

DECENT WORK REGULATION IN AFRICA

WORK-LIFE, GENDER AND INFORMALITY IN LESOTHO

PROJECT NOTE

The DWR-Africa Project

The Project on Decent Work Regulation in Africa (DWR-Africa) responds to UN Sustainable Development Goal 8: to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. To achieve this objective, effective labour regulation is important. Strong labour laws are a vital component of development policies, capable of supporting inclusive growth, sustainable prosperity, and the wellbeing of workers and their families. In this regard, there is much potential for the design of innovative regulatory strategies that can effectively achieve decent work – especially in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs).

The Project has established a Regional Network of researchers and policy-makers who have an interest in effective labour regulation. We also conduct cutting-edge research into the impact of labour laws in Southern Africa.

The Project is funded by the UK Global Challenges Research Fund. It builds on the work of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)/GCRF Strategic Network on Legal Regulation of Unacceptable Forms of Work, a global network of more than 50 research and policy bodies in 20 countries across the world.

Decent Work Regulation in Africa is a collaboration between Durham University (UK), the University of Cape Town (South Africa) and York University (Canada).

Lesotho: A Focus in the Garment Sector

In Lesotho, DWR-Africa has a particular interest in work-life and gender dynamics and how these relate to informality in - or associated with - the garment sector.

Fieldwork is being conducted to interview workers and other stakeholders in the sector.

This research is exploring whether gender dynamics are changing in the garment sector, both at work and at home; whether jobs in the sector are being 'informalised' through e.g. casual work or outsourcing; whether some workers are channelled into informal jobs due to working arrangements in the garment sector; and what workers consider the most important issues in their working lives (e.g. equal pay for equal work, opportunity for promotion, harassment/discrimination, etc.).

We are also conducting a dialogue with stakeholders on issues that include innovations on gender issues that have been brought about by labour law reform, at the national, sector and factory level; the treatment of complaints about e.g. sexual harassment, gender discrimination; the evolution of women's economic empowerment over time; pressures towards informalisation; and the workers who are most affected by unacceptable work.

