

Gender

Women's economic empowerment forum held

By Jemima Okang Addae

“ADOPTING a holistic and multi-dimensional approach is critical to achieving sustained gains in women's economic empowerment efforts,” an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Ghana, Professor Akosua Darkwah has said.

She made the statement at an inception forum for the “Promoting Effective Policies for Women's

Economic Empowerment” (WEE) project.

The forum, held in Accra, brought together a diverse array of multi-sectoral stakeholders from the public, private, academic, and non-profit sectors, intending to introduce them to the research project and solicit their support to ensure a successful implementation.

Empowerment

Elaborating on the project, Professor Darkwah drew attention to the various

ways in which the state's actions could either undermine or promote women's economic empowerment.

“Various studies have signalled how economic reforms by the government, for example, shrunk public sector jobs and undermined the extent to which education served as a path to empowerment for younger Ghanaian women. More recently, state efforts at reducing the negative impact of COVID-19 on Ghanaian citizens were discovered to have gendered outcomes, with women less likely to benefit from the provisions the state made.

“In other jurisdictions, such as Nairobi, Kenya, subsidised child-care significantly increased the percentage of women who joined the workforce,” she noted.

Prof. Darkwah, who is also the Co-Principal Investigator for the WEE project, underscored the importance of paying closer attention to the macro-level decision-making efforts of policymakers and exploring how state policies in various sectors of the economy empower women or otherwise.

This, she said, was pivotal to making “better-concerted efforts to design policies that ultimately empower women.”

Participants commended the

project's comprehensive approach towards addressing the policy formulation and implementation gaps constraining the economic empowerment of the average Ghanaian woman.

They pledged their commitment and proffered collaborative pathways for the achievement of the project's ultimate goal of achieving a critical mass of economically empowered women in Ghana.

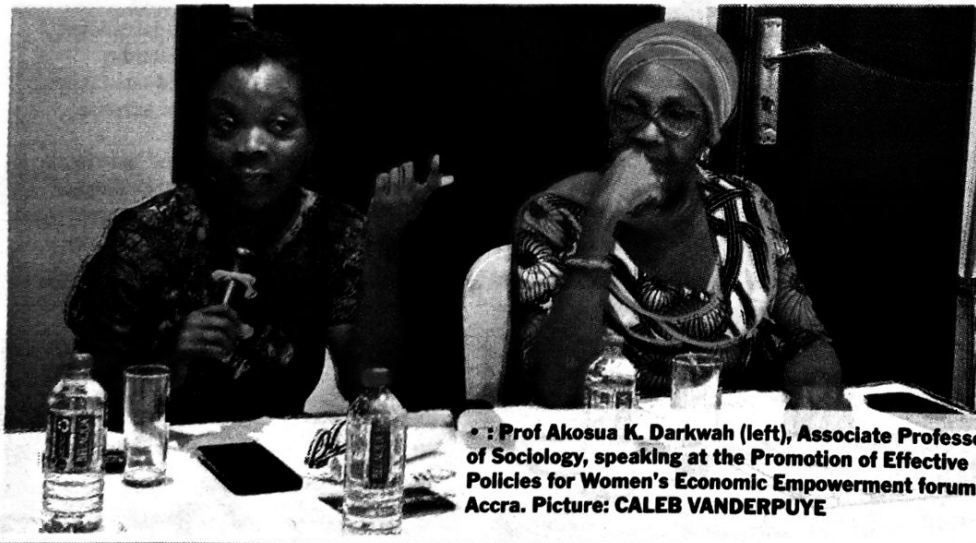
WEE is a nationwide project on women's economic empowerment, featuring research, policy engagement and network-building among women's rights organisations and key female figures across Ghana's business and finance landscape.

It spans a three-year period and aims at achieving a critical mass of economically empowered women in Ghana through the advancement of gender-responsive policy-making.

To achieve this goal, the project's Co-Leads anticipate collaborative work with policymakers, the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), key female figures in business and finance, as well as WEE advocates.

The project is led by three feminist social scientists who are Prof. Akosua K. Darkwah, Prof. Abena Oduro and Prof. Dzodzi Tsikata, together with early career researchers and post-doctoral fellows.

The three are collectively committed to working together to produce evidence and co-create policy solutions to positively change the economic fortunes of Ghanaian women.



• : Prof Akosua K. Darkwah (left), Associate Professor of Sociology, speaking at the Promotion of Effective Policies for Women's Economic Empowerment forum in Accra. Picture: CALEB VANDERPUYE