

LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

Ghana



2026



Key Labour Market Indicators



Population
35 mio



Workforce
13 mio



Informal Employment
78%



Trade Union Rights Violations
2 out of 5

LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

Ghana 2026

FACT SHEET



Labour Force Participation Rate

65%

25%

of population covered by at least one social protection benefit

Trade Union Density

5%



38%

of employees covered by CBAs



Child Labour Rate

6%

33%

Working-age population (15-24 years)

23%

Poverty Rate



24%

of youth not in education, employment or training

PREFACE

The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) is the development organisation of the Danish trade union movement. DTDA's work aligns with the International Labour Organization's global Decent Work Agenda (DWA), based on its four pillars: creating decent jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue. The overall development objective is to eradicate poverty and support the development of just and democratic societies by promoting the DWA.

The DTDA collaborates with trade union organisations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. The programmes' immediate objective is to assist the partner organisations in becoming change agents in their own national and regional labour market context, capable of achieving tangible improvements in the national DWA conditions and the labour-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The labour market profile brings insights to the labour market model and its trends, status, and challenges. It is prepared in collaboration with national partner organisations, providing annual narrative progress reports as part of programme implementation and monitoring. National statistical institutions and international databanks (e.g., ILOSTAT and NATLEX, World Bank Open Data, and other internationally recognised labour-related global indexes) are also used as sources of data and information.

The profile is regularly updated to reflect the latest developments. Labour Market Profiles for more than 20 countries are available on DTDA's website, ensuring stakeholders have access to the most recent information:

<https://www.dtda.dk/>.

The DTDA supports development programmes in Uganda in collaboration with Ghana Trade Union Congress in Ghana (TUC-Ghana).



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ghana’s economy is expected to enter the higher-income group very soon, yet it continues to struggle to translate economic growth into broad-based poverty reduction.

Among the factors contributing to this trend is the erosion of workers’ real incomes due to high consumer price inflation. Although the strictly unemployment rate is relatively low, it masks widespread underemployment and skill mismatches. The income tax system is constrained by a large informal economy and limited tax compliance, undermining the financial sustainability of expanding the welfare system.

The labour market is supported by a well-established legal framework, which is currently undergoing reforms and modernisation.

Regional integration further complements these efforts by facilitating labour mobility and economic cooperation. Even though labour laws define workers’ rights, many informal workers remain excluded from effective legal protection, and some industrial relations continue to face barriers in exercising workers’ rights.

The dynamics of social dialogue have contributed to progress in consensus-building and broader inclusion.

This is reflected in relatively high collective bargaining coverage, while the hybrid labour dispute resolution system is reasonably

effective in the formal sector. Trade union density remains at a medium level compared with neighbouring countries. Unions continue to face challenges arising from privatisation and the restructuring of employment patterns.

Ghana’s workforce is growing rapidly and undergoing structural shifts towards the service sector, which is influenced by climate change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

These alterations are reshaping employment patterns and increasing labour-market vulnerability. For example, there has been a rise in entrepreneurship and gig-based activities rather than stable formal wage employment. Another concern is that the share of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (the NEET rate) is between the highest in West Africa, signalling limited opportunities for skills development and insufficient job creation to ensure meaningful youth participation in productive activities. These circumstances have also contributed to high levels of labour emigration, with mixed effects; for instance, remittance inflows continue to support economic growth, while exported skilled workers create persistent labour shortages in critical sectors.

Better-educated Ghanaian workers are outpacing the creation of decent jobs. This hurdle is linked to a structural imbalance

involving education, economic transformation, and job creation. The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system is undergoing significant reforms, enrolment is increasing, and the number of firms providing formal training has grown rapidly. Despite workers are being trained, the labour market often fails to absorb their skills or utilise them effectively.

The Social Protection Act of 2025 represents a significant milestone, providing a strong statutory foundation for Ghana's social

protection system. However, approximately three out of four Ghanaians lack access to social protection benefits. Furthermore, the expansion of retirement pension coverage has stagnated, leaving coverage levels relatively low and constraining the system's ability to reduce poverty mid older persons. On a more positive note, the number of Ghanaian mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits has increased significantly in recent years, reflecting policy expansion, improved access to benefits, and broader collective bargaining amid formally employed women.

COUNTRY MAP



Source: National Online Project.

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ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Key Findings

- Ghana's economic development has lost pace → labour income share did not increase.
- High inflation erodes the real value of workers' earnings → weak poverty reduction.
- Narrow tax base undermines the welfare system's financial scope.
- Highly climate-vulnerable country → ten demands for just transition agenda.

African Economic Development Model

Ghana has been acknowledged as one of the leading African economic development models, benefitting a stable democracy and an anchor for stability in Western Africa. The country is projected to be classified as a higher middle-income country in 2026. The achievement is linked to a market-based economy with few barriers to trade and investment.

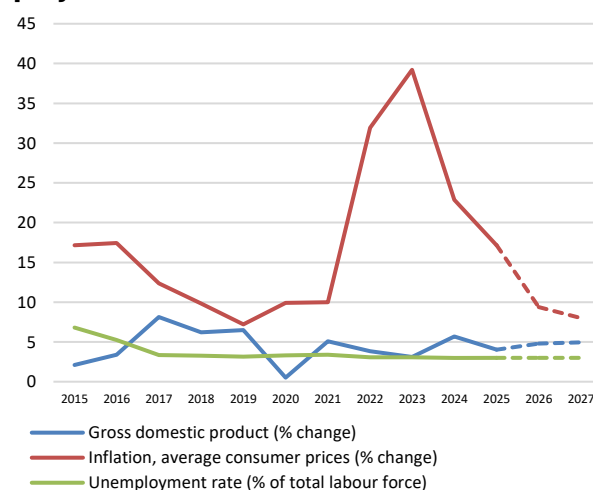
Transformation Slowed Down

Ghana has delivered steady economic growth during the last decade (Figure 1), except some downturns due to impact from the global waves from COVID-19 pandemic and Russian invasion of Ukraine. This growth has been driven by a mix of natural resources, services, industrialisation, and structural reforms.

The service sector is a key driver of economic growth and employment, which are largely

urban-centered. Parts of this sector suffer from low productivity, skill gaps, high informality, and vulnerability to economic shocks. Agricultural modernisation and agro-processing support rural livelihoods and productivity. Progression in manufacturing employment has lost pace in recent years, reflected by downturns in foreign direct investment inflows.

Figure 1: Gross domestic product, inflation, and unemployment growth trends and projections in Ghana, %, 2015–2027



Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Databases.

Alarming High Inflation Erodes Earnings

High inflation in consumer prices has haunted Ghana's economy, reaching historically high levels in recent years (Figure 1). This fast-rising inflation erodes real wages with disproportionate impacts for informal and low-income workers, increase pressure for minimum wage adjustments, heightens poverty risks, and social dialogue tensions. Containing inflation or adjusting wages in line with price increases is critical for protecting worker livelihoods.

Unemployment is Underestimated

Ghana's official unemployment rate is relatively low (see Figure 1 above), but it does not fully reflect labour market conditions. Many individuals are engaged in informal, precarious, or low-hour employment. A large share of the workforce is involved in subsistence agriculture, which is seasonal and characterised by periods of underemployment, often referred to as 'disguised unemployment'.

Weak Poverty Reduction

In Ghana, poverty fell from 53% in 1991 to 24% in 2012, before stagnating at around 23% by 2016.¹ This recent sluggish pace of poverty reduction can be attributed to the economy's inability to generate sufficient productive jobs, inflation eroding real incomes, and weak social protection coverage. These challenges are compounded by high levels of informality and inequality, while fiscal constraints limit the government's capacity for effective redistribution. Without stronger productivity growth in labour-intensive sectors and expanded social protection, economic growth is unlikely to translate into broad-based poverty reduction.

Narrow Income Tax Base

The country's labour market is linked with a progressive income tax system, applying to individuals, businesses, and non-residents earning income. Employee income is taxed through the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system, where employers deduct tax monthly and remit it to the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA). Self-employed persons pay income

tax directly, often in instalments. Allowable deductions and reliefs – such as social security contributions – reduce taxable income. While the system aims to be fair and progressive, challenges remain, such as tax compliance, especially in the informal economy. Because the tax base is narrow, Ghana relies more on indirect taxes (like VAT and levies) and borrowing, which can increase public debt.

Just Transition Agenda

A Highly Climate-Vulnerable Country

Climate change is increasingly affecting Ghana's labour market, particularly in agriculture and fisheries, employing a large portion of the population. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, directly impact crop yields, fish stocks, and productivity. These factors lead to seasonal employment fluctuations, income instability, and job losses.

Workers in informal and subsistence-based occupations are especially vulnerable due to lack of social protection, limited adaptive capacity, and low access to climate-resilient technologies. Urban labour markets are also indirectly affected, as climate-induced migration from rural to urban areas increases competition for low-skilled jobs and strains urban infrastructure.

National Green Jobs Strategy

Ghana has made policy progress in addressing climate change. A central aspect

is the National Green Jobs Strategy, which was launched in 2015, supporting climate-aligned employment, skills development, and protection of workers' rights. Recent improvements reflect a gradual mainstreaming of green employment and just transition principles into national development planning. While policy frameworks are becoming more coherent and internationally aligned, the measurable labour market impact remains moderate due to structural constraints and the widespread informal economy.

Demands for Just Transition Agenda

The trade union movement in Ghana is increasingly engaging with climate change and the Just Transition agenda to protect workers' rights and livelihoods. Unions participate in social dialogue, workshops, and training programmes with the ILO and other partners to understand how climate and energy transitions affect jobs and to advocate for inclusive policies.

Their activities focus on raising awareness, building capacity, and ensuring that climate action does not exacerbate inequalities. While union engagement is growing, it remains largely in the realm of advocacy and capacity-building, with formal institutional mechanisms still emerging.

They have also been involved in the regional rising demands calling for the Just Transition Agenda (see also details in Appendix Table 6).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Key Findings

- Ghana promotes initiatives to modernise its labour market legal framework.
- Regional integration is policy-coherent rather than deeply harmonised but gained some pressure on national labour regulations.
- Compliance with fundamental labour rights is stable.

Reforming Solid Legal Framework

Ghana's labour-related legal framework is covered by a series of laws, primarily governed by **the Labour Act of 2003**. This Act focuses on employment and labour relations, applying broadly to workers and employers in the formal sector. Other regulations and instruments support implementation of the Labour Act, including:

- **Labour Regulations of 2007** – extending many employment practice provisions and clarifies details such as employment services and agents.
- **National Labour Commission Regulations of 2006** – concerning procedures for labour dispute resolution.
- **Workmen's Compensation Act of 1987** – mandating that employers pay compensation to employees for personal injuries or death caused by accidents arising out of and in the course of employment.

Currently, Ghana is pursuing legal reforms to modernise its labour laws, with the aim of improving workplace protections, expanding social and gender equity, and aligning with international labour standards (see Box 1).

Box 1: Legal Labour-Related Reforms

Latest labour-related reforms include:

- Labour Act of 2003 is being revised to modernize workplace protections, including rules for remote work, flexible schedules, and improved definitions for work in a 24-hour economy.
- Introduction of paternity leave alongside maternity leave to promote family-friendly workplace policies.
- Efforts to extend pension coverage to informal sector workers with flexible contribution schemes.

These initiatives are considered as positive developments to enhance worker protections and improve workplace safety.

Laws Protect Workers' Rights

Ghanian workers' basic rights to freedom of association are enshrined in the Constitution, as well as regulated by law. It prohibits anti-union discrimination but does not provide adequate means of protection against it. The rights to collective bargaining and strike are also recognised by law.² Some legal barriers that restrict workers to practice their rights are detected (see Appendix Table 4).³

Hurdles to Fully Realise RTAs

Ghana's labour-related legal framework is largely consistent with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) principles. It promotes free movement of workers, improving labour standards, and fosters regional labour cooperation. ECOWAS's labour governance remains not legally binding oriented, and the country's labour standards are more directly shaped by domestic legislation and ILO obligations than by ECOWAS legal instruments.

The African Continental Free Trade Area's (AfCFTA) offers Ghana opportunities to expand employment, enhance skills, and improve labour standards through regional integration. But it challenges the country to manage labour mobility, ensure compliance with decent work standards, and protect informal workers, requiring policy adjustments and institutional capacity-building. Trade unions across Africa, through the Tunis Declaration, have called for the inclusion of labour rights and social clauses in the AfCFTA to ensure alignment with international labour standards and the Decent Work Agenda.⁴

Weak Legal Enforcement

While the labour market's legal framework may spell out workers' rights, most workers operate in the informal economy without a guarantee of rights and are exposed to unfair labour practices. The implementation and enforcement of regulations furthermore remain weak due to institutional challenges and limited resources.⁵

Ratified ILO Conventions

International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions enumerate international principles and rights at work. Appendix Table 5 shows that eight out of ten Fundamental Conventions and two of four Governance Conventions have been ratified, and 13 of 178 Technical Conventions are up-to-date and actively promoted. The latest ratified convention is the Work in Fishing Convention (C188) in 2024. This ratification marks a significant step toward improving labour rights and working conditions for fishers. Implementation efforts are underway, with positive early impacts and ongoing work to ensure full compliance and broader sector engagement.

CEACR Observations

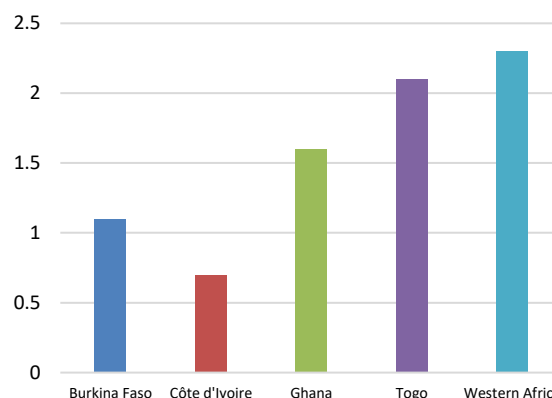
The ILO’s independent supervisory system body – the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) – has observations and direct requests for conventions. The CEACR observes that a new Labour Act is being drafted and the Labour Regulations in line with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (C087) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (C098).

Labour Rights Compliance

The Sustainable Development Goals indicator 8.8.2 measures compliance with fundamental labour rights. Based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, Ghana’s scoring has been stable during the

last decade, landing below compared with the Western Africa average (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Level of national compliance with labour rights among Ghana and neighbouring countries, 2024



Note: The value ranges from 0 to 10, with 0 being the best possible score (indicating higher levels of compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining (FACB) rights) and 10 the worst (indicating lower levels of compliance with FACB rights based on ILO textual sources and national legislation).

Sources: International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

SOCIAL PARTNERS

Key Findings

- Authorities’ mandate is constrained by structural economic and fiscal realities.
- Unionism is challenged by a stalled growth in membership.
- Employers’ organisations encounter shifts in industrial terrain.

The social partners constitute the tripartite labour governance system, and the central institutions are summarised below:

Government

Ministry Authority for Labour Issues

The Ministry of Labour, Jobs, and Employment (MLJE), which was renamed in 2025, represents the government in the industrial relations system. It connects with its subordinate institutions at the core, complemented by tripartite and sector-specific mechanisms. The ministry mandates to overall labour market performance, regulate wages and promote industrial harmony via the tripartite system, ensure workplace safety, and create a policy environment conducive to job creation and professional development.

Key Institutions Under MLJE

The ministry is managing several central institutions with importance for the market's dynamics:

- **National Labour Commission (NLC)**, responsible for ensuring compliance with labour regulations and settling industrial disputes.
- **Factories Inspectorate**, responsible for monitoring occupational safety and compliance with labour laws in factories.
- **Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC)**, responsible for regulating wage structures, particularly in the public sector.
- **National Pensions Regulatory Authority (NPRA)**, responsible for regulating and overseeing the pension system, operating as a semi-autonomous agency under the supervision of MLJE.

Coordinates Ministries and Agencies

The MLJE is linked with the social protection and vocational training system, involving coordination with multiple ministries, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET), and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD).

Institutional Governance Weaknesses

The MLJE's main challenges are institutional capacity constraints, facing a widespread informal economy, fiscal pressures, and structural labour market weaknesses. While Ghana's legal framework is relatively comprehensive, implementation gaps reduce the effectiveness of labour protections and employment promotion efforts. The Ministry's impact on the labour market is therefore significant in principle but constrained in practice by structural economic and fiscal realities.

Trade Unions

Trade Unions Play a Central Role

Trade unions in Ghana are essential players in the labour market. They are supported by a legal and organisational system from the Labour Act of 2003 and the Trade Union Congress Act of 1965, guaranteeing workers' rights.

By law, trade unions not only protect and advocate for workers but also influence

labour policies and contribute to industrial peace. In recent years, the trade union movement has been particularly involved in securing higher wages and better working conditions, protecting workers' rights from unfair practices, expanding collective bargaining, and social protection. Influencing national labour policy and advocating for informal workers also influenced the labour market. See the trade unions' structure system in Box 2.

Box 2: Status of Trade Unions in Ghana

- The trade union movement in Ghana is relatively well-structured, with two national centres, a range of sectoral unions, non-affiliated national unions, and enterprise-based unions.
- The two main trade union centres represent almost 550,000 organised workers, concentrated in the **Trade Union Congress – Ghana** represents 500,000 organised workers, out of which 350,000 are paying dues,⁶ while the **Ghana Federation of Labour** represents 48,200 members.⁷
- The trade union density rate reached app. 4.7% of total employment (or 18% of employees), landing at the medium level compared with neighbouring countries.⁸
- While unions are expanding into the informal economy and emerging sectors, their influence is constrained by high informality and a lack of awareness or incentives.

Challenged Unionism

Trade unions in Ghana have struggled to expand membership due to a derailed formal sector, high informality, and union fragmentation (pluralism). These circumstances not only complicate to expand the collective bargaining coverage but also organising workers from the informal economy, which is haunted by weak enforcement of labour rights in practice. Economic structural adjustment programmes, privatisation, impacts for climate change and the fourth industrial revolution have further contested½ the unionism landscape, reshuffling traditional characteristics.

Repeated Violations of Rights

Ghana is ranked 2 out of 5 (5 is the worst) on the Global Rights Index in 2026, dealing with weaknesses of collective labour rights, under some repeated attacks by governments and/or companies, and complications for better working conditions.

Employers' Organisations

Actors in the Industrial Relation System

In Ghana, employers' organisations are well-established at the national level and sectoral associations maintain some decentralised operational focus. They recognise actors in the industrial relations system, playing institutional roles in policy dialogue, advocate for employer interests in labour and economic policy, and provide services to members across sectors.

Box 3: Central Employers' Organisations

- **Ghana Employers' Association (GEA):** Main voice with about 1,500 registered enterprises and not-for-profit organisations, sub-divided into 20 interest groups.⁹
- **Private Enterprise Federation (PEF):** Umbrella body, linking major employers' associations, with 12 affiliated organisations.¹⁰

Navigating Shift in Industrial Terrain

The employers' organisations encounter a volatile economic environment, complex industrial relations, and evolving workplace dynamics. The main challenges include navigating macroeconomic instability, addressing rising industrial disputes, adapting to digital transformation, and ensuring compliance with emerging environmental and labour regulations.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE**Key Findings**

- A multi-layered legal framework for social dialogue sets the dynamics of the labour market.
- Collective bargaining agreement (CBAs) coverage is relatively high.
- The labour dispute system is reasonably effective in the formal sector but encounters complications that limit its inclusiveness.

Social dialogue plays an important role in addressing labour-related socio-economic issues through negotiation, consultation, and the exchange of information among social partners. Its effectiveness depends on mutual trust, institutional capacity, and an enabling legal environment.

Multi-Layered Legal Framework

The dynamics of Ghana's labour market model is based on a multi-layered legal framework for social dialogue rooted in international labour standards (revisit Appendix Table 5), national legislation, especially the Labour Act of 2003 covering formal workers, and tripartite consultation structures. These formal social dialogue structures have marginalised informal workers, even though some efforts exist to improve their participation (see the Informal Economy sub-section).

Progress in Social Dialogue

Ghana has made some steps forward in social dialogue, with active tripartite institutions (see Box 4). Government commitment has evolved, engaging social partners on issues such as productivity, green jobs, and cost-of-living adjustments. Cooperation between the TUC-Ghana and employers' organisations has become more consensus-driven, while efforts to organise informal-economy workers signal steps toward broader inclusion. This practice indicates progress beyond legislation toward improved practices.

The social dialogue's scope is reflected by its relatively high collective bargaining

agreement (CBAs) coverage: latest data available showed that almost two out of five (38%) of employees (i.e., paid employment) were protected, which, for example, was 14 percentage points higher than Togo's.¹¹

Box 4: Central Tripartite Institutions

The leading tripartite cooperation institutions in Ghana are listed below:

- **National Tripartite Committee (NTC)** is a statutory, tripartite advisory and decision-making body, including to determine the National Daily Minimum Wage and advise government on employment, labour laws, industrial relations, and occupational safety & health policy.
- **National Labour Commission (NLC)** is an independent body to manage industrial relations processes, containing facilitates and settles industrial disputes, including negotiation support, mediation, and arbitration (see Figure 3 ahead).
- **Labour Courts** handle unresolved disputes from the NLC, providing legal enforcement of labour rights.

Although these institutions are legally sound and strategically positioned to improve labour relations, they struggle with capacity limitations, weak enforcement, and stakeholder disconnects.

Social Dialogue Limitations Persist

Social dialogue encounters limitations that constrain its effectiveness and inclusiveness. This complexity is associated to several factors: Compliance with labour laws, especially in private informal enterprises, can be uneven, weakening the authority of dialogue institutions.

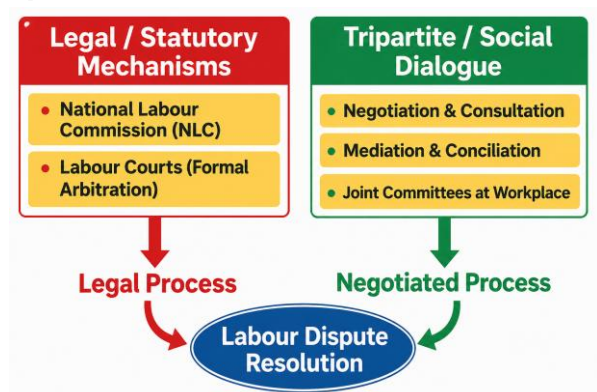
Most informal workers remain under-represented in national dialogue forums, limiting their voice in wage-setting, policy discussions, and labour protections. It creates gaps in coverage across the labour market. In addition, dialogue is often centred on wage disputes or industrial conflict, with less proactive engagement on structural issues like social protection, skills development, or future-of-work challenges.

Industrial Relations Dispute System

The labour dispute system in Ghana is based on a hybrid model, linking with legal and tripartite mechanisms. It combines formal statutory mechanisms with tripartite social dialogue from the National Labour Commission (NLC) and Labour Courts coupled with alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods via mediation, conciliation, and arbitration.

Figure 3 below provides a visual representation of the labour dispute system's processes and approaches.

Figure 3: Ghana’s Hybrid Labour Dispute System



Source: DTDA research.

Labour Dispute System Status

The labour dispute system is effective in the formal sector. Recent reports revealed that out of 315 settlements of industrial complaints, NLC handled 57% (181 cases) in 2023. On the positive side, out of the 27 industrial actions, all industrial disputes involving strikes and work stoppages were resolved. It is worth mentioning that resolution cases of industrial disputes through arbitration have been on a rise.¹²

Labour Dispute Challenges

Several challenges limit the dispute resolution system’s effectiveness and inclusiveness. Informal workers are often excluded due to a lack of legal recognition, contracts, and union representation.

Capacity constraints, weak follow-up mechanisms, and lengthy legal procedures reduce the credibility and use of the system. Limited awareness of dispute resolution mechanisms among workers also hampers the effective utilisation of both ADR and formal channels.

STATUS OF WORKING CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- Well-functioning wage system set by the National Tripartite Committee.
- Nominal minimum wage is growing steady but with deep drops in real terms.
- Most unskilled and informal workers often earn below the cost of living.

Working conditions directly affect workers’ well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction. The state of these conditions has broader implications for the labour market, influencing economic performance, employment patterns, and social stability.

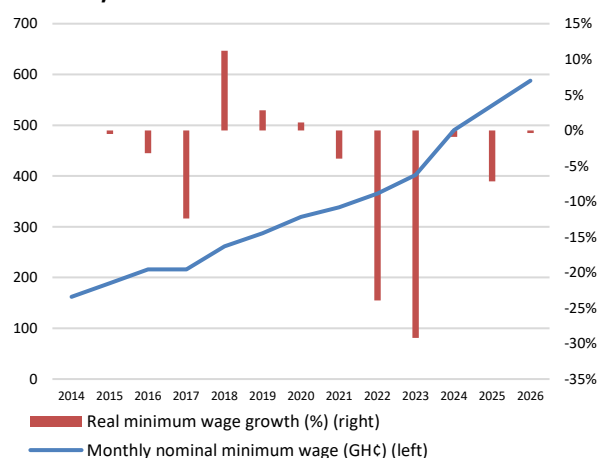
Dual Wage-Setting Structure

Ghana’s wage system is based on a national minimum wage set by the National Tripartite Committee, applying to both public and private sector workers. Public-sector employees are paid under the Single Spine Salary Structure, which standardises salaries, according to job rank, qualifications, and experience. Private-sector wages are mainly determined through negotiation, meeting the minimum wage requirement.

Inflation Undermines Wage Gains

Although the minimum wage is yearly adjusted in Ghana, it is not increasing in real terms (reducing inflation in consumer prices), even with deep drops during the 2020s (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Nominal Monthly Minimum Wage (Ghanaian Cedi) and Its Real Growth (%) in Ghana, 2015–2026



Source: DTDA estimations on real minimum wage growth

As a result, Ghanaian workers’ real earnings have declined in recent years, as the cost of living has risen faster than wage adjustments. Consequently, many workers can afford less than they previously could, despite nominal increases in wages. Combined with weak enforcement of labour regulations in the informal economy and limited bargaining power, this situation has negatively affected many workers, leaving them without sufficient income to maintain a basic standard of living.

Pressures on Wage Tax Systems

In Ghana, limited revenues from wage and income taxes reduce the fiscal space available for labour market interventions. It is a challenge compounded by macroeconomic instability and weak enforcement of tax and labour regulations. As indicated, inflationary pressures have further contributed to the erosion of real wages.

TRENDS THAT AFFECT THE LABOUR MARKET

Key Findings

- The employment structure is undergoing some structural shifts.
- Productive, formal job creation is not keeping pace with labour supply.
- The Fourth Industrial Revolution is emerging to change the labour markets landscape.

The workforce is shaped by a combination of structural challenges and evolving global trends. The following contemporary issues influence employment dynamics, job quality, and labour market inclusivity:

Workforce Lags Behind

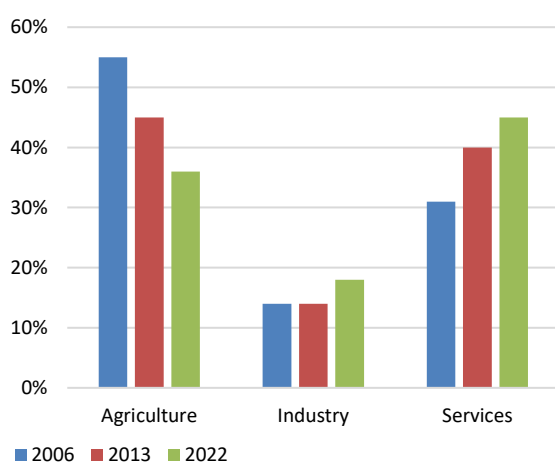
The rapidly growing young population in Ghana represented 35 million in 2025, of which almost 50% are under 20. The population is projected to almost double, reaching at least 50 million in 2050.¹³

The workforce grows slower, reaching 13.3 million people in 2025;¹⁴ for instance, the labour force participation rate experienced a significant drop, reaching 59%. This trend is mainly due to longer education periods, discouraged job seekers, emigration, and structural economic shifts. The impact is a relatively smaller active workforce, higher dependency ratios, and slower economic growth.

Workforce Structural Shifts

Ghana's workforce is undergoing structural changes characterised by a shift from rural, agriculture-based employment to increasingly urban, service-oriented, and digitally connected work (see Figure 5). Workers experience growing participation in entrepreneurship and gig-based activities rather than stable formal wage employment. Currently, at least one out of two workers are operational in urban areas. Despite the expanding opportunities in services and technology, the pace of job creation has not fully matched rapid population growth, resulting in persistent high underemployment.

Figure 5: Share of employment by economic activity in Ghana, %, 2006–2022



Source: Ghana Living Standards Surveys.

4IR Reshapes Ghana's Labour Market

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is gradually reshaping Ghana's labour market by accelerating digitalisation, altering job structures, and increasing demand for new skills. While its overall impact remains uneven, several structural changes are emerging (see Box 5).

Box 5: 4IR Structural Changes

The 4IR in Ghana is not yet transforming the labour market at scale, but it is reinforcing structural trends.

- **Digital technologies are expanding employment opportunities in services**, including platform-based work. It contributes to more non-standard and precarious forms of employment, especially among youth.
- **Automation and digital tools** are beginning to affect routine and low-skilled jobs, particularly in manufacturing and administrative services.
- The 4IR phenomenon is **intensifying skills mismatches**. Employers increasingly demand digital, technical, and soft skills, while education and training systems are still adapting.
- The **expansion of digital platforms and informal digital work** is reinforcing existing labour market dualities: While new income opportunities emerge, many workers remain outside formal labour regulations and social protection systems.

Trade unions are aware of the challenges posed by the 4IR and are increasingly advocating for a "just transition" approach that ensures technological progress benefits workers as well as employers.

THEMATIC DIMENSIONS

SETTING THE WORKFORCE

Cross-cutting issues notably affect the labour market when intersecting with various economic, social, and environmental dimensions, impacting workers and employers across multiple sectors.

Informal economy

The informal economy plays a dual role in labour markets, providing a critical employment buffer with a structural constraint on labour productivity, wages, and social protection.

Informality Dominance

About 78% of employment in Ghana operate in the informal economy – especially in trade, agriculture, transport, small-scale manufacturing, and services. It leads to low-income security, weak legal protections, and limited access to social protection.¹⁵ For instance, this situation is characterised by small businesses, self-employment, casual labour, and family-based enterprises, often without formal registration.

Formalise Labour Market Initiatives

The country is actively pursuing initiatives to formalise its labour market through structured employment programmes, better labour data systems, supportive micro-, small-, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) formalisation, and collaborative policy development. Formalisation is progressing gradually rather than through sweeping

policies. Barriers such as cost, bureaucratic procedures, limited formal credit access and skills mismatches also trigger slow uptake.

Tripartite Informal Economy Forum

The Tripartite National Informal Economy Forum in Ghana exists as a formalised dialogue mechanism, intended to bring government, employers, and workers together on labour issues. Its practical implementation appears ongoing and still developing, with early institutional steps taken. It is without broad, highly visible impact reports or outcomes at scale. Instead, the forum is still being consolidated as a policy instrument rather than fully established with regular influence on national reforms.¹⁶

Organising Informal Workers

Both trade unions and employers' organisations are increasingly engaged in initiatives that support labour market formalisation. Trade unions focus on organising informal workers and extending representation. Employers' organisations prioritise improvements in the business environment and enterprise development. However, structural challenges continue to limit the overall impact of these efforts, such as the dominance of informal employment, high costs associated with formalisation for small enterprises, weak enforcement of labour and business regulations, and low social contribution (i.e., compulsory financial payments to social security schemes).

Migration

Migration flows significantly influence the labour market by shaping labour supply and demand, wage levels, skills distribution, and social dynamics.

Migration Legal and Policy Status

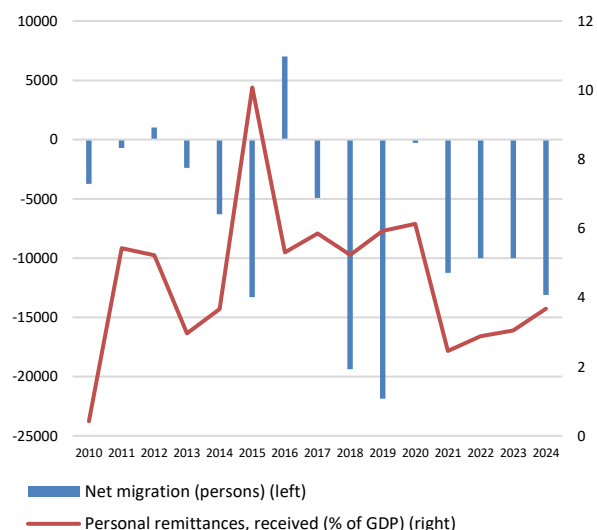
Ghana has developed progressive migration policies and regional commitments that recognise migration as a development and labour market asset; for instance, the ECOWAS Labour Migration Strategy and Action Plan (2025–2035). The national legal framework is still fragmented, with ongoing encounters in implementation, enforcement, and integration of policies into binding law. It affects how effectively migration is managed and how labour market benefits are realised.

Emigration and Remittance Flows

Many Ghanaians, especially working-age adults, emigrate abroad for a combination of economic, professional, educational, and social reasons employment or better opportunities. This condition is echoed in a relatively high negative net-migration flow in recent years. The phenomenon is especially pronounced among skilled professionals such as nurses, doctors, engineers, teachers, and IT workers, although many lower-skilled workers also migrate to other African countries. This migration outflow has contributed to a significant inflow of personal remittances (see Figure 6). It is worth mentioning that the latter indicator peaked with 10% of GDP in 2015 but dwindled afterwards. These remittances resulted from higher earnings in host countries, improved

money transfer systems, favourable exchange rate effects, and supportive policies.

Figure 6: Net migration and personal remittance in Ghana, 2010–2024



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

Migration from internal rural areas to cities has furthermore shifted the structure of the labour market. It has contributed change labour from low-productivity agriculture into industry and services, supporting employment transformation. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been limited.

Migration Impact on the Labour Market

The high emigration of workers creates a dual effect: while remittances and diaspora engagement provide economic benefits, the loss of skilled labour – known as “brain drain” – creates persistent shortages in the mentioned critical sectors. As many migrant workers are absorbed into the informal economy, it can further place additional pressure on already weak regulatory and enforcement systems.

Trade Unions and Labour Migration

Ghana's trade union movement is increasingly active in migration-related labour issues. They have a growing emphasis on fair recruitment and decent work for migrant workers, union collaboration across borders (e.g., with Nigerian unions and regional networks), and participation in policymaking and data systems related to labour migration. Thus, their involvement reflects a shift towards rights-based, collaborative engagement in migration governance, rather than purely national labour disputes.

Child Labour

Child labour has several adverse effects on the labour market. It provides a source of cheap labour, allowing employers to pay lower wages. This factor is often connected with a lack of decent wages and job opportunities, forcing families to rely on child labour for survival. These child labourers grow into unskilled adults and are more likely to remain in low-paying, unstable jobs.

Laws Combating Child Labour

Ghana has a solid framework to combat child labour, grounding in its international commitments (revisit Appendix Table 5). The government implements the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023–2027). This plan targets priority sectors where child labour is most prevalent, such as agriculture, fishing, mining and informal work.

Trade Unions and Child Labour

Trade unions – especially the TUC-Ghana and the General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) – play a growing but still limited role in combating child labour. Their contributions span awareness raising and sensitisation, policy advocacy and campaign, organising informal workers.¹⁷

Child Labour is Relatively Low

According to available data, Ghana has one of the lowest child labour (i.e., economic activity) rates in the region. It was estimated at 6% for children aged 5–17, which was 15 percentage points lower than the sub-Saharan Africa average of 21%.¹⁸ This relatively low child labour rate reflects the scale of how the labour market is following the laws and regulations.

Although national regulations and plans to fight against child labour, the widespread informal economy weakens the aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Reports recorded that Ghana has demonstrated 'moderate advancement' in these efforts.¹⁹

Factors Stick with Child Labour

In Ghana, child labour is not just due to a weak law enforcement but deeply rooted in poverty, education gaps, cultural expectations, and weak social protection. Legal frameworks and trade unions can help, but addressing causes requires integrated social, economic along with educational interventions, leading to alternative and sustainable sources of livelihood.

Gender

Gender shapes labour market dynamics, affecting employment opportunities, wages, job security, and economic growth.

Improved Gender Equality by Law

Ghana has demonstrated a political commitment to promoting gender equality through legislative measures, policy frameworks, and institutional initiatives. A recent important legislative step was the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act of 2024, aiming at to boost women's participation. Despite the improved legal groundwork, measurable improvements in women's labour market status will depend on effective enforcement, complementary social policies (e.g., childcare support, maternity benefit), and broader cultural change.

Trade Unions and Gender Equity

Ghana's trade union movement increasingly recognises the need to advance gender equity both internally and in collective bargaining.²⁰ Many unions have women's committees or gender desks to represent women members and highlight gender concerns. There are ongoing efforts to strengthen gender-responsive policies, building women's leadership, and integrate gender issues into core union work.²¹ The new Gender Equity Act adds a strong legal impetus for unions to accelerate progress, though cultural norms and institutional challenges remain key obstacles that unions must actively address.

Employment Gender Disparities

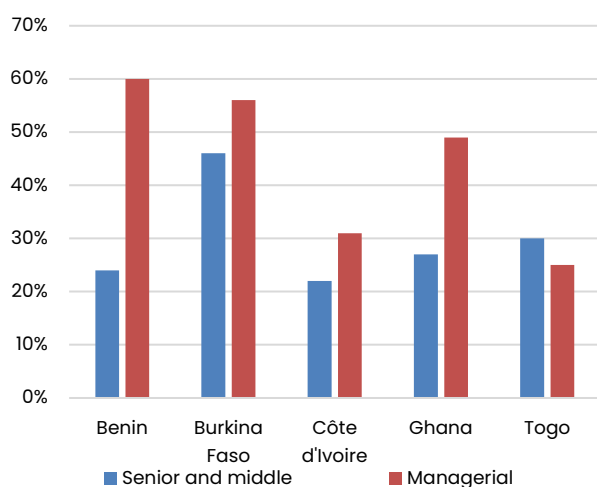
The main characteristics of employment-related gender disparities in Ghana reflect a combination of structural, cultural, economic, and policy factors. These factors affect women's participation, wages, advancement, and working conditions across formal sectors and the informal economy. Data show that women's labour force participation rate is lower than men's and are overrepresented in lower-paying sectors, such as agriculture and informal trading. Ghanaian women workers even earn 34% less than men.²² This gap is larger in the informal economy, where most women are employed. These circumstances support the fact that real gains in women's labour market outcomes have been limited. It is haunted by structural deeper socio-economic barriers such as care burdens and labour market discrimination. An impact of the Gender Equity Act of 2024 implementation is at an early stage to assess.

Status of Women's Leadership

Ghanaian women occupy a growing number of managerial roles, particularly in sectors like healthcare, education, telecommunications, banking, and public administration. This improvement is driven by reforms of the public sector and civil service regulations, requiring women's inclusion in leadership appointments. Also, women entering the workforce today often have higher educational qualifications. It includes university degrees and professional certifications, which has improved their chances for promotions.

However, this leadership gain is uneven, slow, and sector specific. Data show that Ghanaian women in senior and middle management positions are not improving, landing roughly at the medium level compared with the neighbouring countries (Figure 7). It is worth mentioning that this proportion reflects several statistical hurdles, such as the dominance of women in informal enterprises and small sample sizes in the formal sector. The scope of these managerial positions therefore does not fully indicate gender parity in leadership.

Figure 7: Proportion of women in senior, middle and management positions in Ghana and neighbouring countries, %, latest data



Note: Comparing data from the countries could diverge from different national survey structures.

Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Youth

Youth is the labour market's future backbone, playing a central role in shaping employment trends, productivity, and economic growth.

Youthful Population

Ghana's population structure has a 'youth bulge', a term used to describe the increase in the youthful population. Around 33% of the working-age population were youth (aged 15–24 years) and accounted for a substantial portion of the population, reaching at least 6.2 million.²³ Overall, around 69% of the population is under 30 years of age, considered the country's age structure is heavily skewed.

Contested Youth Policies

The country has a relatively vigorous set of policies and institutions to support youth entering the labour market. This includes from statutory agencies (like the Youth Employment Agency) to targeted programmes for skills, internships, entrepreneurship, and job placements. Despite this multifaceted support, youth job creation is still insufficient relative to the fast-growing number of entrants into the workforce. Particularly, labour market mismatches and informal employment dominance continue to limit the effectiveness of policy measures.

Trade Unions and Youth

The trade union movement in Ghana is actively engaging with youth labour issues in multiple ways, such as empowering young workers with knowledge and rights education and building union capacity and youth leadership. They are also advocating on broader labour market policies that affect youth employment, as well as addressing structural issues like child labour and

informal work that affect young people’s entry into decent employment.

Trade unions still struggle with low youth representation in union leadership and the need to make unions more attractive to younger worker. But they are adapting strategies, provide support, and amplify youth voices within the trade union movement; for instance, the incorporation of a youth structure within TUC-Ghana and all affiliate unions.

Youth Employment Characteristics

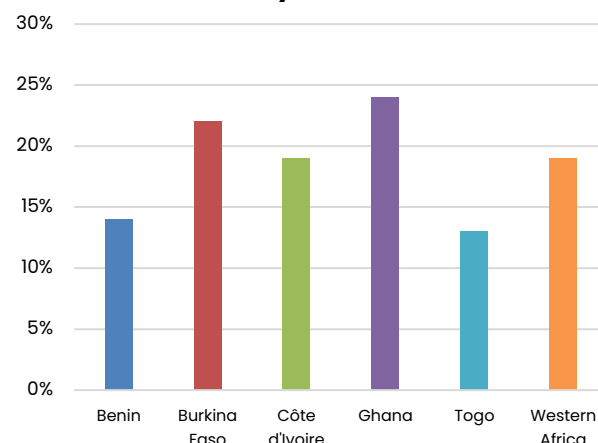
Ghana’s youth employment-to-population ratio is falling, reached the lowest rate among neighbouring countries.²⁴ This relatively low ratio is not simply about individual effort or education. Instead, it illustrates a labour market that is not expanding fast enough in productive sectors to absorb a fast-growing population. A large part of the youth work in informal, insecure job. Another factor is that youth unemployment remains quite low at 5% in Ghana, which is half of sub-Saharan Africa average.

Worrisome High NEET Rate

The not-in-education, employment, or training (NEET rate) better indicates the extent of barriers facing young people in the labour market than the unemployment rate does. Ghana’s NEET rate is 24%, the highest rate compared with the neighbouring countries (see Figure 8). This situation makes it essential to address underlying issues, such as unequal access to education, skill

development, and job creation to ensure sustainable youth engagement in productive activities.

Figure 8: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training in Ghana and other neighbouring countries, %, latest year



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Key Findings

- Ghana’s education reforms are far-reaching and policy-driven → shifts in employment by education.
- Benefits from complex TVET ecosystem → expanding access, employability, and skills coverage.
- TVET’s impact is constrained by quality, relevance, perception, infrastructure, and coordination challenges.

Education connection to the labour market refers to the relationship between the education system, vocational training

programmes, and the market’s needs. It highlights how education and skills development prepare individuals to meet employers’ demands, improve employability, and support economic growth.

Reforming the Education System

Ghana’s education reforms are far-reaching and policy-driven, aiming to close the gap between schooling and employment (see Table 1). Education reform improves the quality of labour supply, which is essential for long-term economic transformation, but it cannot fully solve formal job creation.

Table 1: Overview of Ghana’s education reforms connected to labour-market dynamics

Dimension	Current Status	Labour Impact
Access	Significantly expanded	More school leavers entering labour market
Curriculum	Reforming toward practical skills	Early effects but still incomplete
TVET	Growing emphasis & investment	Improves job-related competencies
Quality	Improving unevenly	Still lagging market needs
Labour match	Skills mismatch persists	Reforms could reduce mismatch future

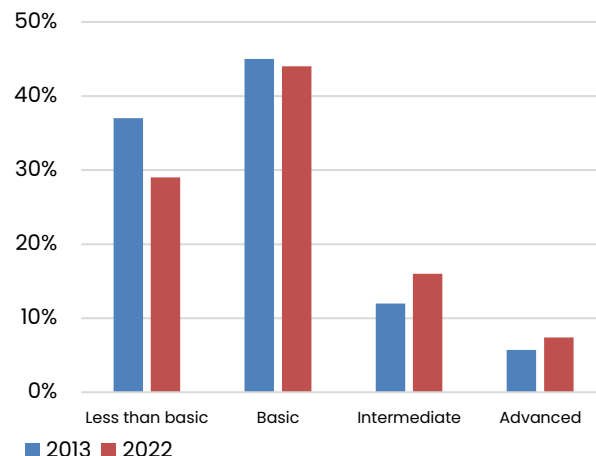
Source: DTDA research.

Better Educated Workforce

The country’s labour market performance is influenced by several educational factors that shape workforce readiness, skills alignment, and employment outcomes. Enrolment and completion rates for Ghanaian students have increased. Some shifts in employment by education are an upsurge at the intermediate level, and

somewhat at the advanced level (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Ghana’s employment by education, %, 2013–2022



Source: Ghana Living Standards Surveys.

Weak Education Outcomes

Ghana has made significant progress in expanding access to education, but education outcomes often do not translate effectively into labour market success. This situation links with several complex features such as mismatch between education and labour market needs; learning outcomes remain uneven (e.g., weak foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving); the number of young people entering the labour market grows faster than the creation of formal-sector jobs; internships, apprenticeships, career guidance, and employer partnerships are often insufficient; educational quality varies considerably between urban and rural areas.

Trade Unions and Education

Two central trade unions in the education sector in Ghana are the Ghana National

Association of Teachers (GNAT), representing teachers outside the public teaching service, and the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU) with teachers and educational staff within the public teaching service and some educational institutions. These trade unions negotiate collectively on behalf of teachers with the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service. Industrial actions (strikes, protests) are usually coordinated through these unions when welfare, salary, or promotion issues arise.

Although they are often part of tripartite consultations on national policies, they face limited direct power over curriculum reform. It is worth mentioning that the trade unions have a growing engagement with teacher professional bodies.

Vocational Training

Complex TVET System

The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) ecosystem in Ghana drives for expanding access, employability, and skills coverage. It benefits from infrastructure upgrades, developed facilities (e.g., regional centres of excellence), and training vouchers for apprentices and craft apprenticeships to bridge educational outcomes with real job skills.

The full potential depends on integrated planning, quality assurance, and industry alignment. See an overview of Ghana's complex TVET ecosystem in the Appendix.

Reforming TVET System

The TVET system is undergoing significant reforms, backed by policy, legal framework, and strategic planning. An initial national TVET policy document was launched in 2023, leading to refine and formalise its comprehensive National TVET Policy in near future. There are also improvements in alignment with industry, regulation, and credentials are underway (see Table 2).

Table 2: TVET Status Snapshot in Ghana

Dimension	Short Status
Policy framework	Strong and updated.
Regulatory bodies	Functional and coordinating.
Curriculum relevance	Improving, but variable.
Industry links	Growing, but uneven.
Social perception	Weak, need uplift.
Training quality	Improving, but insufficient.
Infrastructure	Uneven across regions.

Source: DTDA research.

Increasing TVET Enrolment

TVET enrolment in Ghana is growing rapidly; for example, enrolment in pre-tertiary TVET institutions (public and private) increased from 32,000 in 2020/21 to over 50,000 by 2022/23.²⁵ Firms offering formal training also grew fast during the last decade, landing almost double of the regional average, 50% vs. 28%, respectively.²⁶ These upsurges have been fuelled by government reforms, growing societal acceptance, labour market demand, and improved infrastructure. It is worth mentioning that students enrolled in vocational programmes remains low at about 3.1% of secondary education.

Trade Unions as Strategic Stakeholders

Ghana’s trade union movement – especially TUC-Ghana – is a key stakeholder in TVET. They are included in governance and policy forums that shape TVET strategy, not to mention supports to define skills standards and training relevance. Advocating for teacher and worker rights within the changing TVET landscape is also happening, and support mechanisms intended to connect TVET with real jobs and decent work outcomes. Their influence varies by context and more coordinated action with employers and government, which is needed to fully realise TVET’s employment potential.

TVET System’s Hurdles

Albeit Ghana’s TVET system has a potential to support employment creation and economic development, it remains contested by inadequate funding, outdated curricula, inadequate industry linkages, and negative perceptions limit its effectiveness. These weaknesses contribute to skills shortages, underemployment, and lower productivity in the labour market. It suggests that the TVET system is in transition rather than transformation.

It is worth mentioning that phenomenon like the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Just Transition Agenda has not yet been fully integrated into the TVET system, with limited penetration of advanced digital technologies and green-skills development.²⁷

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Key Findings

- Ghana’s new social protection’s legal milestone launched in 2025 → improved tripartite representation.
- Most Ghanaian workers lack access to social security benefits.
- Weak tax system undermines the social protection system’s financial sustainability and coverage.
- Upsurge in life expectancy is pushing a mounting pressure on the pension system.

Social protection and the labour market are closely connected to develop a country’s welfare, as social protection programmes play a central role in enhancing the well-being of workers, promoting job security, and reducing poverty.

New Social Protection Policy Milestone

In Ghana, the Social Protection Act of 2025 provides a strong statutory basis for better coordination, financing, and integration of safety-net programmes. For instance, the Act formalises the participation of social partners in the governance of social protection, including boards and committees managing the fund, just as programmes implementation are legally required to include representatives of social partners. These improvements strengthen tripartite representation by giving workers and employers a legal voice in decision-making, oversight, and evaluation of social protection systems.

However, the Act's operational details still depend on the secondary legislative instruments, setting the legal and institutional foundation for more inclusive and participatory governance.

Low Spending on Social Protection

The social protection spending in Ghana is relatively low, with a total expenditure projected to be around 1.6% of GDP in 2025, staying below international benchmarks.²⁸ This relatively low investment constrains the labour market's ability to be inclusive, productive, and resilient. Social protection can in principle support skill-building in principle, formalisation, and stable employment. In fact, underfunding is reality, meaning many vulnerable workers remain in insecure, low-productivity jobs, and informal employment dominance. When the tax system is weak and public finances are strained, the effects further ripple across the entire system. Additionally, the economy misses the potential productivity gains of a protected, capable workforce.

Limited Labour Market Impact

Although Ghana's social protection system provides important income support and basic safety nets, its impact on the labour market has been constrained by low coverage, insufficient funding, weak integration with employment policies, and limited representation of informal workers. For instance, employers in the private sector often evade social security contributions, leaving workers unprotected. Another blind-sided factor is that many workers are

unaware of their social protection rights or lack incentives to enter the formal social insurance schemes.

Trade Unions and Social Protection

Ghana's trade unions have a relatively strong position in the governance of social protection. Through their representation on institutions – such as the National Pensions Regulatory Authority (NPRA), the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT), and the National Tripartite Committee – they participate directly in policy formulation, oversight, and social dialogue.

Social protection for workers are further embedded into CBAs within the formal sector, such as maternity protection, redundancy packages, among others. Although a remarkable rise in mothers receiving maternity benefits, which is partly driven by laws and CBAs, the impact remains structurally constrained in the formal sector (see Table 3).

Poor Social Protection Coverage

The social insurance system in Ghana covers formal sector employees, leading to a deep gap among informal workers. Since the informal workforce covers around four out of five workers in employment, most Ghanaian workers lack access to social security benefits. Data reveal that three out of four (75%) Ghanaian workers still do not have access to any form of social protection. Trade union raised deep concerns about the reluctance of most informal economy trade

union members to contribute to the scheme.²⁹ Table 3 glimpses the status of central social protection indicators in comparison with the regional averages.

Table 3: Proportion of population covered by social protection services in Ghana and Western Africa (WA), %, 2022–2023

Indicator	Ghana	WA
Population covered by at least one social protection benefit	25%	15%
Persons above retirement age receiving a pension	16%	16%
Persons with severe disabilities collecting disability social protection benefits	0.1%	2.0%
Unemployed receiving unemployment benefits	0%	0%
Mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits	69%	8.5%
Employed covered in the event of work injury	17%	10%
Children/households receiving child/family cash benefits	30%	14%
Poor persons covered by social protection systems	24%	-
Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance	9.8%	11%

Source: International Labour Organisation, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)*.

Stalled Pension Coverage Growth

Ghana’s demographic landscape is characterised by a relatively small proportion of elderly individuals. Projections suggest that the proportion of individuals aged 60 and over is expected to rise from 6.5% of the population in the early 2020s to 11% in 2050.³⁰

The country’s eldercare pension system is primarily structured under the National Pensions Scheme, combining in contributory and non-contributory components. The

Social Protection Act of 2025 strengthened legal backing for old-age support. For most formal workers under Ghana’s contributory pension system, the standard retirement/pension eligibility age is 60 years.

The retirement pension coverage has been stalled at 16% during the last decade, staying in line with Western Africa average (revisit Table 3).³¹ The low coverage echoes that most informal workers remain unprotected.

The minimum pension grant offers a monthly stipend of around GH¢410 (US\$38) per month in 2026 to eligible individuals.³² It equals that this minimum pension grant is almost two-third less than the poverty threshold among lower-middle-income countries at US\$110 per month.

Informal Social Protection

Apart from the formal social protection system, an informal social protection base also function in Ghana. The latter is largely community-based, voluntary, and flexible, relying on family, savings groups, and mutual aid. This approach provides immediate, culturally embedded support, particularly for rural households and informal workers. However, limitations include low adequacy, exclusion risks, and lack of formal labour market linkages. The government’s ongoing social protection reforms aim to complement informal mechanisms, providing more predictable, legally supported, and broader coverage, particularly for informal workers.

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA

Table 4: Legal reservations in Ghana concerning the industrial relations' rights

Right to organize
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories of workers prohibited or limited from forming or joining a union, or from holding a union office: The Prison Service and the Security and Intelligence Agencies, as specified under the Security and Intelligence Agencies Act 1996, are excluded from the scope of application of the Labour Act 2003. • Regulation of the Labour Regulations 2007 states that where two or more persons desire to form a trade union, they shall 'register with the Chief Labour Officer and pay a registration fee of three million cedis for a Registration Certificate'. • A trade union may not be financially or materially be aided by a political party. • While the Labour Act 2003 does not exclude EPZ workers from its coverage, section of the Free Zone Act provides that free zone developers and enterprises shall be free to negotiate and establish contracts of employment. • A worker whose function is normally considered as policy making, decision making, managerial, holding a position of trust, performing duties that are of highly confidential nature or those of an agent of a shareholder of an undertaking may not form or join trade unions. • Restrictions on trade unions' right to establish branches, federation and confederation or to affiliate with national and international organisations.
Right to collective bargaining
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prison Service and the Security and Intelligence Agencies, as specified under the Security and Intelligence Agencies Act 1996, are excluded from the scope of application of the Labour Act 2003. • Absence of criteria or discretionary, unclear or unreasonable criteria for determining representative organisations. • While the Labour Act 2003 does not exclude EPZ workers from its coverage, section of the Free Zone Act provides that free zone developers and enterprises shall be free to negotiate and establish contracts of employment.
Right to strike
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities' or employers' power to prevent or end a strike by referring the dispute to arbitration. • Discretionary determination or excessively long list of "essential services" in which the right to strike is prohibited or severely restricted. • Discrimination in favour of non-strikers: There are no provisions in the Labour Act 2003 prohibiting discrimination in favour of non-strikers. • Excessively long prior notice / cooling-off period. • Discretionary determination or excessively long list of "services of public utility" in which a minimum operational service is can be imposed in the event of strikes. • Compulsory recourse to arbitration, or too long and complex conciliation and mediation procedures prior to strike actions. • While the Labour Act 2003 does not exclude EPZ workers from its coverage, section of the Free Zone Act provides that free zone developers and enterprises shall be free to negotiate and establish contracts of employment.

Source: International Trade Union Confederation, Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, Ghana Legal, February 2026.

Table 5: Status of ratified ILO Conventions in Ghana

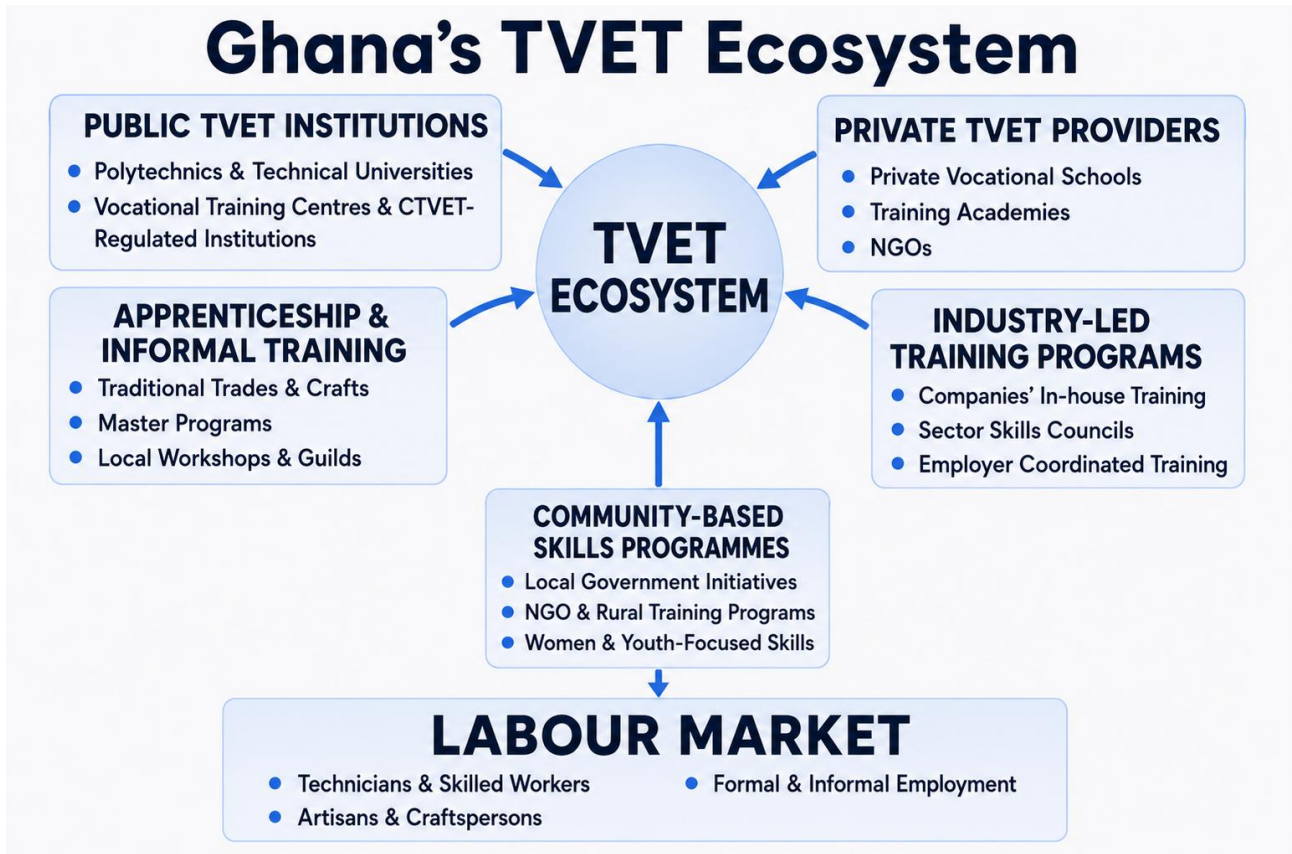
Subject and/or right	Convention	Ratification date
Fundamental Conventions		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	C087 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948	1965
	C098 – Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1959
Elimination of all forms of forced labour	C029 – Forced Labour Convention, 1930	1957
	C105 – Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1958
Effective abolition of child labour	C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973	2011
	C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2000
Elimination of discrimination in employment	C100 – Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1968
	C111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1961
Occupational safety and health	C155 – Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981	Not ratified
	C187 – Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006	Not ratified
Governance Conventions		
Labour inspection	C081 – Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	1959
	C129 – Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969	Not ratified
Employment policy	C122 – Employment Policy Convention, 1964	Not ratified
Tripartism	C144 – Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	2011
Technical Conventions (Up-to-date)		
Working time	C014 – Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921	1973
	C106 – Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957	1958
Wages	C094 – Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949	1961
Occupational Safety and Health	C115 – Radiation Protection Convention, 1960	1961
	C120 – Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964	1966
	C148 – Working Environment (Air, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977	1986
	C184 – Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001	2011
Seafarers	MLC – Maritime Labour Convention, 2006	2013
Labour administration	C150 – Labour Administration Convention, 1978	1986
Industrial relations	C151 – Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978	1986
Specific categories of workers	C149 – Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977	1986
Fishers	C188 – Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)	2024

Source: International Labour Organization, NORMLEX, Ghana, June 2026.

Table 6: The main demands of the African trade unions in the declaration statement calling for the Just Transition agenda, 2023

Main demands in the declaration statement calling for the Just Transition agenda
1. Decent work and quality jobs: Trade unions insist on the creation of quality jobs as part of climate change policies. They demand that these jobs uphold labour rights and prioritise decent working conditions for all. This includes investments in skills development and training for workers to adapt to emerging green industries.
2. Social protection: Workers adversely affected by climate change must benefit from social protection measures, including income support, access to health care, education, and training to facilitate their professional reorientation. Trade unions are committed to protecting the most vulnerable workers and communities from the potential impacts of climate policies.
3 Worker Participation: Workers must be involved in the development and implementation of climate-related policies and projects, as they have valuable insights into the realities of their industries and communities.
4. Community Engagement: Local communities and stakeholders must be involved in decision-making on climate initiatives. Priority should be given to investment in sustainable infrastructure, green technologies and community resilience.
5 Gender equity: Trade unions demand that gender considerations be integrated into climate policies, recognising that women are often the most affected by the effects of climate change. They call for the empowerment of women through training, leadership and gender-sensitive policies.
6. Investment in green jobs: Trade unions call for substantial investment in green technologies, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. They believe this investment will boost economic growth, create jobs and help preserve the environment.
7. Labour rights and just transition plans: Trade unions demand that labour rights be enforced and upheld in the context of climate policies, including the right to organise and the right to collective bargaining. Comprehensive just transition plans must be developed to outline pathways for affected workers and communities through the transition period.
8. Reskilling and Upskilling: Trade unions call for reskilling and upskilling programmes to equip workers with the skills needed for the transition to green industries by adapting to the needs of the labour market.
9. Support for impacted industries: The industries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change policies should be given targeted support and resources to help them transform their operations while safeguarding jobs.
10. Transparency and accountability: Trade unions call for transparency in the allocation of resources and the distribution of benefits resulting from climate initiatives. They also call for accountability mechanisms to be put in place to hold stakeholders accountable for meeting their just transition commitments.

Source: ITUC–Africa, Africa Climate Summit. African trade unions call for a just transition.



Source: DTDA research.

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