digital communication in mitigating these coordination challenges.

Adjei and Boateng (2017) used qualitative interviews with policymakers and migrant workers to explore the operational performance of migration management institutions. Their research showed that although formal policies exist, the lack of clear communication channels and limited resource allocation hamper effective implementation. They noted that enforcement is often compromised by bureaucratic inertia, resulting in protracted processing times. Despite its insights, the study did not quantify the economic costs associated with these inefficiencies for migrants.

Owusu (2018) employed a mixed-methods design, combining administrative data analysis with focus group discussions among migrant groups, to assess institutional effectiveness. The study found that while Ghana's policy frameworks are comprehensive on paper, practical performance is undermined by operational bottlenecks and resource constraints. Many migrants reported prolonged waiting periods and inadequate support during the migration process, yet the study did not fully explore feedback mechanisms that might improve institutional performance over time.

Darko et al (2019) compared regional variations in labour migration management using case studies and surveys from several districts. Their research demonstrated that regions with better-integrated and more adequately funded institutional frameworks reported higher migrant satisfaction and smoother processing of migration applications. However, challenges such as inconsistent funding and poor inter-agency communication were still evident, leaving room for further investigation into regional best practices and the scalability of successful models.

Longitudinal analysis of documents and engaging stakeholders through interviews to trace the evolution of migration management frameworks over a decade were conducted. The findings indicated gradual improvements in legal and administrative processes, yet persistent challenges such as insufficient capacity-building and lack of robust coordination continue to undermine

effectiveness (Osei, 2020). It emphasized that ongoing reforms are needed but did not examine the potential impact of emerging technological innovations on enhancing these frameworks.

2.9.2 Identifying Gaps in Policy Design and Implementation Affecting Regulation of Legal and Irregular Labour Migration

Undertaking a comprehensive policy analysis using document reviews and stakeholder interviews to examine the design of Ghana's migration policy, Gyimah (2018) found out that many policies suffer from ambiguous language and reactive rather than proactive orientations. This situation leaves significant regulatory gaps- particularly in addressing issues of irregular migration. Despite Gyimah providing critical insight into the shortcomings of migration policies, his study did not assess how these gaps influence the day-to-day migration practices.

One major challenge in the current migration framework is the insufficient stakeholder consultation in the policy formulation stage which often leads to conflicting regulations that inadvertently facilitate irregular migration (Mensah and Oteng, 2017). There is a seeming neglect or limited local level involvement in the formulation of migration regulations-particularly local government and traditional leaders. This disconnect contributes to the gaps in awareness and enforcement of migration policies. Teye et al (2017) further argues that such top-down approach overlooks the dynamics of migration at the local community level, especially at the border communities and places which are migrant sending communities. This therefore calls for a more inclusive migration policy design.

Using case studies and focus group discussions to delve into the challenges of the implementation phase of migration policies, Ankomah (2019) identified operational gaps stemming from unclear guide lines, inadequate funding, poor monitoring among others. This creates loopholes which encourage irregular migration. Essential to implementation of migration initiatives are donor

support and international cooperation. Ghana's continuous reliance on international partners, development cooperation for the funding and implementation of migration initiatives can cause serious sustainability issues. Teye (2019) advises that migration initiatives which are donor – driven may not only affect the autonomy and ownership of the policy but may not align with local needs and also affect the long term policy outcome and development goals.

On the issue of the alignment of national migration policies and local practices, Quaye et al (2018), adopted a mixed method approach, integrating survey data with in-depth interviews to do an assessment. The findings indicated that discrepancies between policy design and local enforcement create significant challenges. Though the study did not fully explore the influence of international migration norms on domestic policy coherence, it found out that inconsistencies in policy application across regions further exacerbate the regulatory weakness. Border management practices remain inconsistent owing to weak capacity among border officials, corruption and resource constraints. These have caused irregular migration and trafficking to continue. As observed by CMI (2022), the challenges associated with enforcement undermine public trust and credibility of migration policies.

2.9.3 Exploring the Role of Specialized Institutions in Promoting Legal Migration and Mitigating Irregular Migration

The role of specialized institutions in the promotion of regular labour migration cannot be understated. Their efforts and work are visible across different technical capacities which include policy development, capacity building, international cooperation among others. these bodies include national and regional bodies as well as international organizations. There have been copious studies highlighting the programmes, frameworks and policies by these specialized

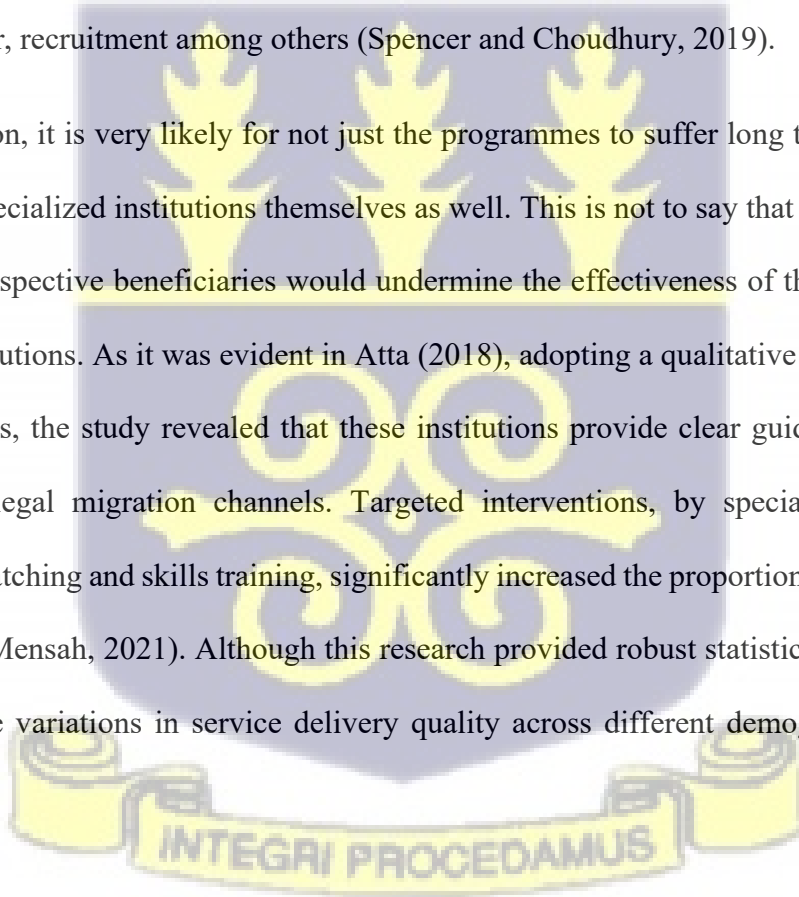
institutions. However, there are few on how these policies are implemented and their actual impact on labour migration (Wickramasekara, 2015).

Most of the research tend to focus on the high migration corridors, like the Global South and the Global North (e.g. Africa and Europe). Conversely, there are quite a limited research on the role of the region based specialized institutions in Africa, Latin America etc. in promoting regular labour migration (Adepoju, 2017). This situation has the tendency of skewing the understanding of global migration. therefore, there is the need to conduct thorough research on the specialized institutions from a regional perspective to understand their contribution to promoting regular labour migration even as we strife to eradicate the problems associated with irregular migration. As proven in the study by Darko (2019). Having employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of migration statistics with qualitative interviews, to evaluate the impact of specialized institutions on migration outcomes, the study demonstrated that regions served by these institutions experienced a significant increase in legal migration cases and a reduction in irregular migration incidents.

Despite these positive results, the study did not compare the performance of specialized institutions against traditional government agencies, and the collaborations that exist among them. This brings to mind another major challenge or gap that could be identified among specialized institutions in the discharge of their mandate to promoting regular labour migration. Betts (2011), identified that there is inadequate examination of how specialized institutions on migration coordinate with each other and with national government. The study further stated that this inadequate study included the lack of study on institutional overlap, mandates and tensions which can lead to fragmented and inefficient migration governance. So instead of creating synergies it rather turns to be duplications of activities and efforts.

In investigating the role of specialized institutions such as the Ghanaian-German Centre for jobs, migration and reintegration, Ofori-Atta (2017), realized that these special institutions offer critical trainings for prospective migrants at the pre-departure stage, support employment and provide accurate information which facilitate regular labour migration. Even though the study highlighted key contributions of specialized institutions, it did not satisfactorily examine the challenges these institutions face in reaching out to broader migrant base who undoubtedly become the major beneficiaries and important stakeholders, whose inputs could help shape their plans, programmes and to some larger extent policies. This thus creates a disconnect between the policy objectives and the lived experiences of the migrants or prospective labour migrants, especially on key matters relating to labour, recruitment among others (Spencer and Choudhury, 2019).

In such a situation, it is very likely for not just the programmes to suffer long term sustainability issues but the specialized institutions themselves as well. This is not to say that the absence of the inputs of the prospective beneficiaries would undermine the effectiveness of the activities of the specialized institutions. As it was evident in Atta (2018), adopting a qualitative approach to study migration experts, the study revealed that these institutions provide clear guidance and support navigating the legal migration channels. Targeted interventions, by specialized institutions, including job-matching and skills training, significantly increased the proportion of migrants using legal channels (Mensah, 2021). Although this research provided robust statistical evidence, it did not fully capture variations in service delivery quality across different demographic groups or regions.



2.9.4 Evaluating the Socio-Economic Impacts of Labour Migration on Ghanaian Migrants and Their Households

Labour migration within Africa and to the international destination has significantly shaped the socio-economic landscape of Ghana. The effects of such migration are multifaceted. It impacts on both migrants and their households in Ghana.

Conducting an extensive survey and in-depth interviews with over 500 households in rural Ghana to assess the socio-economic impacts of labour migration, Osei (2017) found that remittances play a crucial role in improving household income, healthcare, and educational opportunities, leading to overall poverty reduction. This finding corroborates a similar study by Quartey (2006) who asserts that remittances sent by migrants serve as an essential source of livelihood for many families, helping to reduce poverty and improve living standards. The World Bank report (2023) provides that remittances flow to the country surpassed \$4.7 billion in 2022. This then means that the fund served as a boost to the local economy which indirectly increased consumption and created more employment. However, Osei (2017) also noted that over-reliance on remittances could foster dependency. Over dependency on remittances can discourage local enterprise and make remittance dependent households less self-reliant (Adams and Page, 2005). Quantifying the impact of remittances on household development through an econometric analysis using household survey data from 500 rural households, Gyasi (2018) revealed a strong positive correlation between remittance inflows and investments in essential services, such as education and healthcare. The study further revealed disparities in the remittances received. Some places received minimal impact due to low level of the remittance inflow.

In all these, it is evident that those who frequently receive remittances are likely to have improved health and educational outcome (Kusi, 2021). However, migration can also strain family structure,

particularly when one or all parents migrate leaving behind their children for extended family members to take up the socialization role. This situation can affect the ward's education, emotional and mental wellbeing (Awumbila et al, 2014). If the separation becomes prolonged it can also break family ties.

Skilled migration also presents an opportunity for knowledge and technology transfer when migrants return to engage with their home communities or through their engagements with diaspora networks (Black and Castaldo, 2009). But the investments made by the returnees in the home community will surely require so much support and the enabling environment to flourish. These obviously include a stable business environment, extra capital to support growth and expansion, availability of supporting social amenities like electricity, telecommunication, potable water, better infrastructure like good road network, among others. Boadu (2020) focused on entrepreneurial outcomes among returnee migrants by surveying 300 individuals who had returned after working abroad. The research demonstrated that remittances have enabled many returnees to start small businesses, thereby stimulating local economic activity and job creation. However, Boadu (2020) noted that these entrepreneurial ventures were highly contingent on access to additional capital and market knowledge, factors that varied widely across different communities. Government policies on return and diaspora investments must focus on enhancing opportunities by investing in infrastructure and social amenities.



2.10 Summary

This chapter discussed some of the theoretical perspectives to discussing labour migration in Ghana. There was a further elucidation on the nature of pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial and

current trend and pattern of labour migration in Ghana. These theoretical perspectives offer an insight into the theories and framework shaping Ghana's migration governance and how the operations of some public and non-governmental institutions such as the GEC fall within the broader framework. Another attempt was made at identifying some of the contributions of the state to promoting regular labour migration and the challenges to promoting regular labour migration in Ghana.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology adopted to gather the needed information in this study. It begins with an explanation on the research methodology used as well as the sampling technique used to arrive at the sampling size for the study. The Data Collection approach is also discussed in this chapter as the data analysis techniques is not left out. The final part of the chapter discusses ethical matters regarding the research. Issues of informed consent, scope of the study and organization of the study have been thoroughly discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative approach was employed in this study. This method is particularly suited for research that seeks to explore experiences, meanings, and perspectives of participants (Hammarberg et al, 2016). It was chosen over a quantitative approach because it allowed for a deeper investigation into the reasons behind the establishment of the Ghanaian European Centre, specifically from the Centre's own viewpoint. This approach provides a richer understanding of the Centre's operations through the interpretations offered by its staff and other respondents.

Unlike Quantitative Research, which primarily involves assigning numerical values, this approach emphasizes understanding the 'how' and 'why' behind the subject of study. The qualitative method was employed to capture experiences from the respondents' perspectives. In this context, the data cannot be easily quantified or measured. According to Hennink et al (2020), the defining

characteristic of qualitative research is its ability to explore phenomena through the eyes of the participants.

3.2 Population, Sampling Technique and Size

Descombe (2010) defines a population as the group of individuals a researcher aims to study. In this research, the target population included workers of the Ghanaian-European Centre, as well as individuals and institutions that have benefited from its activities. A sample was drawn from these groups to serve as the basis for the study. A sample refers to a subset of the population. According to Bernado (2002), sampling involves selecting a segment of the population that can be considered representative of the entire group.

The respondents for this study were chosen through purposive sampling, a non-probability technique in which participants are intentionally selected based on specific attributes such as their expertise, knowledge, or professional roles, travel experience, among others. Also referred to as judgmental sampling, this method relies on the researcher's discretion (Nikolopoulou, 2022). It is particularly suitable for studies involving a small number of participants. In this case, the sample included approximately five key Technical Advisors from the Ghanaian European Centre, ten individual beneficiaries, and five senior officials from the Labour Department.

These five Senior Members of the Labour Department were drawn from Greater Accra, Ashanti, Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions, representing the areas where the GEC has mapped as project regions and offer technical assistance to the Labour Department. These officers were recommended to the researcher by the Head Office of the Labour Department. These are the best suited individuals capable of providing the in-depth information needed for the study. For the

Technical Advisors, the researcher purposively targeted those who have been with the Centre since its inception or have worked with the Centre for more than three years and have gained extensive experience in their field of work. The individual beneficiaries were selected purposively to reflect the diverse operations of the Centre. The researcher was introduced to the beneficiaries by the GEC. These beneficiaries are well documented by the Centre and have received varied support from the Centre either as prospective migrants, migrants or returnees. The labour department on the other hand is a key implementing partner and a major institutional beneficiary of the Ghanaian-European Centre.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection is a fundamental aspect of any credible research. In qualitative studies, data is typically in textual form and can be obtained through various methods. There are two main categories of data sources: primary and secondary. According to Douglas (2015), primary data refers to information that the researcher gathers firsthand. This can include interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, participant observation, and more. In contrast, secondary data consists of information previously collected by other researchers or organizations for purposes other than the current study (Blumberg, 2008). Examples of secondary data include administrative records, academic journals, survey findings, books, and online resources.

The researcher integrated primary and secondary data sources to acquire relevant information, facilitating a more extensive and well-rounded scope of data collection. The main sources of secondary data included administrative documents from the Ghanaian-European Centre, the Ghana Labour Migration Policy, as well as related publications from other pertinent institutions, scholarly research, and materials from both governmental and non-governmental organizations concerning

labour migration. More so, the researcher included other secondary materials such as journals, newspaper and internet publications, and local and international online sources as well as the Labour Act, Act 651, 2003.

The primary methods used for data collection were interviews. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data and insights into the operations of the Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana. These one-time interviews which approximately lasted for about an hour, took place at the Ghanaian-European Centre, i.e. Workplace of the GEC participants, and the Head Office of the Labour Department in the case of the Labour Department respondent in Accra. Six individual beneficiaries out of the ten(beneficiaries) and the Labour Officers outside the Greater Accra Region were interviewed through telephone communication. The remaining four beneficiaries who were available in Accra were directly engaged in a face-to-face interview which lasted for about an hour for each respondent. The one-time telephone interview was used due to the inability of the researcher to schedule a face-to-face interview because of schedule inconveniences on the part of the respondents and their locations in the country. Averagely, the researcher spent approximately an hour for interview sessions with each of the respondents. It, however, did not undermine the quality of the research. The interviews were conducted at the work places of the respondents from the GEC and the Labour Department in order not to control or influence the conditions surrounding the study. It was to create the natural ambiance to make the respondents comfortable. Labuschgne (2003), describes research conducted in such condition as 'Naturalistic Research'.

Bernado (1988) suggests that semi-structured interviews are particularly useful when researchers may not have the opportunity to meet with respondents more than once. Given the demanding

schedules of the Technical Advisors, the researcher maximized the single opportunity available for the interviews. This method also provided the flexibility to explore additional relevant topics beyond the original interview plan.

A structured interview guide was created to steer the line of questioning to align with the research objectives. However, other relevant topics that emerged naturally during the conversations, though not originally included in the guide, were also thoughtfully explored. Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher engaged in careful observation of the activities at the Ghanaian-European Centre. This provided a solid understanding of the Centre's operations and helped identify the appropriate individuals to interview, while also informing the development of relevant interview questions.

Most of the interview questions were open-ended, and the responses were recorded using an electronic device, except for the telephone interviews with individual respondents, which were documented in writing. Due to the open-ended nature of the questions, new topics often emerged during the conversations. Writing while listening can be quite challenging and distracting; therefore, using a recorder allowed me to capture the entire discussion accurately. The recordings were later transcribed, and the relevant information was analyzed for the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

To begin with, the recorded interview responses were transcribed. The researcher engaged deeply in the transcription process to gain a thorough understanding of the data and develop meaningful insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The data analysis followed the systematic thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The thematic analysis offered a more flexible approach that allowed the researcher to analyze qualitative data by identifying and

analyzing repeated patterns in the data. Firstly, the researcher read through the transcripts over and over again and noted down key ideas. This was successfully followed by creating initial codes which helped the researcher to group the appropriate data systematically. Briefly, the researcher developed codes reflective of the diverse responses from the different groups of respondents. For instance, access to migration information, pre-departure training, awareness of legal channels of migration, economic aspiration, migration experience and employment conditions. Others are remittance practices and investment, reintegration challenges, use of acquired skills, institutional reintegration support, economic sustainability, Programme effectiveness, accessibility to service, gendered experience, community experience among others were developed. The researcher further developed broader themes from the initial codes generated. There was a second look or review of the themes to ensure that they were coherent and consistent with the objective of the survey. After having a clear definition for each of the themes, the researcher finally continued to structure the findings to develop the body of work which is an enlightening account of the contributions of the Ghanaian-European Centre in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana.

Qualitative researchers must clearly articulate the 'How' and the 'Why' of their study (Noble et al, 2014). Consequently, to effectively address the research questions, some participant responses were quoted verbatim to support and illustrate the findings where appropriate. By quoting participants verbatim, the researcher minimized personal bias, thereby preserving the credibility of the study. The participants' responses played a central role in interpreting the data. Through a combination of deductive and inductive coding techniques, the researcher effectively extracted the relevant information for the study. The deductive (etic) approach was particularly useful for analyzing secondary data sources, including journals, research reports, and policy documents.

Meanwhile, the inductive (emic) approach was applied to the firsthand information obtained from semi-structured interviews with the selected respondents.

An interpretative content analysis of the secondary materials was conducted in alignment with the previously stated research objectives. This process was carried out systematically, objectively, and reliably, as recommended by Krippendorff (1980). For the primary data obtained through interviews, a descriptive approach was employed. As noted by Yin (2003), research can adopt exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory methodologies. The descriptive method was chosen for its ability to provide clear insights and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

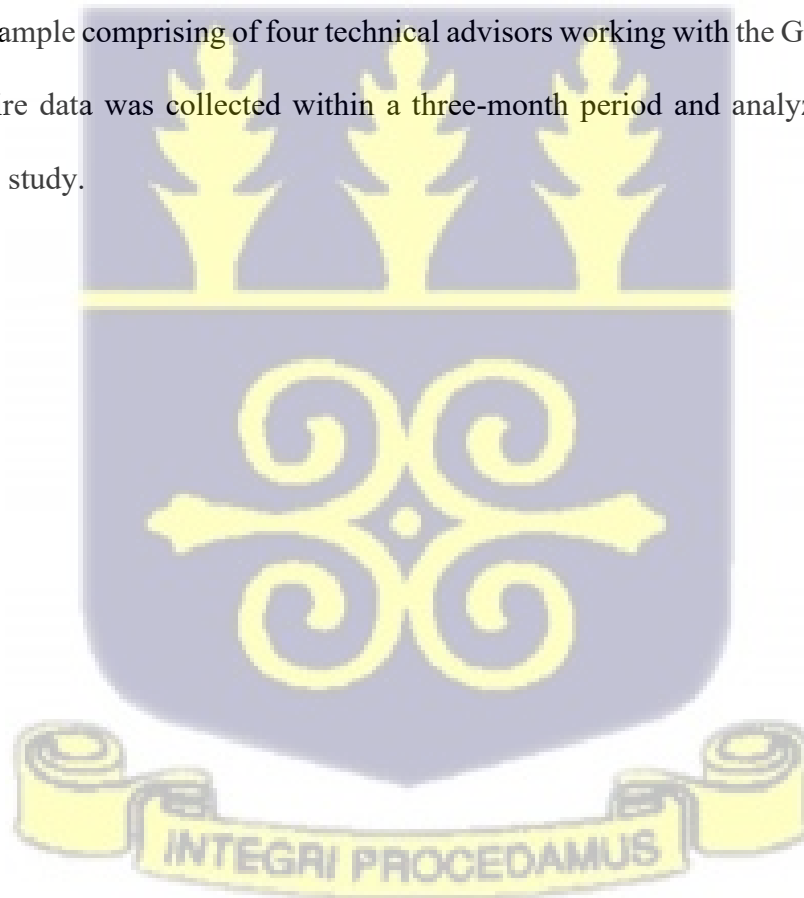
The workers of the Ghanaian-European Centre, Staff of the Labour Department as well as the individual beneficiaries of the services of the Ghanaian-European Centre were the focal people for the study. The data collection and analysis strictly adhered to ethical considerations and guidelines. In as much as the researcher was poised to gather the views and ideas of the respondents to form the body of knowledge for the study, the rights of the respondents to participate was keenly taken into consideration. The study rightfully acknowledged and respected the rights of all the respondents. The objectives of this study was thoroughly explained to the respondents for them to understand to enable the researcher get their consent to participate.

As part of the ethical consideration, the researcher, a student and a civil servant, introduced himself as such to the respondents and proved it by sharing his academic and professional credentials to the respondents. This helped to obtain their approval, support as well as getting credible information for the study.

During the data collection stage, the respondents had the full assurance of the researcher that any information provided will be kept confidential. Their names and other names mentioned would remain anonymous, and where necessary to mention names, pseudonyms would be used instead. Voice recordings from respondents were treated with utmost confidentiality. No favours or promises were used under any circumstance in order to entice respondents to give information. All responses were taken at the volition of the respondents.

3.6 Summary

This section focused on the methodology adopted for the study. A qualitative method with a study population and sample comprising of four technical advisors working with the Ghanaian-European Centre. The entire data was collected within a three-month period and analyzed within the set objectives of the study.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes and discuss the key findings from the survey conducted among the respondents drawn from the Technical Advisors of the Ghanaian European Centre, the technical partners of the Centre as well as the individual beneficiaries of the various interventions of the Centre on how the activities of the Centre contribute to the promotion of regular labour migration in Ghana.

4.1 Background of the Ghanaian European Centre.

The Ghanaian-European Centre was initially commissioned in 2019 officially as the Ghanaian-German Centre in Accra. It was an effort by the German government promoting safe, orderly and regular migration and reduce the issue of irregular migration, as well as leveraging on migration for socioeconomic development. The Ghanaian-German Centre (GGC) operated as one of the Centres of Migration and Development under the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany). The lead executing agency for this flagship project is the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (literally translated in English as German Development Cooperation, GIZ). In 2023, owing to the success achieved by the Ghanaian-German Centre, there was a co-financing agreement between the German government and the European Union to widen the operations of the Centre beyond the parochial German interest to cover the other member countries of the European Union. This initiative became very necessary

due to the increasing emigration to the EU countries as well as the growing labour skill gap in the EU. The co-financing agreement runs from June 2023 to May 2026 with a possibility of renewal.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

The respondents from the survey are basically categorized into three. The first category includes the five staff of the Ghanaian–European centre who were sampled for the study. The second category comprises the individual beneficiaries of the various services of the Ghanaian-European Centre. In all ten beneficiaries were sampled reflecting the general trend of the persons who have benefited from the operations of the centre. The last category is exclusively on the Labour Department of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, which is the political partner of Ghanaian-European Centre.

4.2.1 The Demographic Characteristics of the GEC Staff

In order to understand and appreciate the contribution of the GEC in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana, it is important for the interviewer to know the role of the staff of the Centre who were sampled for the interview. This will enable the researcher to appreciate their work and experiences, establish their competencies and expertise they possess as respondents.

Four males and one female were interviewed. All the respondents serve in various capacities as Technical Advisors at the Centre. It was revealed that all the respondents possessed not less than a Masters Degree in a relevant academic fields. Two of the respondents have actually been studying at the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Migration. Four of the respondents have been with the Centre since the inception of its operations in Ghana. Each respondent has worked for at least three years in same capacity at the

Centre, and have amassed rich experience in migration management, community engagement, social development, public policy and international relations.

4.2.2 Characteristics of the Respondent who are Individual Beneficiaries of the programs of the GEC

A total of ten individuals (Ghanaians) who have benefited from the activities of the Ghana-European Centre responded to the interview conducted by the researcher to gather data for the study. To ensure gender parity, five males and five females were considered for the study. The ages of the respondents range from 24-40 years. Four of the respondents, comprising one (1) male and three (3) females, are returnees from Europe and GCC countries. Another four (4) are Ghanaians resident in the country and aspire to migrate, i.e. prospective migrants. One of the remaining is a labour migrant and the other Migrant who is a student in England. The range of international travel experience of the beneficiaries is from no travel to five years travel experience (0-5). These findings have been presented in the tables below.

Table 1: Basic Characteristics of individual respondents

	Respondent(R1)	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
AGE	24	32	28	22	30	27	33	29	38	40
SEX	Male	Female	male	male	female	Female	female	male	female	male
Migrant Status	Returned Migrant(RM)	RM	Prospective	Migrant Student(MS)	RM	RM	PM	PM	PM	Labour

			Migrant(PM)							Migrant
Benefit received	Reintegration Support (RS)	RS	Skills training(ST)	Counselling(C)	RS	RS	ST	ST	C	C
Years of Migration	2	5	None	2	5	2	None	None	None	1

Source: field interview, 2024.

Current location of Beneficiary Respondents

The researcher found out that following the support the beneficiaries received some of them have now changed their location of usual residence to new places in and outside the country. The returned migrants (Returnees) are mostly back to their place of birth or their hometowns. For the prospective migrants, though they were resident in the country, they returned to their hometowns to use the skills and knowledge acquired. Others also pursued their migration ambition and have seamlessly integrated into the destination society.

Table 2: Table showing Previous and Current locations of Individual Respondents

Respondent(R)	Previous location	Current location
R1	Kuwait	Sege
R2	Italy	Nsawam

R3	Accra	Ahafo Hwidiem
R4	Swedru	Germany
R5	Germany	Accra
R6	Saudi Arabia	Accra
R7	Accra	Accra
R8	Kumasi	Dunkwa-Offin
R9	Accra	Kumasi
R10	Accra	Coventry, England

Source: field interview,2024.

4.2.3 General Characteristics of the respondent from the Labour Department.

The respondents from the Labour Department are all male Senior Officers. They currently ranked as Senior Labour Officers and Assistant Chief Labour Officers. The three Senior Labour Officers interviewed have added roles as Migration Desk Officers and the other two are District and Metro Labour Officer. The District and Metro Officers have served for more than a decade and risen through the ranks in the Civil Service of Ghana. The Accra Metro Officer, for instance, served as an Officer in the Employment Information Branch, a unit under the Labour Department, the Public Employment Centre(PEC), Accra Office and currently he is the head of the Accra Metro Office of the Labour Department. He is also part of several Technical Committees under the mother Ministry of the Labour Department including the GEC-Ministry of Employment Technical Committee, ILO-Ministry of Employment Technical Committee on Child Labour

4.3 Core Services rendered by the Ghanaian-European Centre.

The researcher identified and grouped the core services offered by the centre into three main clusters with various programmes executed periodically. These are including Regular Labour migration and mobility, Capacity building on labour migration and employment promotion as well as Reintegration and employment promotion.

Table 3: Table showing the various services of the GEC

Regular Labour Migration and Mobility	Capacity Building on Labour Migration and Employment Promotion	Reintegration and Employment Promotion
Counselling on requirements for regular labour migration	Trainings on counselling, outreach, communication techniques among others	Individual counselling services
Raising awareness on the risks of irregular migration	Hospitation of labour officers at GEC	Career guidance Trainings
Supporting the development of bilateral agreements	Joint implementation of events	Job Fairs
	Study tours	Skills development Trainings
		Business Startup support
		Information events
		Psychosocial counselling
		Temporal housing of deportees

Source: field interview, 2024.

4.4 Partnerships and collaborations.

The Centre works with several partners. It brings together partners from State institutions as well as private Business and Multilateral organizations. The political partner of the Centre is the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations. The key department for this partnership under the ministry is the Labour Department. Other Collaborating partners include the International Organization for Migration(IOM), the Migration and Employment Promotion Component(MEP) of GIZ Programme for Sustainable Economic Development- PSED/MEP, Chamber of German Commerce in Ghana, Goethe Institut. The synergetic relationship between the Centre and its partners allows for referral of clients for support.

4.5 Support to the Labour Department

Support to the Labour Department include Capacity development training for Labour Officers, provision of Office equipment and facilities, Renovation and Building of new Labour Offices, Secondment and exchange programmes for Labour Officers in Ghana and abroad, procurement of vehicles for the Labour Department, collaborations to organize joint events among others.

4.6 Support to Potential Migrants

The Centre offers counselling service, career guidance and skills training programmes to potential or prospective migrants. Through the counselling session, the Centre offers advice on safe migration pathways.

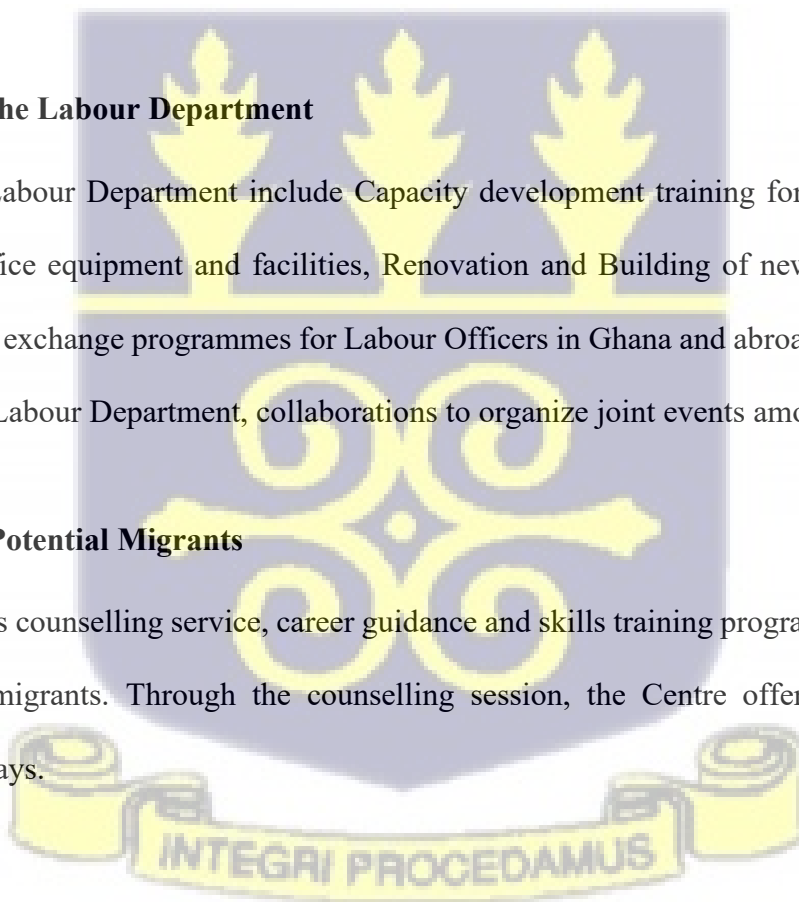


Table 4: Showing the number of potential migrants who have visited the Centre in last two years for support.

	Male	Female	Total
2023	665	764	1429
2024	222	252	474
Grand Total	887	916	1903

Source: GEC Administrative Data

4.7 Supporting Return and Reintegration

The Centre collaborates with Officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ghana immigration Services and other relevant agencies to welcome Ghanaians who have voluntarily or have been forced to return to Ghana from Europe, Germany and other parts of the world at the airport. The Centre offers psychosocial support services such as counselling to the returnees, and provides other programmes aimed at supporting the returnees economically and socially. These ranges from payment of rent, arranging transportation for returnees to their homes, short term skills training, business coaching and business start-up programmes as well as job placement.

Table 5: showing the number of Returned migrants who visited the centre for support over the last two years.

	Male	Female	Total
2023	769	823	1592
2024	262	264	526

Grand Total	1031	1087	2118
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Source: Administrative data of GEC

4.7 Fostering Policy Dialogue on Migration

The Ghanaian-European Centre has been instrumental in fostering policy dialogue on my migration by providing and facilitating technical discussion between Government to Government. The Centre is playing an instrumental role in the development of a bilateral agreement between Ghana and Italy. Periodically, the Centre organizes fora to engage stakeholders on developing trends in migration, research and others.

4.8 Discussions on the findings

This aspect discusses the findings of the study in relation to existing literature and theoretical perspectives on migration governance and labour migration management. The analysis focuses on how the Ghanaian–European Centre (GEC) contributes to the promotion of regular labour migration in Ghana, the mechanisms through which it operates, and the governance implications that arise. Drawing upon frameworks such as the new economics of labour migration (NELM). The discussion connects the empirical results with the broader discourse on migration and development.

This section builds on the literature reviewed earlier, which established that Ghana’s approach to migration governance has increasingly aligned with international frameworks promoting *safe, orderly, and regular migration* as articulated in the **Global Compact for Migration** (United Nations, 2018). Nationally, the **National Migration Policy (NMP)** (Ministry of Interior [MoI], 2017) and the **National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP)** (Ministry of Employment and Labour

Relations [MELR], 2020) highlight the need to enhance labour migration governance and leverage migration for development. The GEC—initially the Ghanaian–German Centre (GGC)—represents an institutional response to these goals, offering counselling, training, and reintegration support to migrants and returnees.

4.8.1 Institutional Innovation and Governance of the GEC

The Ghanaian–European Centre emerged as a flagship collaborative initiative between the Government of Ghana, the German Government, and the European Union to operationalize migration governance principles. Established in 2019 as the Ghanaian–German Centre and later rebranded in 2023 following an EU co-financing agreement, the Centre reflects the transition in migration management from control-oriented approaches to development-oriented governance (Bakewell, 2022; Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014). The GEC’s creation embodies what migration governance scholars call an *institutional innovation*—a multi-actor mechanism designed to provide structured support for legal migration pathways, reintegration, and policy coordination (IOM, 2020).

The findings indicate that the GEC operates under the framework of Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the GIZ, in partnership with Ghana’s Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations. This arrangement demonstrates the transnational nature of migration governance, in which origin and destination countries share responsibility for managing migration flows (Betts, 2011; Geiger & Pécoud, 2020). According to the labour migration governance theory, such multi-level cooperation enhances the effectiveness of migration systems by integrating local, national, and international actors (Hollifield, 2022).

The staff composition of the GEC—comprising Technical Advisors with advanced academic and practical expertise in migration and development—further highlights the professionalization of migration governance in Ghana. Their capacity and longevity within the institution reflect a sustained commitment to building technical knowledge in regular migration management. This finding aligns with Kureková’s (2011) argument that competent institutional actors are essential for the successful governance of labour mobility.

Moreover, the GEC’s transformation from a German-centred project to a Ghanaian–European collaborative hub demonstrates an evolution toward a more inclusive European migration governance approach. It mirrors the European Union’s externalization strategy, which seeks to manage migration in partnership with African countries while addressing skill gaps within the EU labour market (Geddes et al., 2020). The partnership thus reflects the dual objectives of origin countries (employment creation and remittance generation) and destination countries (labour supply and migration control). *“...we are Europe biased because we are funded by the EU and Germany...”* (by a Technical Advisor, Nov 2024, Accra, responding major countries of interest to the Centre).

4.8.2 Core Services and Promotion of Regular Labour Migration

The findings reveal that the GEC’s services are structured into three clusters—regular labour migration and mobility; capacity building on labour migration and employment promotion; and reintegration and employment promotion. These correspond closely to the three pillars of labour migration governance identified by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022): (1) facilitation of labour mobility through legal channels, (2) protection of migrant workers, and (3) maximization of development benefits.

4.8.2.1 Counselling and Awareness Creation

One of the Centre's principal functions is the provision of counselling services to prospective migrants. Through individualized sessions, the GEC educates migrants about legal migration procedures, documentation, and the risks of irregular migration. As Castles (2021) argues, inadequate information and poor regulation often drive irregular migration. By bridging this information gap, the GEC contributes to informed decision-making and reduces the likelihood of migrants relying on irregular or unsafe routes. Between 2023 and 2024, 1,903 potential migrants received counselling and guidance services at the Centre, reflecting growing engagement with regular migration mechanisms.

Ghana is gaining notoriety as one of the sources of cross-border human trafficking of women and children for forced labour and commercial sex work to popular destinations like Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Gambia, United Kingdom, France, Russia, United States of America and others (Ghana AHTU, 2017). By offering migration awareness services and information dissemination, the GEC sensitizes its clients on the dangers of irregular migration, industry criminals and their unscrupulous activities. Consequently, the unsuspecting clients can avoid such criminals and use the right channels for their migration needs. This was evident in the response given by R9 (pseudonym for a female client of the Centre who rescinded from her decision to go to Europe through Libya via the Sahara Desert after visiting the Centre). “... my agent lied to me. He was only after my money. I'm sure I would have died if I had tried that desert journey. I thank God I went to speak to.... (R8, Nov. 2024, Kumasi, responding to benefit received from the Centre).”

4.8.2.2 Skills Development and Employment Promotion

The GEC also provides capacity-building programmes such as skills development, job fairs, and business start-up support. This component reflects the *new economics of labour migration (NELM)*, which views migration as a household strategy for risk diversification and income generation (Stark & Bloom, 1985). By equipping potential migrants with employable skills, the GEC not only prepares them for foreign labour markets but also enhances their employability within Ghana. This approach aligns with findings by Asamoah (2023), who observed that youth in Ghana often migrate due to limited employment opportunities and skill mismatches. Therefore, by addressing domestic labour market gaps, the GEC mitigates push factors for irregular migration. The European Market requires certain level of skilled professionals to balance the labour shortage existing in the European job market. It is a common knowledge that Ghanaian Professional Nurses, Doctors and other professionals are highly sought after. However, there are other skilled professionals such as welders, plumbers and others which are in high demand in Europe. But many Ghanaian job seekers lack the necessary certifications and professional training to qualify for these positions (OECD, 2021). The skills training given by the GEC and subsequent certification goes a long way to solving the issue of skills mismatch between the Ghanaian workers and the European labour market. The prospective migrant can acquire the skills needed which enables them to apply for European jobs. But also helping the Ghanaian people who are potential migrants to invest their time into productive venture and discourage the aspiration of migrating abroad to search for non-existing jobs. Prospective migrants also become entrepreneurial and start micro, small and medium businesses to grow the local Ghanaian economy. They are even able to create some kind of

employment for other people in society to enhance their livelihood...” *Things are better now, and my pork business is doing well...*” (R7 responding to how the technical assistance has improved his business and livelihood, Dansoman, Accra, Nov 2024)

4.8.2.3 Facilitating Bilateral Labour Agreement

Another key service area is the facilitation of bilateral labour migration agreements between Ghana and European countries. The Centre’s technical support in ongoing negotiations, such as with Italy, aligns with Ghana’s NLMP objective to “promote regular migration through bilateral cooperation” (MELR, 2020). According to Wickramasekara (2021), bilateral labour agreements are central to promoting ethical recruitment, ensuring fair working conditions, and protecting migrants’ rights. By supporting such processes, the GEC strengthens the institutional framework for orderly migration.

Collectively, these service mechanisms illustrate the Centre’s practical role in transforming migration governance principles into action, aligning with the IOM’s (2020) emphasis on integrated, evidence-based approaches to labour migration management.

4.8.3 Reintegration, Capacity Building and Development Outcomes

The findings show that the GEC provides a comprehensive reintegration programme for returnees, which includes psychosocial counselling, business coaching, rent support, and skills training. Over 2,118 returnees received reintegration support between 2023 and 2024, demonstrating the Centre’s extensive outreach. This approach reflects a migration systems perspective, which conceptualizes

migration as a circular process with interconnected stages—departure, transit, stay, return, and reintegration (de Haas, 2021).

Scholars argue that reintegration programmes are crucial for maximizing the developmental impact of migration (Black & Gent, 2006; Sinatti, 2020). When returnees are effectively reintegrated, they transfer skills, invest remittances, and contribute to local development. The GEC’s reintegration strategy thus aligns with Ghana’s National Migration Policy, which promotes “productive return and sustainable reintegration” (MoI, 2017).

The study’s finding that many returnees resettled in their hometowns or started businesses demonstrates the link between migration and local economic transformation. As shown in the experiences of R1 and R2 (returnees from Kuwait and Italy respectively), targeted reintegration support can foster entrepreneurship and reduce remigration pressure. These findings echo the arguments of Ammassari (2019) that reintegration initiatives, when effectively managed, transform returnees from dependents into development actors.

Furthermore, by offering psychosocial counselling and temporary housing, the GEC addresses the social dimensions of reintegration—an often neglected aspect in migration policy. According to the IOM (2021), sustainable reintegration must combine economic, social, and psychosocial components to restore migrants’ well-being and dignity. “... the humiliation from my family members and friends would have made me crazy if not for the help of the Counselor GEC gave us. My head was always boiling.” (R2 recounting the benefits received from the Centre during an interview, Accra, Nov 2024).

4.8.4 Policy Dialogue, Partnerships and Institutional Synergy

GEC's multi-stakeholder collaborations exemplify a governance model grounded in partnership and policy coherence. The findings indicate that the Centre works with state institutions (e.g., the Labour Department, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, Ghana Immigration Service), international organizations (e.g., IOM, GIZ), and private and civil society actors. This synergy facilitates knowledge exchange, resource mobilization, and coordinated service delivery.

Migration governance literature underscores that fragmented institutional arrangements often undermine policy coherence (Betts, 2011; Hollifield, 2022). The GEC's partnership model, therefore, contributes to the institutionalization of coordination mechanisms across the migration cycle. Its collaboration with the Labour Department—through capacity building, equipment support, and exchange programmes—enhances state capacity for migration management. This finding is consistent with Adepoju (2020), who observed that inter-institutional cooperation strengthens migration governance in West Africa.

Moreover, the Centre's role in facilitating policy dialogue, such as supporting bilateral negotiations with Italy and convening stakeholder fora, situates it as a knowledge broker. According to Geiger and Pécoud (2020), such dialogues foster “epistemic communities” that shape migration policy through evidence-based discourse. The GEC's efforts align with the ECOWAS (2023) regional strategy to promote labour mobility and rights within West Africa.

Through these partnerships, the GEC exemplifies *migration governance as networked governance*—a process driven by multi-level actors sharing responsibilities and expertise. This

model resonates with the ILO's (2022) advocacy for “whole-of-government and whole-of-society” approaches to migration governance.

4.9 Governance Challenges and Implications

The Ghanaian-European Centre, so far, is doing by being one of the main institutions creating that synergy among government, public institutions, development partners and private institutions to ensure that migration is properly managed to advance the developmental agenda of the state and achieving the global goal of ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration. However, this effort is flawed with copious debilitating challenges. The findings from the study and literature review reveal persistent governance challenges.

4.9.1 Institutional Coordination and Sustainability

Although the GEC has enhanced coordination, overlaps still exist among agencies involved in migration management. IOM (2020) notes that weak inter-agency coordination often hampers the implementation of national migration policies in sub-Saharan Africa. Without institutionalized frameworks and funding mechanisms, such centers risk dependency on external donors (Bakewell, 2022). Ensuring long-term sustainability will require embedding the GEC's operations within Ghana's budgetary and policy structures. In addressing the issue of continuity and sustainability in the likely event of the withdrawal of Support from GEC of the respondents from the labour department was of the view that “... *the Department might not be able to continue with the good works because the budgetary allocation remains very small from government...*” (Snr. Labour Officer in an interview, Nov 2024)

4.9.2 Scale and Labour Market Alignment

While the Centre has served over 1,900 prospective migrants, this number remains small relative to Ghana's large pool of potential migrants. Many prospective migrants in Ghana are unaware of the existence of structured migration promoting institution like the Ghanaian-European Centre and its services. Furthermore, misinformation about migration opportunities creates unrealistic expectations among potential migrants. They often assume that once they arrive at the GEC, they are sure to enter Europe. There is a wrong public opinion about the services of the Centre" ... *We usually get clients who think the Centre facilitates visa acquisition to Europe...* "(according to a Technical Advisor responding awareness and information about the Centre, Accra Nov 2024) The migration pressure driven by youth unemployment and wage differentials remains high (Quartey et al., 2021). The challenge is thus scaling up GEC services and aligning them with real labour demand in Europe and within Ghana's domestic economy. Migration governance theory posits that without structural employment reforms, interventions may have limited long-term impact (de Haas, 2021).

4.9.3 Right Protection in Destination Countries

Another challenge concerns the protection of Ghanaian workers abroad. As Wickramasekara (2021) notes, bilateral labour agreements often lack robust enforcement mechanisms for migrant rights. Hence, while the GEC's facilitation of such agreements is commendable, effective monitoring and grievance mechanisms are essential.

4.9.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Finally, the literature stresses that migration governance interventions must be evidence-based (IOM, 2020). The GEC's impact assessment systems are still developing; thus, establishing data-

driven monitoring frameworks to track outcomes such as employment rates, remittance patterns, and reintegration sustainability will be critical.

These challenges indicate that while the GEC offers a model of effective governance, consolidating its achievements requires institutional strengthening, policy coherence, and enhanced regional and international collaboration.

4.10 Gendered Perspective

A gendered analysis of the Ghanaian–European Centre’s (GEC) operations reveal that both men and women are active participants in the Centre’s programmes, though slight differences exist in their levels of engagement and needs. Administrative data from the GEC (2023–2024) indicate that among potential migrants who sought support from the Centre, females (n = 916) slightly outnumbered males (n = 887), representing 48.4% and 46.6% respectively of total clients. This suggests that women are increasingly accessing institutional pathways for migration, reflecting a gradual shift from the traditionally male-dominated migration trends in Ghana (Awumbila, 2017; IOM, 2020). Such a trend aligns with global evidence that women are not merely passive dependents in migration processes but active economic agents seeking employment, education, and empowerment through legal migration channels (UN Women, 2019).

The data further show that among returned migrants, females (n = 1,087) again slightly exceeded males (n = 1,031) in seeking reintegration and advisory services. This indicates a growing feminization of return migration, a phenomenon consistent with sub-Saharan African migration patterns where women increasingly migrate independently or as part of household livelihood strategies (Adepoju, 2005; de Haas, 2020). The balanced gender distribution observed in both

categories underscores the GEC's effort to provide inclusive migration services, although further qualitative inquiry may be needed to determine whether gender equity is also reflected in the quality and outcomes of support provided.

While parity in service utilization is encouraging, it does not necessarily translate into gender equality in migration outcomes. Existing studies suggest that female migrants often face structural disadvantages such as occupational segregation, wage discrimination, and exposure to gender-based exploitation, particularly in domestic and informal labour markets (ILO, 2021; Piper, 2008). Therefore, institutions like the GEC must ensure that their interventions go beyond numerical parity to address deeper gendered vulnerabilities within migration governance. This includes offering gender-sensitive pre-departure orientation, targeted skills development, psychosocial counselling, and post-return reintegration support that reflect the distinct needs of women and men.

Moreover, Ghana's National Migration Policy (2016) emphasizes gender mainstreaming as a key pillar for ensuring equitable migration outcomes. However, implementation gaps persist in integrating gender across institutional frameworks and bilateral cooperation agreements (IOM, 2019). The GEC's data, showing near-gender parity in engagement, provide an important empirical foundation to assess whether the Centre's programs effectively operationalize this policy commitment. For instance, the relatively high female participation could indicate that women perceive the Centre as a safer and more credible avenue for migration advice, contrasting sharply with the risks associated with informal or irregular migration networks that disproportionately exploit women (Ruhs, 2018; IOM, 2020).

4.11 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study and analyzed how the Ghanaian–European Centre promotes regular labour migration and supports Ghana’s broader migration governance agenda. The findings show that through counselling, skills training, reintegration support, and policy dialogue, the GEC serves as a practical instrument for implementing national and international migration frameworks.

The discussion established that the Centre’s work reflects migration governance theories such as NELM—highlighting migration as both an individual strategy and a structural process shaped by global inequalities and institutional linkages. The GEC exemplifies an institutional innovation that operationalizes development-oriented migration governance through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

However, challenges remain in scaling up services, institutionalizing funding, and ensuring migrant rights protection. Addressing these issues will require policy coherence, sustainable financing, and continued partnership between Ghana, the EU, and other international actors. A gender perspective was also discussed. The GEC’s data, showing near-gender parity in engagement, provide an important empirical foundation to assess whether the Centre’s programs effectively operationalize this policy commitment. Overall, the GEC provides a promising model for promoting regular, safe, and development-driven labour migration, aligning Ghana’s national interests with global migration governance goals.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the study, highlighting the major findings, drawing conclusions, and providing practical recommendations based on the research. The study examined the role of the Ghanaian–European Centre (GEC) in promoting regular labour migration in Ghana, exploring its institutional mechanisms, service delivery, partnerships, and governance outcomes. This chapter also links the empirical results with theoretical perspectives and the existing literature on migration governance and labour mobility. The chapter is organized into three main sections: summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study adopted a qualitative case study approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and field observation to investigate the GEC’s operations and impacts. The key findings are summarized below according to the research objectives:

5.2.1 Institutional Innovation and Governance

The study revealed that the GEC represents a strategic institutional innovation in Ghana’s migration governance landscape. Originally established as the Ghanaian–German Centre, it has evolved into a Ghanaian–European collaborative hub, reflecting an international partnership model that integrates European and Ghanaian migration priorities. The Centre’s governance structure, composed of technical experts and supported by international agencies (e.g., GIZ, IOM), demonstrates the professionalization and institutionalization of migration management in Ghana.

This aligns with migration governance theory, which emphasizes the need for competent, multi-level institutional actors to manage cross-border labour mobility effectively (Hollifield, 2022; Kureková, 2011).

5.2.2 Promotion of Regular Labour Migration

The GEC provides a range of services aimed at promoting safe and regular migration. These include:

Counselling and awareness creation: Guiding prospective migrants on legal migration procedures and risks associated with irregular migration.

Skills development and employment promotion: Offering vocational training and job readiness programmes aligned with European labour market requirements.

Bilateral labour agreement facilitation: Supporting the negotiation of agreements with European countries, particularly Italy, to enable ethical recruitment and employment protection.

These services contribute to informed decision-making, reduce irregular migration, and enhance labour mobility, consistent with the NELM framework and ILO guidelines (Stark & Bloom, 1985; ILO, 2022).

5.2.3 Reintegration and Developmental Outcome

The GEC implements reintegration programmes for returning migrants, encompassing economic, social, and psychosocial support. Evidence from the study shows that returnees engaged in entrepreneurship, skills application, and local development initiatives after participating in

reintegration programmes. This reinforces the migration-development nexus, illustrating how structured reintegration can turn returnees into agents of economic growth and social transformation (Ammassari, 2019; Sinatti, 2020).

5.2.4 Partnerships and Policy Dialogue

The study found that the GEC actively engages multiple stakeholders—including government agencies, international organizations, civil society, and private sector actors—to ensure coordinated migration governance. While the Centre has a good working relationship with national and international organizations such as IOM, German Chamber of Commerce in Ghana, Goethe Institut, Civil Society Organizations, its main political partner is the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations. The Labour Department has been a major recipient of logistical and technical support which has impacted on its employment promotion and migration management services mandate. By facilitating policy dialogue and technical collaboration, the Centre contributes to the establishment of a multi-actor governance network that enhances institutional coherence and policy effectiveness (Betts, 2011; Geiger & Pécoud, 2020).

5.2.5 Governance Challenges

Despite its successes, the study identified several governance challenges, including:

Limited scalability relative to the national pool of potential migrants.

Dependence on external funding and the need for institutionalization within national policy frameworks.

Persistent vulnerabilities for Ghanaian workers abroad due to weak enforcement mechanisms in bilateral agreements.

Gaps in monitoring and evaluation systems for tracking long-term outcomes.

These challenges highlight the ongoing need for policy refinement, institutional strengthening, and sustainable resource mobilization.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study draws the following conclusions:

The GEC as a model of institutional innovation: The Centre exemplifies a successful multi-stakeholder governance model that integrates international partnership with national policy objectives. Its structure and operations provide a blueprint for professionalized, development-oriented migration management in Ghana.

Promotion of safe and regular migration: The GEC's services effectively enhance awareness, legal compliance, and skills acquisition, enabling migrants to access formal employment channels and reducing the risks associated with irregular migration.

Migration as a development tool: By supporting reintegration, skills transfer, and entrepreneurship, the GEC strengthens the developmental impact of migration, consistent with the NELM and migration systems frameworks.

Importance of partnerships: Multi-level collaboration between government agencies, international organizations, and civil society is critical for effective migration governance. The GEC demonstrates the benefits of coordinated approaches for both origin and destination countries.

Persistent governance gaps: Sustainability, scalability, rights protection, and evidence-based evaluation remain significant challenges. Addressing these gaps is necessary to maximize the Centre's impact and ensure alignment with Ghana's National Migration Policy and international migration frameworks.

In conclusion, the GEC plays a pivotal role in operationalizing development-oriented migration governance in Ghana, but further institutionalization, strategic planning, and resource mobilization are essential to consolidate its achievements.

5.4 Recommendations

The study proposes the following recommendations based on the findings and challenges identified in the operations of the Ghanaian-European Centre.

5.4.1 Institutional Strengthening

The GEC is co-funded by the EU and Germany. It is treated as a project and therefore has an expiration period. It is very important that an approach is adopted to ensure that it is sustainable and continue to deliver its services. This approach could include the Ghana government providing extra support through funds or embed the GEC more firmly within Ghana's public administration structures to reduce dependency on donor funding and ensure long-term sustainability. The state can also consider the establishment of a one-stop state institution to address specific migration concerns of the public. A public institution that will be responsible for delivering comprehensive migration solutions including pre-departure, through departure, settlement at destination, return and reintegration needs to its clients

Though the staff possess the requisite academic and professional expertise and experience to do the job at the Centre, it is very important to further develop their technical expertise. As a social phenomenon, migration issues continue to evolve, the trend and pattern keep changing. Therefore, it is crucial that the staff are given continuous technical training by sponsoring their scholarship in policy analysis, data collection, and reintegration monitoring among others. The EU or Ghana government as partners can take that up.

5.4.2 Policy and Regulatory Enhancement

Scalability strategies: Expand the GEC's outreach to address the growing number of potential migrants, particularly in rural and underserved areas. The migration aspiration among the youth keeps soaring in the face of economic hardship in the country. This has made them prone to adopting all sorts of means to migrate. There is therefore the need to scale up operations to reach out to more of the general population. The Centre can consider expanding infrastructure to other underserved communities or parts of the country beyond Accra. The periodic sensitization and awareness programmes organized at schools should not be limited to just the tertiary institutions. The school tours should include pupils at the Junior High Schools and Senior High School Students.

5.4.3 Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

The GEC must promote deeper collaboration with private sector actors and civil society organizations to enhance job placement, skill acquisition, and reintegration services. The collaboration with Labour Department can be used as a springboard to develop similar ties with

Private Employment Agencies in the country. The idea can be extended to include opinion and community leaders from communities well known for being irregular migration prone. Through that more awareness creation and support services can be extended to the people to reduce the risk of engaging in irregular migration.

Furthermore, the GEC must facilitate regular policy dialogue with European partners to anticipate labour market demand and align Ghanaian migration strategies accordingly.

Concluding Remarks

This study contributes to the scholarly understanding of migration governance by demonstrating the practical application of development-oriented migration management in a West African context. Key contributions include:

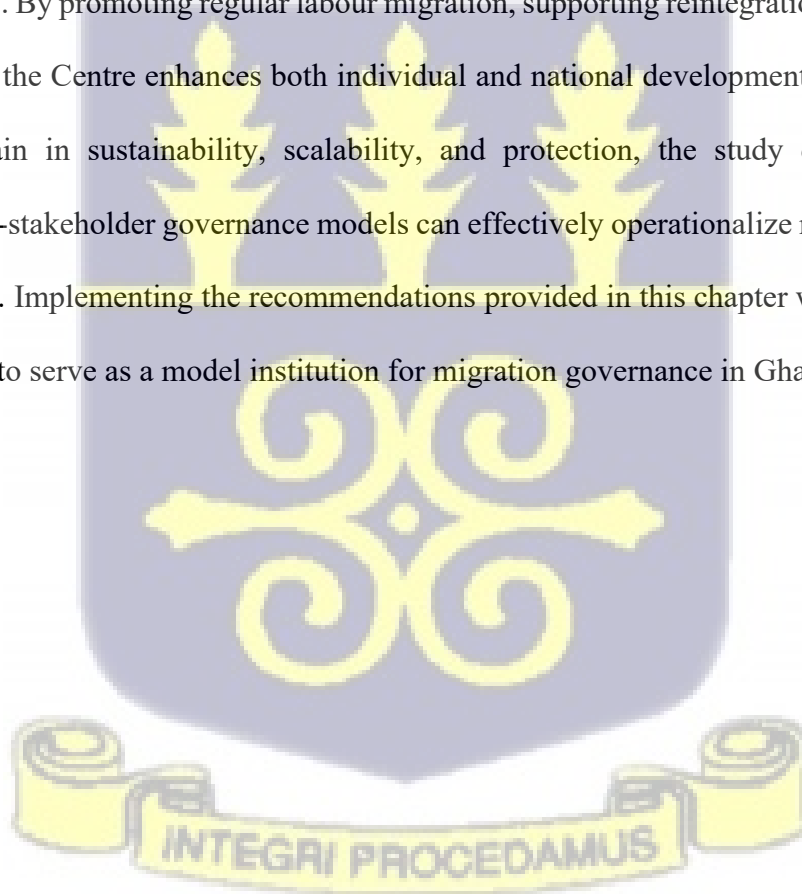
1. Providing empirical evidence of the role of multi-stakeholders like the GEC in promoting regular migration.
2. Linking institutional innovation with theoretical frameworks such as NELM
3. Highlighting the operational challenges and governance gaps in implementing national and international migration policies.

These contributions are relevant for policymakers, migration scholars, and international development actors seeking to improve migration management in Ghana and other West African countries.

While the study offers valuable insights, several limitations are acknowledged:

The research focused on a single institutional case (the GEC), which may limit generalizability to other contexts. Data collection spanned a relatively short period (2023–2024), limiting the assessment of long-term outcomes. Certain operational and financial records of the GEC were not fully accessible due to confidentiality, which constrained some analyses. Future research could adopt a comparative approach across multiple migration centers in West Africa to address these limitations.

In summary, the Ghanaian–European Centre represents a pioneering approach to migration governance that integrates international collaboration, institutional innovation, and development-oriented services. By promoting regular labour migration, supporting reintegration, and facilitating policy dialogue, the Centre enhances both individual and national development outcomes. While challenges remain in sustainability, scalability, and protection, the study demonstrates that structured, multi-stakeholder governance models can effectively operationalize migration as a tool for development. Implementing the recommendations provided in this chapter will strengthen the GEC’s capacity to serve as a model institution for migration governance in Ghana and beyond.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FIELD INSTRUMENTS

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

CENTRE FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

RESEARCH TOPIC: PROMOTING REGULAR LABOUR MIGRATION IN GHANA: A CASE OF THE GHANA-EUROPEAN CENTRE.

This interview guide was designed to create a fluid conversation with the respondent within a 30min to 1-hour duration. I seek to study the promotion of regular labour migration in Ghana: a case of the Ghanaian-European Centre.

I am conducting this research as part of my studies as an MA student of the centre for migration studies, university of Ghana, Legon, Accra. I would be very glad and appreciate it if you could spend sometime to answer the following questions. Be informed that your participation in this exercise is purely voluntary. You can choose to withdraw at any point. The responses you offer are only meant for academic purposes and shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your identity shall not be divulged to any other person or entity. Thank you.

IDENTIFICATION:

REGION-----

MUNICIPALITY-----

CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE-----

PLACE OF INTERVIEW-----

HOUSE NUMBER-----TELEPHONE-----

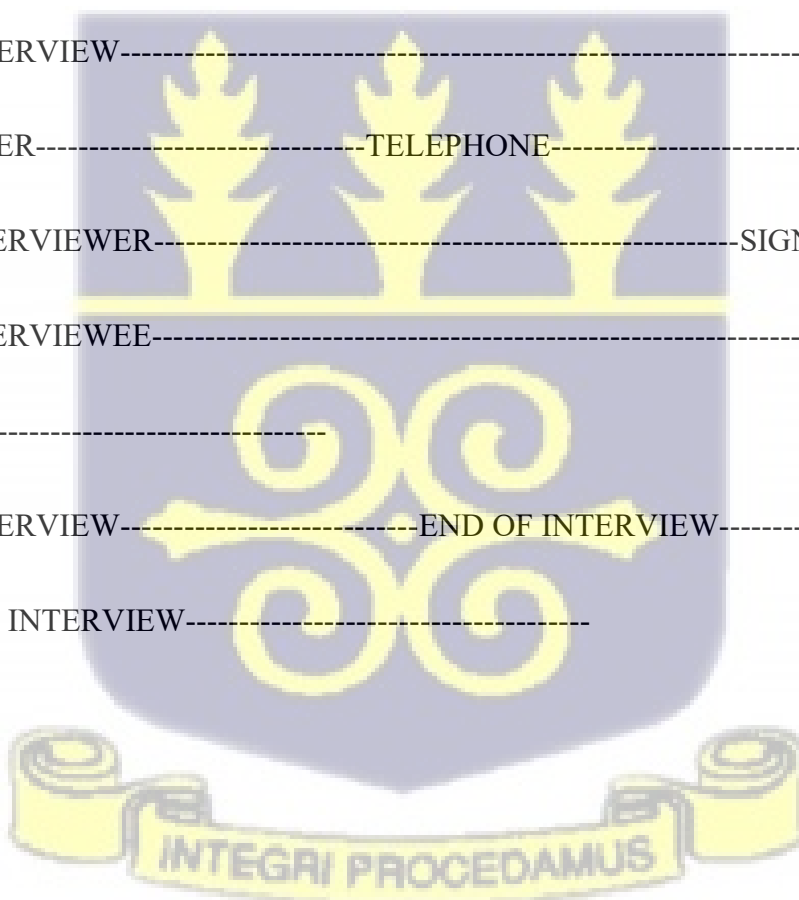
NAME OF INTERVIEWER-----SIGNATURE-----

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE-----

DATE-----

START OF INTERVIEW-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

DURATION OF INTERVIEW-----



1. Introduction and Context

- **Interviewer's Introduction**

- Welcome and brief explanation of the purpose of the interview.
- Highlight the focus on promoting regular labor migration.

- **Respondent Introduction**

- Can you briefly introduce yourself and your role within the Ghanaian-European Centre for Jobs, Migration, and Development?

2. Understanding the Centre's Objectives

- Can you give a brief overview of the four main objectives of the Centre?
- How do these objectives relate to the promotion of regular labor migration between Ghana and Europe?

Section 1: Promoting Regular Labor Migration

1. Overview of Regular Labor Migration Programs

- What strategies does the Centre employ to promote regular labor migration between Ghana and European countries?
- What are the key sectors or industries where regular labor migration is most viable for Ghanaians seeking opportunities in Europe?

2. Challenges and Opportunities

- What are some of the biggest challenges faced in promoting regular migration?

- What opportunities does regular labor migration offer to both Ghana and the European countries?
- How do you address potential risks such as exploitation or irregular migration within the framework of these programs?

3. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Which organizations or government bodies do you collaborate with to ensure that the labor migration process is safe and beneficial for all parties involved?
- How do you engage with employers and recruitment agencies in Europe to ensure that they are aligned with ethical recruitment practices?

4. Impact Measurement

- How does the Centre measure the success of its programs promoting regular labor migration?
- Are there any key indicators or success stories that you can share to demonstrate the impact of the Centre's efforts in this area?

Section 2: Enhancing Skills Development for Employability

1. Skills Gap Analysis

- How does the Centre assess the skills needed in European job markets, and how does this inform training programs for potential migrants?
- Can you give examples of specific skills or training programs that have been developed to meet the needs of European employers?

2. Training and Certification

- What types of certifications or qualifications are necessary for Ghanaians to participate in regular labor migration programs, and how does the Centre facilitate this?
-

Section 3: Supporting Return and Reintegration of Migrants

1. Reintegration Programs

- What support systems does the Centre have in place for Ghanaians who return from Europe after their migration experience?
- How does the Centre help returnees reintegrate into the Ghanaian labor market, and what are the common challenges faced in this process?

2. Leveraging Skills of Returnees

- In what ways does the Centre work to ensure that the skills and experiences gained abroad are utilized effectively in Ghana's development?
-

Section 4: Fostering Policy Dialogue on Migration

1. Policy Advocacy

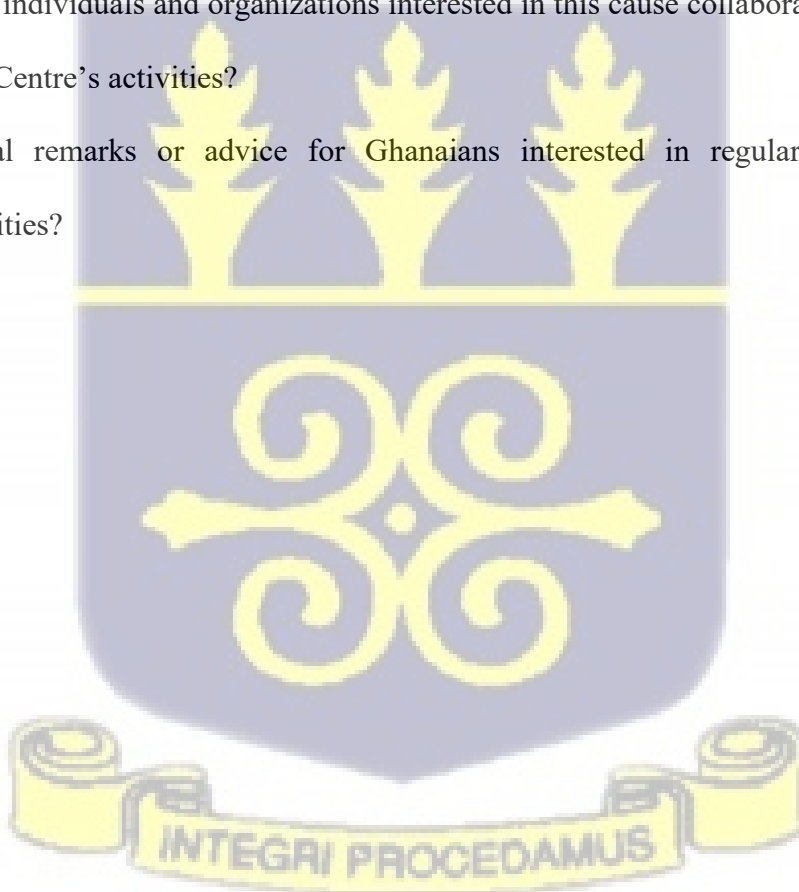
- How does the Centre engage in policy dialogue with Ghanaian and European governments to promote regular labor migration?
- What policies do you think need to be improved or implemented to make regular labor migration more accessible and sustainable?

2. Role in Bilateral Agreements

- Has the Centre been involved in shaping any bilateral agreements between Ghana and European countries on labor migration? If so, could you share some details about this involvement?

Conclusion

- What future goals does the Centre have regarding the promotion of regular labor migration?
- How can individuals and organizations interested in this cause collaborate or get involved with the Centre's activities?
- Any final remarks or advice for Ghanaians interested in regular labor migration opportunities?



APPENDIX B

I am conducting this research as part of my studies as an MA student of the centre for migration studies, university of Ghana, Legon, Accra. I would be very glad and appreciate it if you could spend some time to answer the following questions. Be informed that your participation in this exercise is purely voluntary. You can choose to withdraw at any point. The responses you offer are only meant for academic purposes and shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your identity shall not be divulged to any other person or entity. Thank you.



IDENTIFICATION:

REGION-----

MUNICIPALITY-----

CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE-----

PLACE OF INTERVIEW-----

HOUSE NUMBER-----TELEPHONE-----

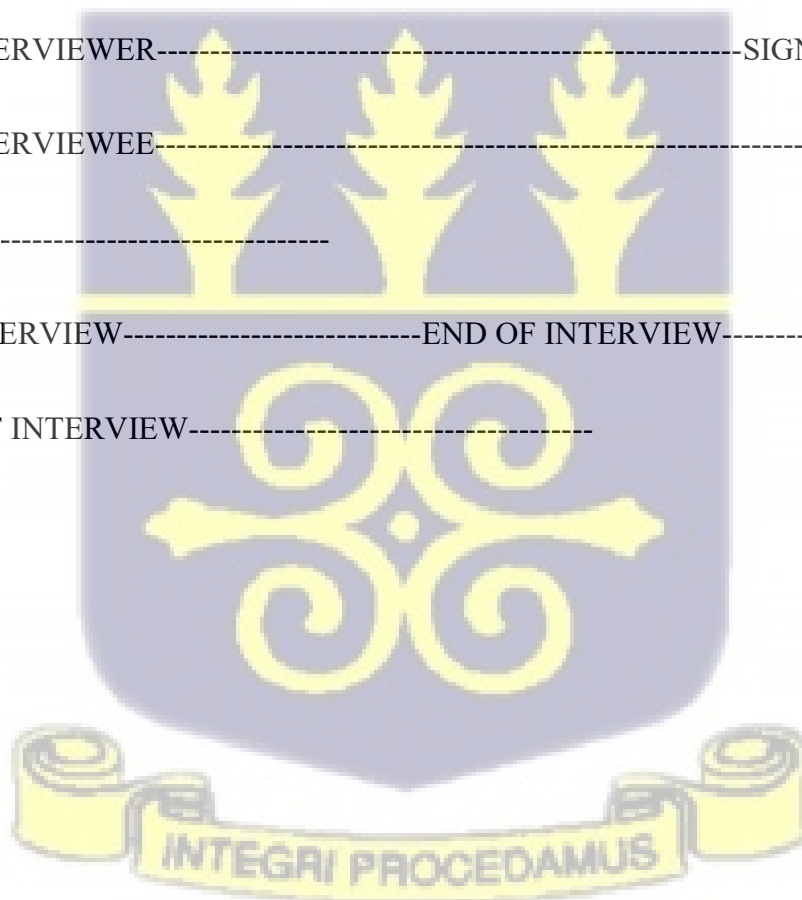
NAME OF INTERVIEWER-----SIGNATURE-----

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE-----

DATE-----

START OF INTERVIEW-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

DURATION OF INTERVIEW-----



Introduction

1. Introduce yourself and the purpose of the interview.
 - Explain that the aim is to understand the impact of the Centre's initiatives.
 - Assure confidentiality, if applicable.
 2. Obtain consent for the interview.
 - Ask for permission to record the interview if needed.
-

Part 1: Background Information

1. **Personal/Institutional Profile**
 - Can you tell me about yourself/your institution?
 - What is your role or position?
 - How many years have you been out of the country?
 2. **Connection to the Centre**
 - How did you hear about the Regular Migration Promoting Centre?
 - When did you first engage with the Centre?
-

Part 2: Services Received

3. **Nature of Engagement**
 - What specific services or programs have you participated in or accessed?
 - How frequently have you engaged with the Centre?

4. Experience with the Services

- Can you describe your experience with the Centre's staff and facilities?
- Were the services tailored to your needs?

5. Skills and Knowledge Acquired

- What skills, training, or knowledge have you gained from the Centre?
- How has this knowledge changed your understanding of regular migration?

Part 3: Impact and Outcomes

6. Personal/Institutional Changes

- How has your life/institution changed since engaging with the Centre?
- Have you noticed any improvement in your ability to navigate migration processes?

7. Community Impact

- Have you shared the knowledge or skills gained with others in your community?
- What has been the response from your community?

8. Challenges Overcome

- What challenges were you facing before engaging with the Centre?
- How has the Centre helped you overcome these challenges?

Part 4: Feedback and Recommendations

9. Satisfaction with the Centre

- Are you satisfied with the services provided by the Centre?
- What aspects of the Centre do you find most helpful?

10. Areas for Improvement

- Are there any areas where you think the Centre could improve?
- Are there services or programs you think should be added?

11. Suggestions for Others

- Would you recommend the Centre to others? Why or why not?

Part 5: Looking Ahead

12. Future Plans

- How do you plan to use the skills or knowledge you've gained from the Centre in the future?
- Do you see yourself continuing to engage with the Centre?

13. Vision for the Centre

- What is your vision for the Centre in the next 5–10 years?
- How do you think the Centre can further promote regular migration in Ghana?

Closing

1. Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.
2. Offer an opportunity for them to share any additional comments or experiences.
3. Provide information on how they can stay in touch for future follow-ups, if applicable.

