



IDWF/FES-CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS

FES Makuti Conference Hall, Dar es Salaam

19th - 21st April 2016

Workshop Report

The report at hand aims at summarizing the contents discussed and conclusions reached during the three-day capacity building workshop on the issue of *migrant domestic workers (MDW)* that was hosted by FES Tanzania and IDWF from the 19th to the 21st April in Dar es Salaam.

1 What is the aim of IDWF in organizing MDW?

After the opening of the workshop, Elizabeth Tang (Hongkong), secretary general of the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), gave a brief introductory presentation on the nature and objectives of the federation.

There are about 63 million domestic workers in the world, half of which are migrant domestic workers (MDW). 87% of the world's domestic workers are women. The conditions under which MDWs live and work are often precarious. About 30% are excluded from the protection of existing labour legislations as in the Middle East and many Asian countries MDWs are not officially recognized as workers. This means that they are also not allowed to form trade unions. Around 45% of the MDWs work seven days a week (no weekly rest) and 35% are excluded from maternity benefits.

The IDWF was founded in order to build a strong, democratic and united domestic/household workers' global organization to protect and advance domestic/house hold workers' right everywhere. The federation has 59 affiliates in over 47 countries representing more than half a million domestic workers. In Africa there are currently 20 affiliates with more than 100,000 DWs.

The IDWF5 Years Strategic Plan (2016-2020) entails the following five goals:

1. Federation building : to double IDWF membership to 800,000
2. Organizing 200,000 migrant domestic workers and with migrant domestic workers in leadership
3. Through capacity building to develop 950 domestic workers leaders
4. Effective campaigns
5. Domestic workers representation at all levels

More information: www.idwfed.org

2.0 Expectations:

The participant's expectations were as follows:

- To learn on positive measures on “How to tackle challenges faced by migrants workers.
- To learn more knowledge and experience of migrant DWs from different countries.
- To learn techniques on how to recruit MDWS into the union as most of them are recruited from underground.
- Get more awareness about MDWs
- Learn, share and plan on MDWs intervention.
- Have joint action to address the problem faced by MDWs.
- Have more unity and solidarity in Africa for DWs and MDWs.
- Learn more how to organize MDWs
- Be able to connect with MDWs activists.
- Having other experience and techniques used in area of policies and legal frame work on dealing with MDWs

3.0 Country Reports on the situation of Migrant Domestic Workers

2.1 Uganda

About 30,000 Ugandans live and work as migrant domestic workers in the Gulf States. The government has issued 55 licenses to official recruitment agencies which send domestic workers to the Gulf States. Many of them however have no real address and many more operate illegally underground. MDWs have to pay agency fees that range between 450 US\$ and 1,500 US\$.

Reports of abuses and exploitation among Ugandan MDWs are very common. The Ugandan DW union (UHFTAWU) has been engaged in holding radio talk-shows to sensitize the public about the reality of MDWs in the Middle East, providing assistance to victims and encouraging the public to job creators (entrepreneurs) and not only depend on employment.

Although the government has recently banned the deployment of domestic workers to Saudi-Arabia, the labour migration and human trafficking continues through alternative, informal channels (e.g. Nairobi).

2.2 Ethiopia

Ethiopia is mostly the origin and partly transit country on the international migration route of domestic workers to the Middle East. The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) is deeply worried about the precarious situations that Ethiopian migrant workers face and also recognizes its potentially greater role in promoting human and trade union rights of migrant workers.

CETU has been taking an active part in nation-wide and regional campaigns to address the problems of migration. With the support of the International Labour Office (ILO), CETU has successfully signed a pioneering bilateral agreement with the Lebanese National Federation of Workers and Employees Trade Unions (FENASOL) with the objective of improving the working and the living condition of Ethiopian migrant workers in Lebanon. The implementation of this bilateral agreement coupled with

other efforts of the Ethiopian government will help to promote the human and trade union rights of Ethiopian migrant workers and can also be a model to other Gulf Arab nations. There are currently efforts to reach similar bilateral agreements with trade unions in other Arab nations which are the dominant destination Ethiopian migrant workers. CETU is furthermore engaged in the national anti-human trafficking task force, the reintegration of returnees, awareness raising programs and trainings.

The Ethiopian government has recently promulgated strict anti-human trafficking proclamation which comes up with a clear and strict legal mechanism concerning foreign employment to make sure that the rights of Ethiopians working in foreign countries are guaranteed. The government also encourages people to work in their country rather than risking their lives going abroad illegally. Besides, the government is interested in signing bilateral agreements with the countries of destinations, mainly gulf nations.

2.3 Kenya

A large number of Kenyans work as domestic workers in the Middle East. Recruitment by often dubious job agencies many find themselves deprived of their passports, basic rights and salaries. Cases of all kinds of abuses and discrimination are common.

The central organization of trade Unions (COTU) Kenya with Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Education Institutions, Hospitals and Allied workers (KUDHEIHA) conducted workshops in Limuru, Nairobi, Mombasa and Kwale with some of the migrant domestic workers. These Migrant workers had been working in Dubai, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. As an outcome of these workshops, COTU Kenya together with KUDHEIHA Union have put in place several recommendations and best practices to the government of Kenya for protection of migrant domestic workers.

2.4 Zanzibar

CHODAWU 'Z' (Conservation, Hotel, Domestic and Allied Workers Union) is the only trade union in Zanzibar that deals with Domestic Workers and represents about 10% of the approx. 3,600 archipelago's domestic workers. CHODAWU 'Z' is an affiliate of IDWF.

The union has made efforts in sensitizing the population on the rights of domestic workers and on the risks of migrating to the Gulf States to work as a MDW. Furthermore it is lobbying for the ratification of the ILO Convention 189 and plans to strengthen the relationship with partner unions in Dubai and other countries in the Middle East.

2.5 Tanzania mainland: Conservation, Hotels, Domestic and Social Service and Consultancy Workers union-CHODAWU.

In Tanzania mainland, domestic workers make up 1.2% of the labour market (ILO's Global and Regional Statistics, 2013). The union has about 37,000 members of whom 7500 are domestic workers. (Attached is the report).

4.0 Presentations:

4.1 Case study: Government policies and legal frame work: These were presented by senior officials from Zanzibar and Tanzania mainland.

The major issues learned from their presentations were as follows:

- In both countries there were departments dealing for migrant workers including MDWS.
- Also there agencies for migrant workers but was a Ban for MDWs due to violation of laws and reports of incidences happening to MDWs in the Arabic countries.
- The laws in both countries recognize domestic workers as well as MDWs.
- Poor enforcement in both countries due to inadequate human resources.
- Tanzania have not ratified ILO C 189 but was in the process to ratify .
- Zanzibar the Government was more active to support MDWs in collaboration with CHODAWU(Z)as most of them go to work in Oman, Dubai and Saudi Arabia

4.2 Overview of the situation of Migrant workers in the region: **Yasin Kakande (Ugandan Journalist)**

Yasin Kakande who has been working in Middle East shared his experience and has written two books concerning MDWs.(i) The Ambitious Struggle: An Africa Journalist's Journey of Hope and Identity in a Land of Migrants (ii) "Slave States> The practice of Kafala in the Gulf Arab Region"

Through his presentation it was revealed:

- That there was a lot of human trafficking, abuses, racism, exploitation, wage discrimination that MWs and MDWS in United Arab Emirates.
- The Arab authorities do not like to publish these issues as from his experience he was told to leave the country because of revealing the incidence and publish them.
- Calls for the journalists to write appropriate issues /stories related to MDWs so that to call the attention of policy makers in our countries.

4.3 Regional analysis of migrant domestic Workers in Africa: **(Judica Amri-Lawson, Former Deputy Regional director, ILO-Africa.**

Judica Amri –Lawson , presented the global and regional view of the situation of MDWS as indicated in the presentation (see the link).

4.4Mission report by IDWF in the middle East- **(Reynaldo Rasing, IDWF Project Coordinator)**

Questions and Answers/discussion

The mission report to Middle East done by Rey Racing, IDWF project coordinator and Fish , Asia regional coordinator showed the followings:

- (i) What is happening in the Middle East to MDWs.

- (ii) That there are some organizations which are trying to support MDWs in the Middle East and that IDWF can work together with the organizations.
- (iii) That collaboration and Networking with other organizations in the Middle East can help to support MDWs.
- (iv) That they are some initiative to organize MDWs into associations so that they can be powerful and fight for their rights and learn more.

4.6 Role of Trade unions: Sharing on Good Practice:

- (i) The experience was shared on organizing and recruiting MDWs by SADSAWU union from South Africa, Reintegration of MDWs by CETU, from Ethiopia, Awareness raising to MDWs by KUDHEIHA from Kenya and Agency fee campaign/ use of social media.
Major issues noted in the presentation were as follows:

Organizing and recruitment:

- SADSAWU have been able to recruit MDWS from Zimbabwe and have 250 members in the union.
- That, MDWs are workers and need to be organized and unionized and fight for their rights.
- MDWs can be leaders in the unions too.

Reintegration of MDWs in Ethiopia:

- That in 2013, 168,018 MWs and most MDWS were repatriated back to Ethiopia.
- The migration process was done by Government jointly with the Stake holders, with the support from ILO.
- Psycho - social support, awareness creation, economic empowerment and Institutional Development are key elements in reintegration.

Awareness creation to MDWs and Local DWs in Kenya:

- That KUDHEIHA has began to create awareness to the potential areas like Kisumu and Mombasa and Kwale where most of the DWs are recruited to go to work in Middle East countries.
- That the awareness includes DWs rights, human rights and workers rights.

Agency fee campaign/ use of social media in Hong Kong (Elizabeth Tang).

- The topic was presented by Elizabeth tang who narrated about what is agency fee and how it is done
- Also she explained about the importance of social media and cited an example of a MDW who was mistreated by her employer in one of the Arabic countries and how she was successful rescued because of the use of social media such as face book.
- She emphasized that the use of IDWF face book , twitter , the IDWF website are tool to connect DWs and MDWs and share issues.

5.0 Group activities:

Challenges faced by MDWS in the region:

(a) Lack of data:

- Insufficient/ improper data used to develop policies and Improper recording keeping of MDWs and related issues in the countries of origin such as MOL.
- Insufficient resources to facilitate research process such as human resource and funds.
- Inadequate Cooperation between local and high government leaders.

(i) Solution:

- To provide sufficient resources to facilitate research on MDWS and related issues in the countries.
- Involve more stake holders including Trade unions and domestic workers unions.

(b) Cooperation and organizing MDWs in country of origin and at destination:

- Some destinations don't have established trade union or associations for domestic workers.
- Accessibility to destination countries/ homes is a challenge
- Deprive MDWs of their rights of representation.

(ii) Solutions:

- Trade unions in countries of origin should cooperate with T.U centers/ confederation in countries of destination through International organization such as IDWF, IUF, ITUC, UNI.
- Trade unions should sign CBAs with recruitment agencies/associations.
- More awareness creation activities on MDWs issues should be conducted.

(c) Lack of/inadequate implementation of existing laws and policies in the country of origin.

(iii) Solutions:

- Lobbying and pressurizing Government in different forums, such as campaigns, tripartite meetings to enforce the laws in place.
- Government should come with additional laws, regulations and policies to the existing law which does not include MDWs.
- Trade unions should be involved in policy formulation.

(d) Recruitment agencies unscrupulous practices:

(iv) Solutions:

- Define punishment
- Effective implementation of the laws
- Education and awareness creation of DWs /MDWS and Human rights

(e) Pre- departure training is lacking e.g. Labour laws in the recipient countries, DWs rights)

(v) Solutions:

- Training MDWs about labor laws, culture in the receiving and sending countries
- There should be vocational training skills of ABC of what they are going to do to MDWS before their departure.
- MDWS/DWs should be educated about their rights and obligation as well as the ABC of language, internet to enable them to communicate when they are in the foreign countries.

(f) Coordination and collaboration between the key ministries in the countries of origin.

(vi) Solutions:

- Government should make sure that there is coordination on its policies and technical people between the ministries / institutions dealing with workers and related issues.
- Trade unions should be consulted and be involved when making policies related to MDWS/DWs.
- Lobby government and pressurize Government to ratify ILO. C 189.

(g)Lack of supporting services offered by the embassies of African Government:

(vii)Solutions:

- Embassy offices should be empowered in order to be respected.
- Embassy officials should be trained on how to handle issues of MDWs.
- Embassy offices should allocate experts, who can deal with MDWs and related labor issues.

(h) Implementation of “BAN”

(viii) Solutions:

- Strengthen cooperation among African countries so that MDWs do not exit at any airport.
- Involvement of TUs in the different forums in planning and implementation of the program me such as AU, EATUC SADC so that they can create more awareness to their workers.

(I)Sensitization and awareness among TUs and MDWs themselves:

(ix)Solutions:

- Convene educational meetings among trade union federations to impart the knowledge about MDWs.
- Convene conference about MDWs and involve researchers, FBOs, and other regional actors so come up with regional strategies.
- Organize peaceful demonstrations to sensitize the public on MDWs.

(J) Hooking up with sub regional frameworks/blocs.

(xi) Solutions:

- Supply relevant information and data to the regional offices on MDWs.
- Lobbying regional officials and regional stakeholders to be discussed and include I the policies for implementation.
- Meeting and lobbying with regional policy makers.

(K) Active citizenship:

Citizens are not aware of their constitution rights, lack of accountability of the government officials, lack of engagement of the citizen and violation of human rights

Solutions:

- Community awareness creation
- Join forces with other stake holders
- Advocate for the review of laws, policies and effective implementation of the laws and policies and engagement of the community.

(i) Role of ILO as supportive organization:

- Support materials /funds for trainings and seminars on ILO C 189 and other related Conventions as stipulated in C 189.
- Ensuring the process towards ratification of C 189 with the stake holders through the tripartite meetings.
- ILO sensitizes its regional and country directors about MDWs concern and protection.

4.0 Major issues observed by the participants in the workshop.

(i) MDWs was a concern of all the trade unions for domestic workers and trade union federations and needed some interventions / actions to support MDWs and prevent the evils.

(ii) Data and information about MDWs in the region was poor or inadequate to facilitate some of the intervention at country and regional level. However through the discussion and report the there are many MDWs in the Middle East and most of them are treated badly.

(iii) Knowledge and expertise about MDWs is very important to TUs, Embassy officials, Government officials and community at large.

- (iv) Most of the labor laws need to be reviewed to accommodate MDWs.
- (v) ILO C 189 needs to be ratified in Africa countries which are a tool to protect MDWs.
- (vi) There are a number of countries/DWs trade unions which have began to work on MDWs at different level such as Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Zanzibar.
- (vii) There is poor enforcement of the laws in the countries because of poor coordination among the ministries, corruption and inadequate knowledge about MDWs.
- (ix) Organizing and recruitment of MDWs has not started in most of the DWs trade union in Africa.

5.0 Agreed issues:

- (i) Each organization to finalize the three years action plan.
- (ii) Pressurize government to ratify C 189
- (iii) June 16th the unions launch MY Fair Home campaign.

6.0 Conclusion:

Though it was the first workshop on MDWs in the region, the participants contributed well. It was also learned that there were some little effort which were done at ground levels by the unions and hence the workshop has helped the participants to learn and share a lot .

Articles and documents: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6dzmdtj3jqjim63/AAArSq-qRvP137EwpPYXFslha?dl=0>

Presentations and reports:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/01io0mzwqjm51au/AADHFShSmsSgFpysHEXJBRwya?dl=0>

Photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8l3xtm754hkt94m/AAC09FDXE4ouDR9dgpC84Arba?dl=0>