

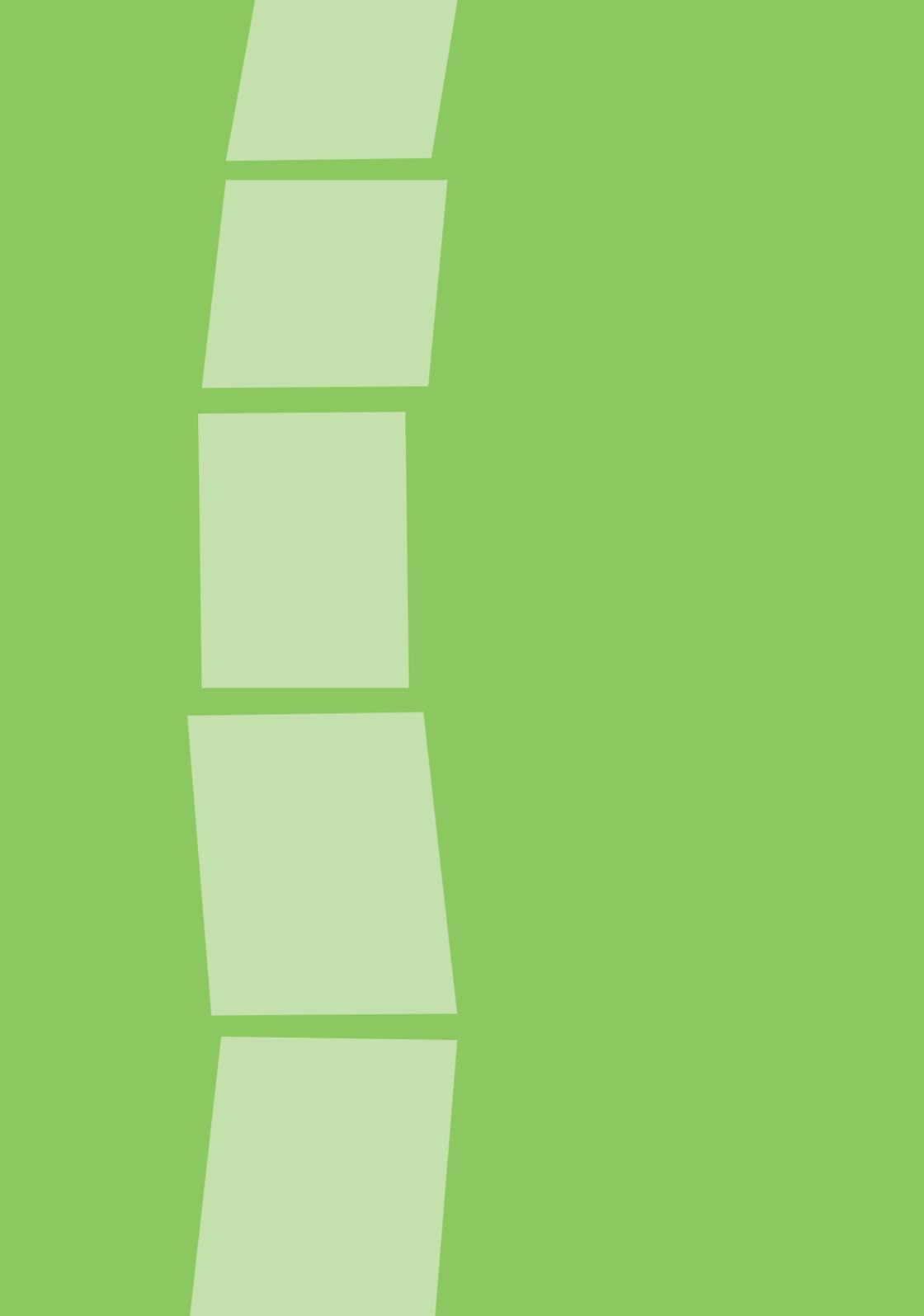


International
Labour
Organization



DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

**EIGHT GOOD
PRACTICES FROM
ASIA**





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Labour
Organization

DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

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FOREWORD

Domestic work performed by a person for an employer provides a valuable service of vital interest to families and societies worldwide. Domestic work allows households and economies to function, and is an important occupation by which many, most of them women, earn their livelihoods.

Yet, we are aware that the unique nature of this work carried out in the private homes of others, creates an invisible and undervalued class of workers. All too often, domestic workers face substandard working conditions, characterized by long working hours, insufficient rest periods, low wages, delayed payments and the lack of a safe working – and sometimes living – environment with a high exposure to violence and harassment.

The vulnerability of domestic workers to exploitation and abuse is rooted in traditional ideas that they are not “real” workers. As a result, domestic work is excluded from the labour and social protection protecting other workers, and domestic workers lack collective organization and representation in many countries, including in Asia.

Many children under the minimum age for employment are also involved in this unregulated sector. Two of every three child domestic workers are girls for whom this occupation is often considered a protected, safe and suitable type of work. However, the opposite is generally true. Child domestic workers have to forego education, they often work in exploitative, harmful and hazardous conditions, hidden from the public and far away from their families. They are even more subject to exploitation than adults. Stories of abuse of children in domestic work are all too common.

Because of these harsh realities, child labour in domestic work comprises a worst form of child labour. ILO evidence indicates that, globally, 11.5 million of the 17.2 million child domestic workers under 18 years are in child labour situations that need to be eliminated. The other 5.7 million, mostly adolescents, are in permissible work, but need decent work and protection from exploitation.

Fortunately, a range of actors in Asia including domestic workers and their organizations have taken action to realize decent work for domestic workers and tackle child labour in domestic work. Therefore, the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have cooperated on the Promoting Decent Work for Domestic Workers to End Child Domestic Work (PROMOTE) Project, supported by the United States Department of Labor, and compiled eight good practices from Asia in this publication.

The eight good practices demonstrate successful initiatives to combat child labour in India and Nepal; to establish strong and sustainable domestic workers organizations in the form of trade unions, cooperatives or associations in Indonesia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea; on skills development and organizing in Hong Kong, China, and on the global online IDWF communication network.

The IDWF and ILO Jakarta would like to sincerely thank the authors of the eight good practices, Ms G. Leema Rose, Mr Saroj KC, Ms Margeritha Gastaldi, Ms Jennifer Angarita, Mr John Vincent S. Cruz, Ms Peng Choi, the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, and the Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union, and Ms Meredith Mc Bride for their valuable contributions. Special thanks also go to Colin Piprell and Neliën Haspels for drafting and editing support, to Michéle Karamanof for the lay-out, and to Yee Ting Ma of the IDWF and Arum Ratnawati and colleagues of ILO Jakarta for overall coordination and organization.

We hope that the good practices will inspire domestic workers and their organizations, employers and support organizations to promote decent work for domestic workers, to eliminate child labour in domestic work and to protect child domestic workers.

Elizabeth Tang

General Secretary, IDWF

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Director, ILO Country Office of for
Indonesia and Timor-Leste

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| Foreward..... | 3 |
| Summary..... | 7 |
| Introduction..... | 24 |
| I CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS..... | 29 |
| 1 India: National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM) in Bihar — Acting against child labour in domestic work | 30 |
| 2 Nepal: Closed doors no longer closed — Addressing child labour in domestic work..... | 52 |
| II ORGANIZING DOMESTIC WORKERS..... | 97 |
| 3 Indonesia: Rap — A method for organizing domestic workers | 98 |
| 4 Indonesia: Workers, not helpers — Organizing and empowering domestic workers | 124 |
| 5 Philippines: No one stands alone — Domestic workers find their voice in UNITED | 139 |
| III DOMESTIC WORKER COOPERATIVES..... | 165 |
| 6 Republic of Korea: The cooperative model — Decent work and social protection for house managers..... | 166 |
| IV SKILLS, JOBS AND ORGANIZING | 193 |
| 7 Domestic workers — Training, job placement and organizing with the HKCTU..... | 194 |
| V COMMUNICATION NETWORK..... | 223 |
| 8 Global: Domestic workers unite — Creating an online communication network..... | 224 |

SUMMARY

Domestic workers (DWs), predominantly women, comprise one of the most disadvantaged workforces in the world. Many of them come from poverty and have had limited access to education, and thus fall victim to labour exploitation. This is even more true for those forced by economic disadvantage or human trafficking to migrate across borders for work.

Domestic work is typically undertaken in workplaces that are atomized, privatized and informal, with no work contracts, no standard working hours, no mandatory rest day, and no minimum wage. Domestic work has a low status, and DWs are often treated without respect. This social and economic devaluation of DWs is exacerbated by the workers' relative isolation in individual households – often essentially workplaces with a single employee cut off from fellow workers – making it difficult to reach, much less organize, those employed in this sector.

This publication presents eight good practices, demonstrating how different approaches and measures have proven to work, in a variety of Asian contexts, to overcome the myriad challenges faced by child and adult DWs. It aims to:

- raise awareness among DWs, their organizations, their employers, and other concerned agencies on designing effective strategies and avoiding common pitfalls; and to
- promote the use of proven good practices, and inspire action in other contexts and countries.

This publication comprises eight chapters organized according to five issue areas:

- eliminating child labour in domestic work;
- organizing DWs;
- house managers' cooperative model;
- skills training and job matching for DWs; and
- online communication by DWs and their organizations.

I — CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS

Background. Child labour in domestic work is a worst form of child labour. Typically it features excessive workloads and loneliness, as well as exploitation and other ill treatment. Some children are compelled to work from a very early age and are deprived of the parental love crucial to a child's emotional needs and healthy development.

Successfully addressing these issues entails educating the children, their parents, employers, the general public, policy-makers and legislators alike, regarding the terrible destruction of human resources child labour represents, as well as its concomitant economic and social consequences, including something as perhaps unexpected as this: every child that is employed contributes to unemployment among the adult population.

Other necessary measures include reintegrating working children with their families and putting them back into non-formal and/or formal education. Among other things, this can mean providing material support for families who are otherwise too poor to provide education or a proper home environment for their children.

Both the NDWM in India and CWISH in Nepal designed and implemented an integrated strategy combining a range of measures that successfully weaned children from disadvantaged population groups away from child labour in domestic work. Both organizations also engaged in policy advocacy to prevent a further influx of children in domestic service.

India: NDWM in Bihar

Acting against child labour in domestic work

Issues and challenges. Domestic workers and other unorganized sector workers in Bihar largely lived in slum areas with minimal facilities and worked for very low wages. The children, often victims of caste-related disparities, were typically deprived of such human rights as education, health, sanitation, entertainment and

information. They were subject to child labour, often pushed to assume family responsibilities at an early age. The child domestic workers (CDWs) were largely girls between the ages of 4 and 18 years, school drop-outs or children who had never attended school. Most lived with their parents in slum areas, their mothers employed in similar work for little pay, many fathers abusing alcohol and doing little to provide for their children. These children and others, victims of human trafficking, faced a variety of dangers in workplaces behind closed doors. They remained generally unaware of their situation and were permitted very minimal contact with the outside world.

Another challenge: Although employment of children in domestic work or other kinds of labour up to the age of 14 years is illegal, government officials are very lenient with lawbreakers.

Objectives. The Bihar National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM) aimed to accomplish the following:

- bring dignity to domestic work and domestic workers (DWs);
- abolish child labour; and
- secure the rights of migrant workers.

Approaches/methods. The NDWM applied the following measures: non-formal education centres; anti-trafficking and safe migration training in source areas of migration; shelter-home rescue and rehabilitation; awareness and sensitivity training for parents; community mobilization-cum-participation; child peer group participation; public awareness programmes; skills training for school drop-outs; group formation among children to learn about and come up for their rights; special day celebrations; stakeholders meetings; and media campaigns.

Results. Between 2006 and 2015, about 700 CDWs and dropouts benefited from the NDWM programme and entered into formal schooling. Parents in and around 130 urban slums and villages became aware of children's rights. A marked change became apparent in the parents' way of thinking, evidenced by the fact that, in some areas, every child was being sent to school. Trafficking

children for domestic work from the tribal areas was reduced. Increased placement of adult workers reduced the number of children entering domestic work. Training and policy advocacy with the local authorities succeeded in rescuing CDWs, who were subsequently rehabilitated through formal education and skills training.

Awareness of DW rights among adult workers increased their salaries, which also reduced the number of children drawn into domestic work.

Good practices. The work by NDWM shows how to effectively involve all relevant stakeholders at the community level — changing mindsets of children, mothers, then fathers, teachers and community leaders, not only in urban slum areas with large concentrations of CDWs, but also in the tribal communities where they come from. Another strong feature of the NDWM’s programme relates to the different ways in which children were actively engaged in the fight against child labour in domestic work. Different groups of working and school-going children were brought together for joint activities. They learned about their rights to education, play and healthy development, and how to advocate for these rights. Changes came about slowly but incrementally, and in the longer run, these strategies brought strong and stable changes. These good practices can be replicated, especially among the urban poor and in areas where child trafficking is prevalent.

Nepal: Closed doors no longer closed

Addressing child labour in domestic work

Issues and challenges. It was difficult to contact the target CDWs, given that sector’s characteristic “invisibility”, and limited information in general made it difficult to properly appreciate their circumstances.

Objectives. Children and Women in Social Service and Human Rights (CWISH) strove to promote CDW rights to an education, parental care and protection from exploitation, violence and all other forms of abuse.

Approaches/methods. CWISH began its work by conducting non-formal classes for CDWs. Later, it expanded its activities to improving their work environments; enrolling them in formal education; and rescuing, rehabilitating and reintegrating them with their families. At the same time, CWISH conducted research into the conditions under which CDWs lived and worked, and initiated campaigns and policy dialogues to abolish child labour in domestic work.

Results. In the 20 years from 1996 until 2016, CWISH mainstreamed the CDW agenda into national policies and programmes. CWISH practices proved effective in:

- improving CDW living and working conditions and providing them with non-formal education;
- rescuing CDWs; reintegrating them with their families and putting them into schools; and
- conducting related research and evidence-based policy interventions.

Good practices. CWISH established a successful model for addressing CDW issues with all relevant stakeholders. CWISH demonstrates how to start taking successful action first through non-confrontational “soft” approaches, including large scale awareness-raising of all relevant actors, including CDW employers, and providing working children and their families with a wide range of support services. After a decade CWISH gradually moved to also applying “hard” approaches committing the local authorities to withdraw children from abusive and exploitative employment, to declare areas “child labour free” and implement a zero tolerance policy towards child labour exploitation and abuse, including physical and sexual violence.

Other CWISH good practices included the establishment of a recruitment agency for adult domestic workers and training them, so employers had an alternative to employing CDWs; and the set-up of children’s clubs and a [child] Domestic Workers Forum. In 2006, members of this forum, turned adult, formed the first DW union in the country.

II – ORGANIZING DOMESTIC WORKERS

Background. Domestic workers typically face the following employment conditions:

- working in isolation without fellow workers;
- heavy workloads with meagre pay and lack of labour protection; and
- lack of voice, representation and opportunities to join and form organizations.

The three initiatives in this section, two from Indonesia and one from the Philippines, show how to encourage and motivate DWs to join DW organizations, and how support organizations can help build sustainable membership-based DW organizations for DWs by DWs.

Indonesia: Rap

A method for organizing domestic workers

Issues and challenges. Challenges included the following: relative isolation of the DWs and the difficulty of accessing them; limited time and other resources; lack of required capacity and a clear strategy; and waning membership numbers and participation in DW groups and organizations.

Objectives. The Rap method aimed at increasing the capacity of existing community organizers and DW leaders to know how to effectively reach out to new DWs, and help them organize to advocate for the recognition of their rights as workers.

Approaches/methods. The six-step Rap method provides a participatory, systematic and dynamic process to building membership-based DW organizations.

Results. JALA PRT successfully trained its community organizers as well as existing and new DW leaders in Rap, so that the new “rappers” could attract new members, and help them organize for their empowerment. Between July 2015 and April 2016,

the membership among three Jala PRT affiliated organizations increased from 131 to 611 active members.

Good practices. The Rap method is successful because it teaches the rappers to zoom in on the needs and concerns of unorganized DWs; to relate these to broader inequalities, such as the absence of decent jobs and lack of labour and social protection for DWs; and to encourage them to join a DW organization to achieve their dreams. Rap presents a good practice – a successful, replicable strategy to raise and develop awareness of the challenges faced by DWs and showing how these may be overcome by building a membership-based organization.

Indonesia: Workers, not helpers

Organizing and empowering domestic workers

Issues and challenges in building DW organizations include:

- the difficulty of connecting and mobilizing an often isolated, informal workforce;
- an ingrained cultural understanding of “domestic workers” as being somehow not genuine workers, as quasi “members of the family” undeserving of defined wages and working conditions;
- familial and spousal disapproval of organizational involvement;
- limited time and availability, particularly among women with children, single mothers, and live-in DWs; and
- financial constraints.

Objectives. To establish networks and build organizations that empower and connect DWs to alleviate the difficulties, abuses and inequities, that they commonly experience.

Approaches/methods. Sapulidi’s most effective strategies in addressing these challenges were the following:

- emphasis on organizing of DWs by DWs and on DW leadership development;
- incentivizing membership through needs-based training; and

- narrative-based story sharing and social media networking among members.

Results. The Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union was established in mid 2003. In August 2015, Sapulidi had grown to 102 dues-paying members. In April 2016, its active members amounted to 411. For a relatively new workers' organization operating in the informal workforce, all the preliminary indicators suggest success.

Good practices. The Sapulidi DW union demonstrates that the chances of success in founding an expandable, replicable and sustainable DW organization are higher when DW leaders and members are in charge and run their own organization. DW support organizations should therefore invest in DW leadership development and share decision-making from the start. In addition, when trained DWs apply the six-step Rap method they attract relatively more unorganized DWs than community organizers because they are fellow workers. These good practices can be expected to continue helping empower DWs and, through them, to build lasting DW organizations.

Philippines: No one stands alone

Domestic workers find their voice in UNITED

Issues and challenges. Intricate networks of neighbours and relatives provided channels through which DWs, including many children, were recruited into an industry where they lacked any formal, documented processes or, subsequently, regulations that protected them in their workplaces.

The structure of the sector demanded innovative ways of establishing contact and motivating DWs to organize and undertake collective action.

Objectives. To use channels similar to those that had functioned as a recruitment network for exploited and unprotected DWs – who were drawn mainly from vulnerable groups such as children, women, ethnic minorities, and migrants – to establish a grassroots DW union.



Approaches/methods. Investment in personal relationships was key to organizing UNITED. Similar to the six-step Rap method used in Indonesia, the LEARN organizers focused on the target members' working conditions, and from there stressed the need for collective action as the only viable mechanism by which their grievances could be addressed.

Results. UNITED's experience as a grassroots union was unprecedented. By the end of 2013, an informal DW association had grown to 273 members in Metro Manila. In October 2016, UNITED reported a minimum of 737 members, in six of the 18 regions in the country.

Good practices. The organizers recruited by LEARN were domestic workers themselves, who had learned how to organize. Through personal contacts, and using non-confrontational approaches, they focused on meeting DWs' needs and convinced them of the need for collective action. Both the "Saving mobilization as an organizing platform" and "retail-organizing" or organizers' door-to-door organizing, led to the establishment of UNITE, thereby extending the rights and benefits of social movement unionism within a very vulnerable sector.

III – DOMESTIC WORKER COOPERATIVES

Background. The Republic of Korea's National House Manager's Cooperative (NHMC) applies a social cooperative model to improving working conditions among DWs. Members, all of whom are DWs, organize in associations or cooperatives. They contribute financial resources and take joint decisions. In the cooperatives, DWs are shareholders and co-owners.

Republic of Korea: The cooperative model

Decent work and social protection for house managers

Issues and challenges. Following the 1997 IMF financial crisis, unemployment became a priority social concern. But job creation and placement for unemployed women, especially middle-aged women, was not enough in itself to address certain prevailing social and institutional problems. To address DW-related socio-structural problems, the workers themselves needed to establish an organization that functioned on their behalf, and one which they could manage on their own.

Objectives. The National House Manager's Cooperative (NHMC) sought to realize in practice the spirit and philosophy of a worker social cooperative in such a way that it could address DW-related socio-structural problems.

Approaches/methods. NHMC applied a social cooperative model to improving working conditions among DWs. Starting with job matching services, campaigns were undertaken to revalue DW campaigns to revalue DW, to increase legal protection, and to promote employment contracts benefiting DWs and their employers; DWs organized in associations and cooperatives at the local levels which are a member of the NHMC at the national level.



Results. The NHMC was established in 2004 with a national headquarters and 12 branches across the country. Full members amounted to 176 in 2006 and had increased to 444 in 2016. Since 2012, DW cooperative members have gained access to social security benefits through their cooperative. NHMC members also lobbied successfully to upgrade their status from domestic helper or maid to “house manager”.

Good practices. The NHMC cooperative model demonstrates how the provision of “decent work” job matching and follow-up services benefits both domestic workers and their employers. In similar vein, the development and use of a domestic service standard manual with specified terms and conditions and a domestic service work contract ensures both the quality of services for employers and basic labour rights for workers. NHMC members, all DWs, are empowered through participation in decision-making in a democratic organization, which also engages in policy advocacy for legislative changes. In addition, the successful lobby to promote the use of the term “house manager” increases the status of the job and the dignity of the workers.

IV – SKILLS, JOBS AND ORGANIZING

Background. The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) was founded in 1990 under the banner of worker solidarity, democracy and justice. In 1996, HKCTU set up the Confederation of Trade Unions Training Centre (CTUTC), and began offering courses for prospective local domestic workers. In 2001, the Hong Kong Domestic Workers' General Union (DWGU-HK) was founded, as one of HKCTU's 90 affiliates, by a network of around 100 domestic workers from Hong Kong. The CTUTC and the DWGU-HK worked hand in hand to foster decent working conditions and the recognition of domestic work as a profession in Hong Kong, China.

Hong Kong, China: Domestic workers

Training, job placement and organizing with the HKCTU

Issues and challenges. Domestic workers from Hong Kong usually undertake informal, short-term or part-time domestic work. Many of them are unemployed women seeking jobs during economic downturns. The HKCTU has been engaged in improving DW employment and working conditions for over two decades.

Objectives. This chapter describes CTUTC and DWGU-HK efforts to help DWs attain a more professional status, hence improving quality of services, wage levels and legal protection.

Approaches/methods. The CTUTC focused mainly on helping trainees find successful employment as DWs by upgrading their skills, and matching them with employers willing to provide decent jobs. Course designers analyzed employer needs and developed a list of job skills and competency standards to underpin and standardize the curriculum. Meanwhile the DWGU-HK advocated for decent wage and labour protection through mass media promotion, special events and roadshows.

Results. The CTUTC and the DWGU helped DWs attain a more professional status, thereby improving wage levels and legal protection. Domestic work trainees, often unpaid housewives, were



starting to participate and find representation in the classrooms, in the union, in the industry, in society at large, and in shaping domestic work with decent pay.

The classes quickly expanded amid government support for boosting jobs for unemployed women with limited education. The CTUTC had great success providing accreditation for trainees and later matching them with employers who paid decent wages – from 1996 to 2017, the centre matched trainees with over 40,000 jobs. Membership of the DWGU-HK increased to around 600 local domestic workers and has remained stable over the years.

The CTUTC and the DWGU-HK successfully cooperated in ensuring that DWs from Hong Kong were provided with labour insurance. The CTUTC negotiated with insurance companies so DW employers could take out a labour insurance policy for their DW while the DWGU-HK petitioned the Labour Department to make this insurance obligatory.

Good practices.

The CTUTC established a central job referral service and district-level job-matching services complemented by professional skills training system, including a standardized curriculum, a common skills assessment scheme including competency cards for graduates, and travel allowances to facilitate commuting at unsocial hours or across districts. The CTUTC largely succeeded in earning the support of employers, who chose to hire their DWs through the CTUTC because they could count on reliable service, respect for privacy, credibility of the union, satisfactory follow-up, and lack of agency fees.

One good CTUTC practice comprises the emphasis not only on increasing DWs' professional skills but also on developing their self-confidence and critical thinking, and learning how to organize and take collective action.

The establishment of the CTUTC, and the support to the DWGU-HK by the HKCTU, and the cooperation between these two separate entities proved to be an effective way for promoting more and better jobs for DWs from Hong Hong. While the CTUTC focused on increasing the professional service standards and job placement services, the DWGU-HK advocated and lobbied for fair wages, labour protection, employment contracts and occupational safety and health for DWs.



IDWF discussions on the design of the online communication network.

V — COMMUNICATION NETWORK

Background. Due to the individualized and private nature of DW, it has been more difficult and challenging for DWs to communicate and organize than for other workers. Nevertheless, throughout the world DWs have been organizing themselves for years. The preparations around the development and adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) by ILO member States galvanized DWs and their organizations into action, culminating in the subsequent founding of the IDWF in 2013. In this interconnected world, the IDWF considered it vital to improve its online communication platform to facilitate fast sharing of information and communication between DWs, their organizations and the outside world.

Global: Domestic workers unite

Creating an online communication network

Issues and challenges. The biggest problems were these:

- developing a communication network that did not use technology so complex it would confuse users or take too long to load on slow internet connections;
- moving old documents manually from the previous website to the new one, a time-intensive process;
- migrating to a recommended new content management system, which entailed time-consuming training for staff; and
- solving network code bugs and other technical difficulties.

Objectives. To facilitate knowledge sharing and communication between domestic workers across different countries and ethnicities.

Approaches/methods. The IDWF and ILO designed the online communication platform based on DWs' needs, priorities and interests, and provided intensive technical support and training to IDWF staff, board members and affiliates in Asia, Africa and Latin America to facilitate knowledge and information sharing, and campaigning among DWs, their organizations, other support organizations and the outside world.

Results. One year after the first visioning event in Asia, the IDWF communication network had succeeded in creating online platforms to share the top five products requested by DWs at the event, including audio and video training materials, case studies and good-practice reports, and a membership database.

After the launch of the communication network, between 16 December 2014 and 30 April 2015 the communication network logged more than 4,400 registered members in 152 different countries. Two years later, by mid 2017, the number of registered users had increased more than tenfold. Over 45,000 members

have registered from 170 countries, indicating that the network is facilitating communication as intended. DWs and their organizations have provided positive feedback, they consider that the platform is easy to use and provides timely information and news.

Good practices. The IDWF and the ILO, in particular the PROMOTE Project, together developed an online communication platform that facilitates knowledge sharing and communication among DWs across different countries and ethnicities.

The following practices promote successful networking:

- develop any communication network with the intended network users from the very start, and try out the network features with the users during the design stage;
- avoid recreating social media but link with what is already available; and
- provide extensive training to new users to familiarize them with the new technology.



INTRODUCTION

This publication presents different approaches to a constellation of domestic worker issues in a variety of Asian contexts. It aims to raise awareness of these among the domestic workers themselves, their employers and the general public, and, in addressing the issues, to promote proven good practices that can be effectively replicated nationally and internationally.

The ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) concerning decent work for DWs (C189) broadly defines domestic work as work performed in or for a household or households, and a DW as any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. Domestic work often includes multiple tasks and duties including childcare, laundry, landscaping, chauffeuring, housework, security, and care for the elderly or disabled.

Of an estimated 67 million domestic workers (DWs) globally,¹ 80 per cent are women.² And the real total is probably much higher, given that reliable data regarding actual numbers is scant, as is information regarding DW living and working conditions in general.

In many countries around the world, nannies, caregivers and other domestic workers comprise an invisible, mostly female workforce who help sustain local economies. Yet the patchwork of labour and employment laws protecting DWs varies greatly both within and across countries. A dearth of legal protection means many DWs face substandard pay and workplace abuse.

from chapter II.4 (below): "Indonesia: Workers, not helpers – Organizing and empowering domestic workers"

The **eight chapters** in this publication describe activities undertaken to improve the lot of DWs in a variety of Asian economic, social and cultural contexts. However, domestic work in the households of others tends to have the same features everywhere:

- Much of this work is performed in the informal economy, and reliable information about DW living and working conditions is often unavailable.
- Domestic work is typically undertaken in workplaces (private households) that are atomized, privatized and informal, with no work contracts, no standard work hours, no mandatory rest day, and no minimum wage.
- In some societies, furthermore, domestic work is not viewed as a legitimate profession, and often falls outside what provisions already exist for the protection of other workers.
- DW is generally considered as low-value work done by women and girls. Therefore, DWs are not protected and subject to disrespect, discrimination and violence. This makes it difficult to reach, much less organize, those employed in this sector, predominantly women.

- DWs comprise one of the most vulnerable workforces in the world. Many of them come from poverty and have had limited access to education, and thus are often victims of labour exploitation. This may become even more true for those forced by economic disadvantage or human trafficking to migrate across borders for work.
- Far too many children, generally the most vulnerable workers of all, remain engaged in domestic work.

The following eight chapters are organized according to five issue areas:

- I eliminating child labour in domestic work;
- II organizing DWs;
- III house managers' cooperative model;
- IV skills training and job matching for DWs; and
- V online communication by DWs and their organizations.

Despite the diversity of the eight initiatives, however, common themes and goals were apparent. With the support of trade unions, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local or national governmental agencies, the IDWF and the ILO, DWs were united in pursuing the following overlapping goals:

- more and better jobs;
- empowerment through professional development as well as the development of a sense of dignity and personal efficacy among DWs; and
- legal protection for their rights, including the following:
 - the rights of all to decent work and decent living conditions, including:
 - the rights of women to be accorded equal status with men as workers and as citizens;
 - the rights of DWs to be protected as all other workers;

- the rights of children not to work, but to instead:
 - live free of vulnerability to exploitation, violence and other forms of abuse;
 - receive an education;
 - enjoy parental care in meeting their emotional needs and healthy development; and
 - be accorded the opportunity to enjoy their childhoods and develop themselves.

The eight chapters presented in this publication took diverse approaches to addressing those goals, but but they all aimed at empowering DWs by organizing DWs and providing them with better services, education and training, and engaged in policy advocacy for better labour and social protection. They also shared the belief that DWs themselves, including child domestic workers (CDWs), should participate to the extent possible in the organizing, training and subsequent leadership activities.

Each of these activities contributed to raising awareness among government agencies, employers and the workers themselves of the main issues, including the prevailing challenges and available means to address them. Another common thread was the aim of developing an effective DW voice at all levels of this process, including efforts to introduce the latest information and strategic thinking into official policy-making.

Priorities of domestic workers and their organizations include:

- social recognition of DWs as full citizens. More protection is needed from traditionally negative public perceptions, while education is needed to change deep-seated social and cultural attitudes and biases against women, ethnic and caste minorities, children and other vulnerable groups;
- reducing and finally eliminating the too prevalent incidence of child labour, which is an indicator of worker vulnerability in this sector;

- legal and social recognition of domestic and care work as skilled, professional work;
- better, more DW-specific legal provisions and enforcement;
- collective organizations that provide DWs with a voice and opportunities to develop their communication and leadership skills;
- improved self-esteem and dignity leading to self-empowerment in finding sustainable routes to more jobs and more decent work;
- better working conditions in general, including better wages and hours; and
- more opportunities to better their lives and those of their families.

Each with its specific context and associated challenges, each with its specific approaches, these eight initiatives succeeded in achieving their respective objectives.

Success factors importantly included working together with both local and outside agencies and, most importantly, with the DWs themselves. Measures designed to empower DWs both individually and collectively led to more sustainable, potentially more expandable and replicable and, in general, more valuable gains.

¹ International Labour Organization (ILO) estimate.

² *ILO: Decent Work for Domestic Workers: Achievements since the adoption of C189* (no date), www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/briefingnote/wcms_490778.pdf [accessed 26 Mar. 2017].



CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS





I — INDIA: NDWM IN BIHAR – ACTING AGAINST CHILD LABOUR IN DOMESTIC WORK

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Immaculatie Cordies Marie (ICM) Bihar

National Domestic Workers' Movement Bihar

2016

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|---|
| BBA | Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save the Childhood Movement, India) |
| CDW | Child domestic worker |
| DW | Domestic worker |
| ICM | Immaculatie Cordies Marie |
| NDWM | National Domestic Workers' Movement (India) |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| OBC | Other Backward Classes |

1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 NDWM

Headquartered in the main area of Patna (Gandhi Maidan), the capital of Bihar, the NDWM serves DWs in five districts of Bihar. The NDWM provides “Muskan Manzil”, a shelter home for rescued CDWs, and networks with the Government to rescue CDWs and rehabilitate them through skills training and formal education.

1.1.2 BIHAR

In Indian tradition, women and girls are often considered secondary citizens. And although the Government of the Republic of India claims progress is being made, the status of women and girl children remains little improved. Government schemes for their welfare, for example the Kanya Suraksha Yojana and the Students Scholarship Yojana, tend to remain largely rhetorical, failing to reach people at the grass-roots level. Girl children are not sent to school, often being instead taught household chores to prepare them to perform their duties in another household after marriage. And they are married as soon as they attain puberty. They are also often allowed to work in other households, notably in urban Bihar.

Their employers can require these children to work for long hours, and their domestic work earnings, however meager, are welcome in their home households.

According to the 2011 national census, Bihar had a total population of 103,804,637 (54,185,347 men and 49,619,290 women), an increase from the total 2011 population of 82,998,506 (43,243,795 men and 39,754,714 women).

In 2011, Bihar's population comprised 8.58 per cent of India's total population. The caste system strongly prevails in all parts of Bihar. Houses are even located in a village according to the caste of their occupants. This report focuses on groups, especially in Bihar, that belong predominantly to the lowest stratum of the Indian caste system. Bihar society is divided on the basis four forward castes, four upper backward castes, 100 most backward castes and more than 20 lower castes. These caste divisions have been legitimated in the Hindu belief system in terms of karma, where the oppressed caste is made to believe that being poor and relegated to a lower social position is their fate. Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs and Yadavs comprise the wealthy and powerful castes. Brahmins, Bhumihars and Rajputs consider themselves to be high caste, while Yadavs, although they fall in the backward category, are a powerful group both economically and politically. These four groups together constitute barely 30 per cent of Bihar's total population, but they possess most of the land. They also hold most of the top government jobs and other important sources of income. The scheduled castes, known as Dalits, constitute 40 per cent of the population and Other Backward Classes (OBC)¹ 20 per cent. The remainder are Muslims and Christians.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The Bihar NDWM aimed to accomplish the following:

- bring dignity to domestic work and domestic workers (DWs);
- abolish child labour; and
- secure the rights of migrant workers.

2 – CHALLENGES

2.1 CASTE-RELATED DISPARITIES

High-caste people have a long history of exploiting the scheduled castes, who live below the poverty line. These lower castes strongly tend to be illiterate, landless, casual labourers, unorganized and totally dependent on higher-caste people for their livelihoods. This hierarchical system has a pronounced effect on the lives of Bihar's poor and the landless. Oppressed by high-caste land holders, many migrate to the cities in search of work, prepared to accept any kind of unskilled labour they can find. Male family members often take up such jobs as pulling rickshaws, painting, construction work and other types of manual, and generally unorganized labour. Female members, on the other hand, go into domestic work. Children, mostly girls, are especially in demand for domestic work, since they are often willing to work for longer than the stipulated time and do more than the stipulated duties for no pay or very little, while rarely answering their employers back or demanding respect for their rights.

2.2 CHILDREN AGED 4–14 YEARS IN CHILD DOMESTIC WORK

Bihar's urban poor who comprised 95 per cent of the workforce in the informal sector, were clustered in slum areas in the cities. The women work as domestic workers at very low wages in the service of those in the skilled, organized sectors as doctors, government employees, teachers and business people. Male family members typically drink alcohol on a daily basis. They do not support their families financially. Their children are deprived of such human rights as education, health, sanitation, entertainment and information. They are subject to child labour and are pushed to assume family responsibilities at a tender age.



Education is an important means to enabling children to lead normal childhoods and to reduce their engaging in domestic work. Child labour in domestic work and other informal sector jobs is an especially major problem among those aged between of four and 14 years.

A recent study by the India-based Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), the “Save the Childhood Movement”, showed how children aged 6–14 years listed as enrolled students in Darbhanga, Bihar, were actually working as bonded labourers in Delhi. This study also claimed that 25 per cent of all children between 6 and 14 years were still out of school.²

Most parents who engaged their children in domestic work rather than send them to schools were illiterate, unmotivated and had yet to understand the importance of education. Even among those wanting to educate their children, the condition of government schools in these areas was very poor, and the parents preferred that their children go to private schools which, however, they could not afford. Overall, the school drop-out rate among children who entered domestic work would have been reduced had the following conditions prevailed:

- if the schools improved – for example if teachers had showed up for work more often;
- if fathers reduced their alcohol intake; and
- if mothers received proper salaries as domestic workers.

Irregular school attendance was caused in part by illiteracy and drunkenness among parents and the lack of credible dreams, or the clear unaffordability of such dreams, among the children regarding their future. The other major factor behind child domestic work was poor economic conditions among families. The parents were at work, and care of siblings was vested with elder children who subsequently tended to drop out of school. Once they dropped out, the mothers often brought them along on domestic work jobs, and soon the girl children were themselves domestic workers. It is also true that, once the children started earning, they were expected to behave like adults, taking up family responsibilities. And so they lost their childhood.

Another big challenge to reducing child domestic work in Bihar should be noted here. Although employment of children in domestic work or other kinds of labour up to the age of 14 years is illegal, government officials are often very lenient with lawbreakers, thereby contributing to the number of children working in households.

2.3 CDWS: ABUSED, EXPLOITED AND INVISIBLE

- The CDWs were largely girls between the ages of 4 and 18 years living with their parents in slum areas, school drop-outs or children who had never been to school. They usually accompanied their mothers to work, tending to provide domestic work services to two or three families and realizing very meagre incomes from their efforts. In 99 per cent of the cases the girls shared the burden of family responsibilities with their mothers as the fathers did not support the family. The children's future and their dreams were lost in the course of cleaning other people's houses and taking care of their employers' children.

- Full time-child domestic workers were also trafficked by illegal agents from rural and tribal areas of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam and Orissa, placed with or sold to households in cities such as Patna. These children faced numerous dangers in workplaces behind closed doors. They remained generally unaware of their situation and were permitted minimal contact with the outside world. These children were often physically, sexually and mentally abused by employers who took advantage of their vulnerability. The agents who placed them were always known to the families, who trusted them to take their children to work in the cities. Cases of children who disappeared from the tribal areas of Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam and West Bengal were common. The traffickers faded away into the cities and parents from remote areas were unable to trace their children. Often the local police failed to offer assistance. Approached by illiterate parents, the police tended to expect bribes, and the parents, who often could not pay them, were asked to visit the police station again and again, which, especially given the distances involved and the fact that transport was scarce, was unaffordable. Sometimes the parents were threatened or physically abused both by police and illegal agents, and they eventually stopped searching for their children – a common story in many of the tribal villages of Bihar and Jharkhand.



3 – APPROACHES/ METHODS

Non-formal centres. Conducting classes in a variety of subjects, the non-formal centres aimed to serve children, including school drop-outs and CDWs, who did not attend formal schools. These children, aged 6–14 years, gathered six days a week for three hours per day. The centre prepared them academically for eventual admittance to formal schools, while providing them with stationery and books and, as an additional incentive to attend in some areas, nutritious foods such as eggs or grain. The teacher met with parents of children who failed to attend classes regularly to remind them of how important education really was. The non-formal teacher also remained in regular contact with the local formal school teacher and advocated for the admission of children where appropriate.

The NDWM had been conducting this “good practice”, reducing the number of children in domestic work in Bihar from 2006 onwards. Initially, in the five years till 2010, the project was supported by the Bihar government through the Women’s Development Corporation. Later, it was supported by the Jaan Foundation from Mumbai. Six non-formal centres are now in operation, and through them, over those nine years, (2006 to 2015) at least 700 CDWs and prospective CDWs were prepared for entry into formal education. The mother of the child was usually a DW as well, thus the NDWM was able to build rapport with them and give them training in the rights of children, including the right to education.

Anti-trafficking and safe migration training in source areas. Training in anti-trafficking and safe migration was an important good practice. All people have the right to migrate to where they can find sources of income or security for their family. However, various factors constrained that kind of migration, while the essentially inhumane traffic in human beings was showing its ugly face. This modern-day slavery also dealt in children, who were trafficked to factories and households and often sold into sex work.

The NDWM reached out to the districts of Bihar (Banka, Jammui, Godda, Bhagalpur, Kishanganj), Jharkhand (Gumla, Simdega) and West Bengal (Silliguri) where many children were being trafficked, especially for domestic work. Most trafficking agents were workers who migrated to cities. They made false promises, essentially conning parents in the villages, and took the children for domestic work. Once they reached the cities they sold them for between 80,000 and 100,000 Indian rupees (INR) for a year's indenture. These children worked in households where they were paid only in food and were not allowed to leave their workplace or contact family members.

To reduce such practices, the NDWM conducted training in village schools, hostels, parishes and "panchayats" (village councils), sharing information about the trafficking of children. They promoted awareness of the issues by distributing pamphlets, organizing street theatre, training for capacity building, and through sharing case studies of rescued children, including stories of how they faced abuse at the hands of urban employers. In the schools, the NDWM encouraged children to continue their studies and parents to educate their children. Through its network in cities such as Patna, when it stumbled across cases of missing children it rescued them with the help of the police and returned them to their parents. In certain areas it established youth committees who monitored trafficking of children in their villages and stopped the agents, sometimes catching and beating them. Through this practice, the NDWM was able to identify the illegal recruiting agents and warn them of dire legal consequences if they continued to traffic in children. The villagers, aware of the potential abuses, were sending their children to the cities less often, instead placing them in schools. In consequence, school dropout rates were dropping and, on the whole, people in the source areas had become more alert to illegal child traffickers.

Shelter home: Rescue and rehabilitation. Beyond educating the parents, the NDWM ran "Muskan Manzil", a shelter home for children rescued from domestic work through the Child Labour Department of the Bihar government. Once alerted, with the help

of local police and NGOs, to the fact that someone was employing a child, three department teams raided the home of the employer and rescued the child. Such children were placed in the NDWM shelter home. In addition, DWs sometimes found CDWs working in apartments, and helped them to escape. The NDWM provided such children with both temporary shelter and academic classes. Once they developed an interest in education and found local sponsors, they were sent to nearby schools or hostels. To help them become self empowered citizens, these children were also given training in various skills beyond an academic education, including the following: leadership, communication, street theatre, cultural folk dance, martial arts such as taekwondo. Regular follow-up attention included guidance and counselling, as well as medical care if the need arose. In operation since 2010, the shelter home, as of this writing, had rescued and rehabilitated about 65 children.

Awareness and sensitization training for parents. The children whom the NDWM encountered daily were not only expected to work as adults, to the extent they took up family responsibilities they had to behave as adults. And in Indian culture, girls are prepared for marriage from the time of their birth. As parents have an important say over their children, the NDWM motivated them to avoid engaging children in household work or sending them out to domestic work. Parents were encouraged to recognize the harmful effects of alcohol consumption and to eradicate social evils from their communities. Illiterate parents were often poorly motivated to send their children to school and disadvantaged household economic conditions presented another important factor in steering children away from school and into domestic work. The NDWM regularly sensitized parents to how important education was for their children and how deleterious daily labour could be. Self-help groups for income-generating activities were one way to help families with insufficient income to meet their daily needs so that their children could return to school.

NDWM educational programmes regarding workers' and children's rights helped dissuade parents from taking their children with them to their workplace. Employers sometimes asked domestic workers

who were too ill to come to work to instead send their children in their place, and, for fear of losing their job or wages, these parents too often obliged. This type of situation was one main avenue leading children to domestic work. The NDWM encouraged sick workers to take leave instead, since this was their right, and not to send their children to replace them. Indeed, regular NDWM field meetings and training courses were encouraging women to send their daughters to school.

Awareness-raising activities sensitized parents, NGOs, local leaders and the community in general to understand how education could bring about important individual and social change in the life of a child. This promoted improved retention rates in the schools, while parents were motivated to reduce the engagement of children in domestic/household work and in care for siblings.

Community mobilization-cum-participation. The NDWM aimed to build capacity among parents and local leaders, enabling them to play more active roles in managing non-formal centres and government schools. Meanwhile, creating a more child-friendly atmosphere in schools and involving parent-teacher associations enabled teachers to more responsibly engage with their teaching duties and with providing appropriate co-curricular activities to attract children away from work options toward schools.

Children aged 4–18 years comprised the largest population in the area. New initiatives to promote better participation in NDWM programmes such as the Child Rights Movement presupposed developing the skills of these children. Parents needed educating regarding alcohol abuse and its social effects, promoting a friendly parent-child atmosphere in the family so that future generations would avoid using alcohol. Their new awareness and understanding of these issues led parents to recognize the value of education for their children.

One main NDWM task was community mobilization. As women became empowered it became vital to reach out to their husbands too, as they traditionally were the main family decision-makers. The NDWM raised awareness in communities where most children



were working through street theatre, depicting the rights and conditions of working children. The NDWM urged community leaders and communities as a whole to take responsibility for trying to see that no child was sent for domestic work, bringing as many children as possible back into mainstream education.

Peer-group participation. Peer-group participation presents one more important measure in reducing CDW, and the NDWM created opportunities for children to come together:

- Non-formal centres provided important places where the children came together daily, places where they could be motivated by school-going children of their own age, friends who sowed the seeds of interest in study.
- Monthly meetings of the various area groups provided forums in which the children could discuss ways to change their life situations in the areas of health, education, sanitation, household alcohol abuse, and child labour.

- Regular one- to three-day residential training sessions offered opportunities to meet children from different areas of Bihar and learn from one another.
- The children could display their talents before their peers during celebrations where the NDWM created platforms for children to play, dance and enjoy their childhood together.
- A six-monthly residential programme provided CDWs with solid training in their rights to education, health, freedom from abuse, and a proper childhood. Legal personnel were invited to provide training, and the NDWM followed up at the field level to improve the children's situation.
- The NDWM promoted child-led initiatives and skill development programmes that enhanced leadership skills and a sense of responsibility for building the future of their communities and society at large.
- All these activities together produced a peer-group energy where the children helped to steer one another away from domestic work and towards school attendance.

Public awareness programme. Public attitudes towards child labour issues – especially among both those sending and employing the children – stood, and continue to stand, in need of real transformation. To this end, the NDWM regularly undertook activities to raise public awareness in such locations as bus stands, auto stands, railway stations and the main roundabouts of cities like Patna, Bhagalpur and Darbhanga. Children's rights-themed street plays were performed, and various groups including NGOs working with the children were invited to speak about the rights of children and how employing children presented a danger to society. This sort of activity was usually performed in crowded areas where many unorganized-sector workers found transportation to return home at the end of the day. The NDWM awareness programme also included distribution of pamphlets.

Skills training for dropouts. Skills development can bring great changes to the life of any individual, especially children. Given such skills, children acquire greater self-respect, self-confidence and independence. Growing up with such skills and attitudes encourages them to become well-rounded, independent and responsible citizens capable of mapping their own futures.

The NDWM organized different skills development programmes designed to inculcate positive attitudes in children with respect to completing their education. Age-appropriate skills development programmes prepared children to establish age-appropriate career dreams and plans, thereby nurturing greater interest in an education.

Skills enhancement programmes supported children in framing life plans, making it more likely they would master a particular skills set. For example, CDWs, mostly those aged 14–18 years, were trained in tailoring and embroidery. Once registered in a class, they gradually dropped their domestic work to devote their full attention to the tailoring. Upon successful completion of the course, they were provided with a certificate that enabled them to earn a living. At the same time, the NDWM helped them to write their class ten exams by registering them with the National Open University, further improving their formal qualifications for employment.

Group formation-child rights movement. In the slum areas of Bihar, where the prospective CDWs live, the NDWM established groups of children aged 8–14 years. These groups consisted of CDWs, children of DWs, and school-going children. The child rights movement was the base organization for children at the slum level, and by way of different programmes they played a major role among children in enrollment, retention and minimizing the incidence of child labour in domestic work. The NDWM formed around 12 groups consisting of 30 to 50 children trained in child rights and the legal provisions that support these rights. Well-trained resource persons also conducted sessions in health and hygiene. The NDWM held monthly meetings with the children and trained them to take up local issues such as child labour, health

and sanitation, environmental issues, alcohol abuse, and illiteracy. The NDWM was also informed whenever a child entered domestic work in a particular locality. The group leaders would meet the parents of the CDW and encourage them to take her out of work and send her to school.

When children in their own localities explained to their parents the need for education, the parents tended to listen to them and try to send their ward to a nearby school. The groups also met child labour department officials and asked them to support their cause.

The NDWM-Bihar initiated the child rights movement in 2013 and, as of this writing, about 800 children from the five districts of Bihar had joined the movement. The children, themselves serving as agents in reducing CDW, acquired the attitudes and skills to become future leaders as they took up the responsibilities of bringing change to their own communities.

Special day celebrations. Special days such as the following, for example international or national holidays, present opportunities to create greater awareness among both children and the public at large:

- World Day Against Child Labour (12 June);
- International Day of Hope for All Children (17 February);
- Indian Independence Day (15 August); and
- Children's Day (14 November).

Such celebrations can help to educate children on their rights to a childhood and education. The NDWM involved school-going children including children who had been rescued and/or withdrawn from work, and children who were still working in the street plays, and organized other activities, such as sport days and picnics to promote children's interactions with one another and reinforce the positive value of education.

This proved one of the best good practices. After such celebrations many children were encouraged to approach the NDWM to enroll them in schools.



Reaching out to employers and employment creation. The NDWM in Bihar created employment by placing adults in domestic work. Employers maintained regular contact with the NDWM, and prospective migrants also contacted the movement, seeking employment in households, which mainly involved chores such as cleaning, washing dishes and clothes, and cooking, as well as caring for children, the elderly and the sick.

Placing an adult in domestic work automatically reduced the chance of having households employ children. The NDWM established a rapport with employers, and conducted meetings with them to raise their awareness of the legal rights of workers, while persuading them not to employ children. Documentary films were shown that depicted the struggle of CDWs and the positive changes achieved by employers who respected their workers and empowered them through various types of skills training. During these meetings DW leaders were invited to share their struggles with the rights at issue as well as share positive experiences they had had with their employers.

Since its inception in 2005, this practice has changed employer attitudes, where some of them began supporting the NDWM in the rescue of CDWs working in their apartment buildings.

Media advocacy campaign. Media advocacy complemented the demonstrations and rallies conducted on special days. The media interviewed workers and the NDWM, which highlighted CDW issues together with domestic work issues in general. The media provided channels to every sector of the population. During these meetings the NDWM shared cases of CDW abuse and asked the public to approach the NDWM whenever they found children working in households.

4 – RESULTS

The variety of above-mentioned strategies and measures were implemented by the Bihar NDWM with minimum financial assistance and maximum work on the ground. Between 2006 and 2015 the NDWM accomplished the following positive outcomes:

- About 700 CDWs and dropouts benefited from the NDWM programme and entered into formal schooling.
- Parents in and around 130 urban slums and villages of Patna, Bhagalpur, Begusarai, Darbhanga and Bhojpur districts were made aware of children's rights.
- A marked change became apparent in these parents' way of thinking, evidenced by the fact that, in some areas, every child was being sent to school.
- Trafficking children for domestic work from the tribal areas was reduced.
- Placement of adult workers had reduced the number of children entering domestic work.
- Stakeholder training succeeded in rescuing CDWs, who were subsequently rehabilitated through formal education and skills training.
- Awareness of DW rights among adult workers increased their salaries, which also reduced the number of children drawn into domestic work.



5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

The above approaches and methods proved to be innovative good practices that led to the successful withdrawal of children from domestic work. While some of the measures did not show immediate results, in the longer term they have brought strong and stable changes. Furthermore, these practices can be replicated, especially among the urban poor and in areas where child trafficking is prevalent. Populations in areas exposed to NDWM good practices were 95 per cent illiterate, and fell into the culturally and religiously oppressed category. People were led to believe that their disadvantaged condition was a matter of fate. Illiteracy among the stakeholders presented a major challenge. Indian society, moreover, tends to view girls, the NDWM's target group, as secondary citizens.

The good practices applied to face these formidable challenges will achieve the needed changes and can be successfully replicated. However, families' cultural and financial background in a given society, as well as the availability of organizations committed to combating child labour in domestic work that are equipped with the necessary personnel and financial resources, will determine how long it takes or in which countries these good practices may be successfully replicated.

ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

- strong NDWM rapport with parents is the foremost priority;
- regular contact and activities for both parents and children;
- field visits and regular meetings with the parents;
- surveys to collect data on the reasons children work as domestic workers;
- group formation among children of all kinds, not only working children;
- motivational training;
- recognizing and building leadership capacity among children;
- show documentaries portraying positive employer impacts on the lives of CDWs;
- distribution of child rights pamphlets in public areas;
- street plays depicting children's rights issues in busy public utility areas;
- poster awareness campaigns in the source areas;
- case presentations featuring trafficked CDWs;
- advocacy with the officials who can advance policy changes with issues of working children;
- distribution of pamphlets providing information about whom to contact when a working child is found;
- awareness and pre-departure training for prospective migrants;
- motivational training for adult DWs who will be in direct contact with rescued CDWs;
- operation of the shelter home in rescuing and rehabilitating CDWs;
- regular academic classes for children to encourage an interest in school and education;
- sponsored education for children with very poor backgrounds; and
- networking with like-minded groups.

6 – CONCLUSIONS

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES REMAINING

- Forty-five per cent of the workforce in India are children, which contributes to adult unemployment.
- Children provide easy targets for employers, since they need not be paid, making follow-up activities with children especially important.
- Financial development is by far the most important goal among the disadvantaged, so it can be difficult to persuade them to spend money on a child's education.
- In India, private schools are expensive, and the urban poor are unable to send their children to quality schools.
- Since CDWs work behind closed doors, government assistance is needed to enter private homes to investigate cases of child domestic work or abuse.
- Adult mind-sets regarding child domestic work – those of parents, employers and the public in general – need transforming.
- India's Constitution forbids child labour, yet employers feel free to flout the law in this regard.
- The poor have little voice in the judicial system and little awareness of children's rights, thus they often fail to recognize that it is a crime to send their children to work.
- The NDWM has achieved greater impact through personal visits to parents than by applying legal norms.
- Positive NDWM impacts accumulated over a period of nine years; even the mere exposure of these children to places and experiences other than those to which they were accustomed (even things as simple of picnics in the countryside) had positive impacts on them.



- The interaction of children in or under threat of domestic work with other, school-going children in itself can bring about positive change, encouraging the choice of school over work.

The individual good practices collected in this report produced varying results. And the NDWM faced significant challenges in executing them, since most people with whom it worked were illiterate and they strongly tended to focus only on earning livelihoods, rather than on championing their rights. Regular and repeated NDWM interventions, however, were changing attitudes towards education, achieving both subtle and radical changes in the lives of these children and their parents. Already, many parents had become aware that a child's place was at school, not behind the closed walls of domestic work.

- ¹ A "collective term used by the Government of India to classify castes which are socially and educationally disadvantaged. It is one of several official classifications of the population of India, along with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs)." Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Other_Backward_Class [accessed 27 Feb. 2017].
- ² Manash Pratim Gohain: "Enrolled in Bihar, working in Delhi" (HAQ Centre for Child Rights, no date), haqrc.org/news/enrolled-bihar-working-delhi [accessed 27 Mar. 2017].



2 — NEPAL: CLOSED DOORS NO LONGER CLOSED – ADDRESSING CHILD LABOUR IN DOMESTIC WORK

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Saroj KC, Nepal

ACRONYMS

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| AATWIN | Alliance Against Trafficking of Women and Children in Nepal |
| ADW | Adult Domestic Worker |
| ADWC | Active Domestic Workers Consultancy |
| CBS | Central Bureau of Statistics |
| CDW | Child Domestic Worker |
| CFLG | Child-Friendly Local Governance |
| CO-Jakarta | ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor-Leste |
| CPC | Child protection committee |
| CSA | Child Sexual Abuse |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| CWISH | Children and Women in Social Service and Human Rights |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DW | Domestic worker |
| GEFONT | General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions |
| HUN | Home Workers Union Nepal |
| IDWF | International Domestic Workers Federation |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| KAP | Knowledge, attitudes and practices |
| LSMC | Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan city |
| MoFALD | Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development |
| NCE | National Campaign for Education |
| NCPA | National Child Protection Alliance |
| NFE | Non-formal education |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| NIDWU | Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Union |
| NPR | Nepalese Rupees |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| ORC | Outreach Centres |
| REFLECT | Regenerated Freirean Literacy and Community Empowerment Techniques |
| RNCDWLEs | Reintegrating Child Domestic Workers Living with Employers (project) |
| SLS | Support Learning Sessions |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| UNGASS | United Nations General Assembly Special Session |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Fund |
| US\$ | United States Dollars |
| VDC | Village Development Committee |



*Reintegrated child happy at home with her family.
Photo: Travis Hodges/CWISH*

1 – INTRODUCTION

This chapter documents Children and Women in Social Service and Human Rights (CWISH) practices and experiences in reducing child domestic worker (CDW) numbers in Kathmandu, Nepal. It aims to share good practices of CWISH that can be scaled up and replicated.

The study, which covered the period 1996–2016, relied mainly on the following data collection methods:

- trend analyses of annual status reports on CDWs in Kathmandu produced by CWISH from 2001 to 2016;
- review of annual CWISH organizational reports from 1996 to 2015;
- interview with founder/Chairperson of CWISH;

- interview with former Executive Director of CWISH;
- interviews with former facilitators of Outreach Centers;
- interview with a former CDW who had participated in Outreach Centers (ORCs) and who was currently serving as trade union activist;
- focus group discussions with CWISH staff members regarding good practices; and
- semi-structured questionnaires in the conduct of interviews, with individual interviews audio recorded and then transcribed.

1.1 BACKGROUND

History of slavery. Nepal has a long history of enslavement, mostly in the form of domestic servitude. Disadvantaged lower-caste and ethnic minority communities have been forced to work for more privileged, landlord or higher-caste communities. Girls have traditionally been sold by poor families to rich families as slaves – “maids” or “servants” – who performed work considered of low or no value generally conducted by low caste, class or ethnic group children (GEFONT, 2011).¹ Kamlari, or sending a daughter for domestic work from the Tharu community,² used to be prevalent; officially abolished as of 27 June 2013, in fact the practice still persists.

Child domestic workers (CDWs). Having child workers in domestic service was long a source of prestige in Nepalese urban society, all the while employers believed that providing CDWs with food, clothing and shelter was a social service. By the early 1990s, with Nepal transitioning from the party-less Panchayat system³ to a multiparty democratic system, urbanization and modernization were shaping a popular perception of cities as hubs of opportunity. Dreams of a better life, including better homes, food and education were attracting children to domestic work, which was also regarded as a safe form of employment. Meanwhile, CWISH started raising questions about the protection and education of CDWs living with employers, children who worked behind closed doors and stood at risk of violence and other forms of abuse (CWISH, 2005).⁴

Legal status of child workers. Nepal has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). In Nepal, child labour is a punishable crime under the provisions of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 2000, the Labour Act of 1992 and the Children's Act of 1992.

The ILO defines child labour as work done by children (people younger than 18 years) that is exploitative, hazardous or otherwise inappropriate for their age, detrimental to their schooling or social, physical, mental, spiritual or moral development. Child labour is determined by the age of child, the nature and duration of work, and working conditions, as well as provisions in national legislation and international standards.

The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), in brief C189, defines domestic work as work performed in or for a household or households, and a domestic worker means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. "Child domestic worker" (CDW) refers generally to children working in the domestic work sector, in a home of a third party or employer whether in permissible or non-permissible situations.⁵

Nature and extent of child domestic work. According to the 2008 National Labour Force Survey, among 7.7 million children aged 5–17 years, more than 40 per cent (3.14 million) were economically active; more than half (1.6 million) of them were engaged in child labour. Almost 40 per cent (620,000) of these child labourers were involved in hazardous forms of work, and almost 8 per cent (126,000) of them worked in the worst forms of child labour.⁶

Meanwhile, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) reported that children involved in labour had been reduced by 1 million over the previous ten years. This reflected efforts on the part of the Government of Nepal and civil society organizations (CSOs) over the previous several decades. The Government had prepared the National Master Plan on Child Labour (2004–14) with the objective of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2009 and all forms

of child labour by 2014. Following a review, however, an updated plan, the National Master Plan on Child Labour (2011–2020), aimed to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and all forms of child labour by 2020.

The National Child Labour Report 2012 indicated that children from impoverished areas and households, marginalized and deprived of access to state facilities, were highly vulnerable to entering into child labour.⁷ Children involved in labour were mostly employed in the informal economy, far beyond the reach of protective policies and legislation. Children were even being forced into slave-like domestic work. Walk Free's Global Slavery Index 2016 estimated that 45.8 million people around the world lived and worked in conditions of modern slavery, and 234,600 (0.823 per cent) were to be found in Nepal. This report ranked Nepal 31st among countries globally in terms of having the greatest number of people in modern slavery, 13th in proportion to the total national population, and seventh in Asia Pacific.⁸

Globally, the ILO estimated that 11.5 million children aged 5–17 years were employed in domestic work, of whom 82.6 per cent were aged 5–14 years.⁹ In Nepal a total of 55,655 children were engaged in domestic work in urban areas, with 21,191 of these in urban areas of Kathmandu, among which 97 per cent of CDWs worked in conditions of slavery. Of that 97 per cent, 10.7 per cent were in bonded/indebted servitude, 52.7 per cent worked without pay, 46.6 per cent worked excessive hours and 78.8 per cent worked at night.¹⁰

The ILO rapid assessment of CDWs in Kathmandu concluded that one in every five households in that city employed a child domestic worker. Meanwhile, a 2012 World Education and Plan Nepal rapid assessment estimated 53,488 CDWs among a selected 10 districts including Kathmandu.¹¹ A more recent rapid assessment conducted by CWISH in 2016 estimated 12,265 CDWs in Kathmandu with one child domestic worker in every 20 households.

CDW is categorized as a worst form of child labour when it features one or more of the following characteristics: no pay, or paying off

debts, excessive workloads, confinement and extreme loneliness, violence or other abuse and ill-treatment. Some children are compelled to work at a very early age and are deprived of the parental love crucial to a child's emotional needs and healthy development.¹²

1.2 OBJECTIVES

Intensifying efforts to eliminate child labour in domestic work.

Founded in 1993, CWISH is a national human rights organization aiming to ensure social justice, protection and promotion of human rights, with particular focus on the rights of children. CWISH is one of the leading agencies in Nepal working on child protection, education and family empowerment.¹³

CWISH has worked to end CDW from 1996. In the 20 years from then until 2016, CWISH mainstreamed the CDW agenda into national policies and programmes. At the same time, CWISH reduced CDW numbers and established a successful model to address CDW issues. This report shows how effective CWISH practices were in:

- improving CDW living and working conditions;
- rescuing CDWs;
- reintegrating them into their families; and
- conducting related research and policy interventions.

2 – CHALLENGES

- It was difficult to contact CDWs, and limited information made it difficult to properly appreciate their circumstances.
- Outreach to CDWs was especially difficult in more remote areas.
- In general, government efforts were insufficiently responsive in supporting outreach to CDWs.

3 – APPROACHES/METHODS

3.1 NON-CONFRONTATIONAL OUTREACH TO BOTH CDWS AND EMPLOYERS

Most CDWs were out of school. Following its inception in 1996, CWISH reached out to these children to collect and interpret information in characterizing their situation. It also started conducting non-formal classes for CDWs in outreach centres (ORCs). CWISH facilitators conducted non-confrontational home visits to identify such workers, interacted with employers, and gathered CDWs into ORCs providing for non-formal education, aiming eventually to enrol them in formal education. Facilitators went from household to household with leaflets, interacting with employers, convincing them that literate children could more effectively contribute to chores such as shopping for groceries and appear more presentable before guests, thereby casting the employers themselves in a better light. CWISH also mobilized influential local people to collaborate in convincing employers of the advantages of these measures.

Between 1996 and 2016, the organization supported 7,232 CDWs to improve conditions and enroll in formal education through its outreach centers.

3.2 RAPID ASSESSMENTS

The ILO and UNICEF developed a rapid assessment method to investigate child labour in 2000, and in 2001 the ILO applied it to conducting surveys of child domestic workers. The same rapid assessment methodology was adopted for the 2016 CWISH survey, which applied both quantitative and qualitative techniques to establishing a detailed picture of the CDW situation in Kathmandu.

The surveyors, in consultation with the Kathmandu Metropolitan City office, applied cluster sampling techniques to classify the study area as either core urban, urban or semi-urban based on such factors such as commercial centers, population density and degree of urbanization (ILO, 2001). The same three wards surveyed in the 2001 ILO rapid assessment (Wards 25, 32 and 34) were selected as core urban, urban and semi urban areas, respectively. These wards were further divided into sub-areas of sample households for consultations with the Child Protection Committee (CPC) and the Ward Citizens Forum (WCF). Selection of sub-areas from each sampled ward was based on preliminary information from the CPC and WCF consultations regarding the incidence and location of child labour within each ward. (See section 4.2, below, for the results of these assessments.)

3.3 EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS AMONG CDWS

CWISH published awareness-raising materials, including brochures and posters, and delivered them to households door to door as well as by way of daily national newspapers. Messages included the fact that employing children in labour was illegal. Media people were given training in child labour issues, including those regarding child domestic workers. Local radio stations broadcasted related jingles, public service announcements and other programming. CWISH facilitated establishment of the Child Friendly Journalist Group, helping to mobilize media against child labour in general.

This group publicized CDW issues, mainly those regarding abuse and exploitation, helping to sensitize the public to the prevailing lack of CDW legal protection. CWISH also prepared and broadcast radio and television CDW policy interactions, and mobilized youth groups to present CDW issue-related forum theatre¹⁴ and street drama in communities.

When we started to work with CDWs, employers would say proudly they were doing good work by giving food and shelter to a child in exchange for domestic work. Child domestic workers didn't go to school and weren't allowed to visit their own homes. Policy-makers and bureaucrats were simply ignorant of these issues. But things have changed. The attitude of employers is different. If we ask them, they say they don't have CDWs. Even if they do have CDWs, they claim these children are close relatives. This can create difficult situations, since we often can't find means of proper verification in such cases. However, we are positive about the response – at least people have understood that employing a child is illegal and unethical.

Shanti Adhikari, CWISH founder

In addition, local facilitators were mobilized to conduct individual and group meetings with the employers. The facilitators made door-to-door visits, met with employers and conveyed the message regarding child domestic work. At the same time, CWISH organized interactive community meetings about child domestic work with the employers. From 1996 to 2005, CWISH raised awareness of CDW issues while achieving improvements in these children's circumstances.

3.3.1 OUTREACH CENTRES FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The ORCs provided venues where CDWs had access to play and other interaction with their peers. Because CDWs did not have access to formal education, CWISH had been operating ORCs since 1996 in different areas of the Kathmandu Valley. ORCs served as refuges for study, play, interaction with peers and sharing their problems for two hours a day for nine months. ORCs also provided temporary facilities for non-formal education, aiming to mainstream CDWs into formal education.

From 1996 to 2006, we applied a soft approach. All we did was convince employers to send CDWs to one of our outreach centers. It was really difficult to reach CDWs, especially in the upper-class households. These people had big houses with full security. When we went there to ask about CDWs, they used to set their dogs on us. We couldn't talk to the CDWs even when we saw them. The government system was not responsive enough; the only thing we could do was access CDWs through our ORCs, assess their situation and empower them so that they could bargain with employers for their education, remuneration and eventual reintegration with their families. In 2005, we conducted research on sexual abuse among CDWs which revealed that almost 55 per cent were abused sexually and, among these, most in terms of physical contact. These findings were an eye-opener for us regarding the lack of protection of CDWs.

So from 2006 onwards, given the nature of the situation, we also applied a hard approach, developing a zero tolerance policy in cases of abuse, exploitation and violence against CDWs. Even where they were employed in upper-class households, we started rescuing and reintegrating CDWs where they were found to be vulnerable or abused. We registered cases, filed complaints against employers, and

finally law enforcement agencies began addressing these issues. We have many examples where employers were prosecuted by the courts. We had to face threats from employers, but slowly official police recognition of the issues has made life easier for us.

Pradeep Dongol, former facilitator now working as a CWISH child protection officer with the Helpline Team

ORCs were established in areas where the surveys indicated CDW concentrations. A facilitator was employed to conduct home visits in support of non-formal education. It cost US\$1,200 on average for one ORC to conduct three sessions a day with at least 20 participants each for nine months.



3.3.2 SUPPORT LEARNING SESSIONS: PREPARATION FOR FORMAL EDUCATION

Support learning sessions (SLS) are for CDWs who are enrolled in schools. They aim to support CDWs in academic courses while helping them to overcome living and working difficulties. CDWs have an opportunity to share their issues with trained facilitators, empower themselves and become informed regarding their legal rights and entitlements. School teachers support academic performance while CWISH facilitators conduct sessions regarding child domestic work. A one-hour learning session is conducted every day after school for nine months. Five days a week are dedicated to academic courses, and one day is devoted to discussing child domestic work, characterizing the children's respective situations, needs and priorities. CWISH spends US\$800 on average to conduct support learning sessions in one school for nine months.

Adult domestic workers during their annual meeting.



3.4 RECRUITING AND UNIONIZING ADULT DOMESTIC WORKERS

The Active Domestic Workers Consultancy. In CWISH consciousness-raising sessions for employers regarding the illegality of having children in domestic work, employers always asked about alternatives. In May 2010, CWISH thus supported the establishment of the Active Domestic Workers Consultancy (ADWC), a private recruitment agency for adult domestic workers (ADWs). The consultancy's mission was to train and recruit ADWs and to facilitate household placement, with an emphasis on replacing child domestic workers. CWISH supported ADWC until 2015, mostly to organize training in household chores and basic orientation about labour rights. The consultancy went on to develop a recruiting and placement policy where ADWs and employers were obliged to come to an agreement ensuring minimum wages, leave privileges, working hours and the work environment as stipulated by the Labour Act of 1992. Over five years, CWISH supported the consultancy in capacity building for and recruitment of 300 adults into domestic work.

As of this writing, the ADWC operated independently of CWISH support, and had become a recognized name in the recruitment of adult domestic workers. Other companies were also emerging that promoted domestic work as decent work and supplied domestic workers. The ADWC also facilitated interested ADWs in the organization of Home Workers Union Nepal, a trade union advocating for the rights of domestic workers and promoting domestic work as decent work.

The Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Union. The NIDWU was established on 2 February 2006 under the umbrella of the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) to protect the rights of domestic workers and promote domestic work as decent work.¹⁵ In 2000, CWISH had set up children's clubs for CDWs and united them in an apex body, the Domestic Workers Forum. Members of this forum – CDWs from the children's clubs¹⁶ now turned adult – later established the NIDWU.

I also had to go for domestic work just like my elder brother and sister did. My father died and, to cover the cremation expenses, my mother took a loan from the employer. To cover the loan, I had to work in his house, though I didn't know how much the debt was, or when it would be paid off. I worked there for three years before I finally escaped. At the age of ten, I left my birthplace and moved to Kathmandu to work as a domestic worker. In Kathmandu, fortunately, I was able to attend CWISH-organized non-formal classes, and also became a member of a children's club that became a milestone for my further growth. After attending non-formal classes for nine months, I enrolled in a formal school. When I was 16 years old, I had to hand over my leadership responsibilities for the children's club to new members. After this, CWISH helped me and 25 others like me to unionize. Under my leadership, we collected 558 signatures from DWs and assembled 300 DWs to form the Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Union (NIDWU). This was the first DW trade union in South Asia. Now the NIDWU has grown bigger and become the Home Workers Union Nepal, for which I am serving as secretary general. I am also representing the Asian Domestic Workers Network and the International Domestic Workers Federation and fighting to promote domestic work as decent work and ensuring the rights of DWs not just in Nepal but globally.¹⁷

Sonu Danuwar, Former CDW and activist for domestic work as decent work.

In 2013, GEFONT aimed to make the NIDWU a stronger union by transforming it into the Home Workers Union Nepal (HUN), which was to also comprise the Home-based Workers Union, the Gold and Silver Ornaments Workers Trade Union and the Thanka Artists Trade Union. The NIDWU had 1,500 members and HUN had 7,000 members (6,200 women and 800 men), at the time, most of them domestic workers. There were 4,000 DWs, only 100 of whom were men.¹⁸ Currently, promoting domestic work as decent work has become an important trade union agenda, and has found a strong political voice.

CWISH has been working together with the HUN in conducting signature campaigns and pressuring the Government to ratify ILO C189. Prior to endorsement, the ILO conducted global consultations, and CWISH, together with the NIDWU, submitted a DWs situation analysis from Nepal.¹⁹

3.5 WORKING TOGETHER WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CWISH was the first such organization to work together with local government – that is, Village Development Committees (VDCs) and municipalities – towards the elimination of child labour. Action research²⁰ in 2001 was the first initiative conducted together with Ward Number 7 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City; 820 CDWs were identified, the ward registered these children and provided them with identity cards.

The local governments were ignorant of the issue of child labour. Once, while we were lobbying with the municipality, senior staff harshly replied that they were occupied with a lot of work and didn't have time to concentrate on child labour issues; their job demanded that they keep records and even manage the bodies of dead street dogs. I stopped him and asked, "If you are so committed to managing the bodies of dead street dogs, then why don't you have an interest on working with children who are alive and at risk in your locality?" This got through to the staff, and they immediately asked us how we could collaborate.

Mr Yubaraj Ghimire, CWISH Programme Coordinator

CWISH has supported 11 municipalities in developing strategies to eliminate child labour through local efforts. Among these, the municipalities of Lalitpur, Hetauda and Biratnagar had already launched initiatives for establishing their municipalities as child labour free, while others were in the process of doing so. To further that end, CWISH supported municipality child labour surveys as well as programmes to identify child labourers and set up child protection committees and monitoring mechanisms.

The Green Flag Campaign. CWISH initiated the Green Flag Campaign for eliminating child labour. In July 2013, CWISH collaborated with Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City (LSMC) in setting up this campaign, which was launched on 12 June 2014, on the occasion of the ILO-sanctioned World Day Against Child Labour.



Green Flag advocates freeing households and all forms of businesses, including shops, hotels, restaurants, construction sites and brick kilns, from child labour.²¹

The Green Flag Campaign represents an innovative measure to eliminate child labour in houses and workplaces. Primarily, it uses a positive, non-confrontational approach to displaying the Green Flag symbol to indicate that a particular house or workplace is child labour free. Green Flag was designed with the intention that local governments would implement the campaign. LSMC successfully implemented this initiative in Wards 16, 20 and 21, subsequently declaring these areas child labour-free zones. As of this writing, LSMC was in the process of establishing the same status in more wards.

We aim to declare our city child labour free by 2018. We are rigorously working on it by mobilizing local child protection committees and local community organizations. Together, we went to the community, sensitized and took action against employers who were employing child workers. Now we receive demands from communities and wards to launch the campaign in their area. We have formed and capacitated child protection committees who are mandated to characterize the child labour situation, and then follow up and monitor developments even after an area has been declared child labour free. Initially, we started with support of NGOs such as CWISH. Now, we have our own resources and capacity. We have allocated NPR1.6 million (US\$16,000) for the elimination of child labour and NPR6 million (US\$60,000) to work with children in each fiscal year.

Sarita Maharjan, implementer of the LSMC Green Flag Campaign



Board displayed in Lalitpur after child labour-free zone declaration.

Hetauda Municipality also launched a Green Flag Campaign on 12 June 2014, declaring its Ward 11 child labour free at the same time. By June 2016, Hetauda had declared 15 wards (Wards # 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25) out of 29 wards as child labour-free

zones as part of Green Flag. Local government took ownership of the campaign and mainstreamed it in its work against child labour. The Child Protection Committees formed at the ward level then followed up and monitored the status of these zones. These committees took immediate action if any children were found to be involved in labour in their locality.

3.6 REINTEGRATION OF CDWS

CWISH included an “exit package” of its own design in the ORC curriculum for out of school working children and in the support learning sessions for CDWs in schools. The exit package aimed to empower CDWs, in part by helping them recognize their rights to parental care and socialization. The exit package gave children the resources to map a positive future for themselves. This 12-week package included two-hour participatory sessions each day:

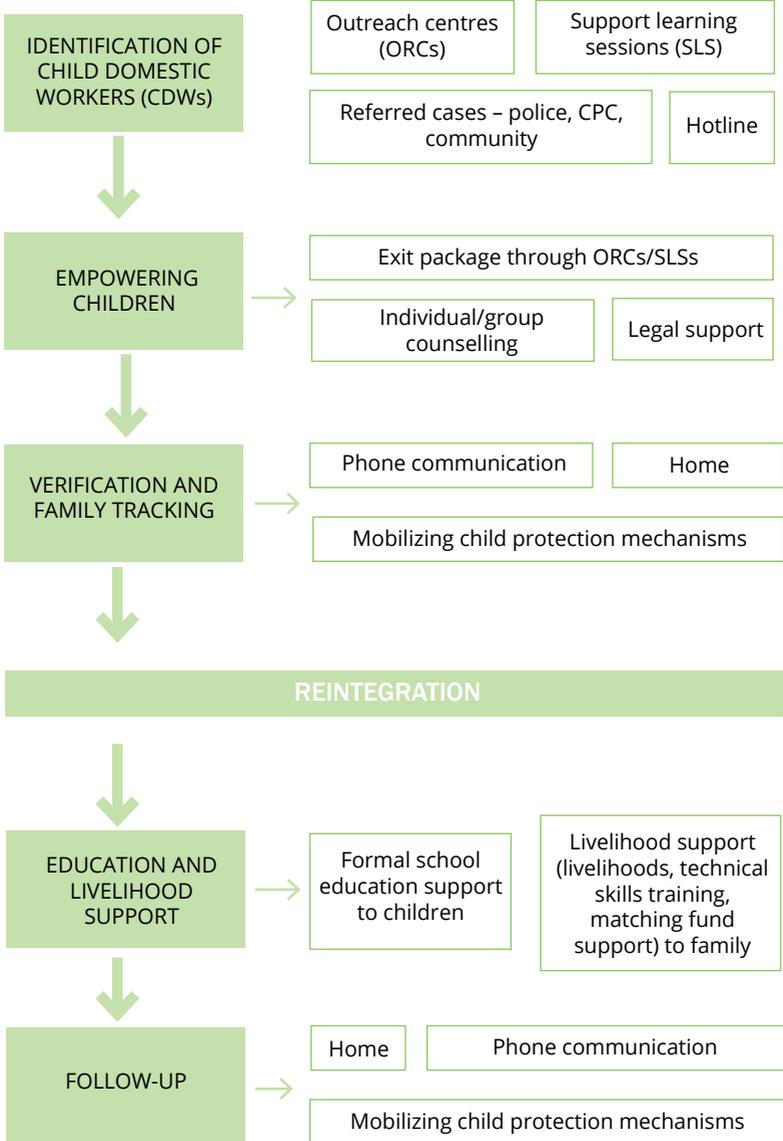
- Introduction
- Who am I?
- My community
- My family
- My Society
- Journey of my life
- What I have achieved and what I have not
- Setting goals
- Opportunities and challenges
- Importance of family and society
- Identifying alternatives
- Preparing action plans

The exit package aimed to reintegrate at least 60 per cent of exit package participants, where they were expected to show their interest in being reintegrated by the end of the 12th session.²² Over four years (2011–14), CWISH reintegrated 810 CDWs into their families and, as of this writing, 95 per cent of them were still living happily with their parents, while 88 per cent were attending school regularly in their community.²³ Aiming to support sustainable reintegration, CWISH provided the families with business education training, helped to prepare and implement their business plans, and linked them to local cooperatives for negotiating loans. At the same time, CWISH worked with schools to develop improved teaching and learning practices and to promote child-friendly schools to prevent the flow of children into labour. CWISH had facilitated REFLECT, a Paulo Freire adult literacy and community empowerment model in Nepal.²⁴ REFLECT groups were sensitized to child labour and became watch groups that monitored the lives of reintegrated children, at the same time working to sensitize the community at large to the issues.

This reintegration model (see the reintegration flowchart on page 72) was established through what was both an intensive and a holistic four-year project supported by EveryChild UK and funded by Comic Relief. The cost of reintegration per child was US\$350, including livelihood support for the family and educational materials for three years.

The final evaluation of the Reintegrating Child Domestic Workers Living with Employers project applied the OECD-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation involved 34 focus group discussions as well as 20 key informant interviews conducted with 91 reintegrated and vulnerable children, 111 parents, and 55 other stakeholders including teachers, local and national officials and adult domestic workers.

REINTEGRATION FLOW CHART



Evaluators' report. The summary of evaluation findings was as follows.

Relevance. The project proved highly relevant, given the following factors:

- the prevalence and severity of exploitation and abuse in domestic work;
- low levels of awareness about the practice as a priority child protection issue;
- lack of adequate social provision for families living at subsistence levels; and
- lack of access to free quality education.

Effectiveness. The project proved effective at four main levels.

- The children were happy being with their families; accessing education; and being with their friends. More importantly, participation in the various project activities boosted their self-esteem, making them more self-confident.
- Parents were willing to keep their children with them because they better understood the negative impacts of domestic labour on children and their parental responsibilities, and because the project livelihood interventions had improved their economic well-being.
- Teachers were more concerned about the performance of weak students and helping them with their studies.
- Better coordination with local child protection committees more effectively prevented children from entering domestic work.

Efficiency. The final evaluation found the project was generally efficient, providing value for money with well-managed finances and systematic monitoring.

Sustainability. A potential project weakness, the report found, lay in communicating to beneficiaries and stakeholders the need to continue pursuing these measures after the project phased out.

According to CWISH, sustainability and details of the handover were considered only late in the project. The project should have emphasized reintegration and the extension of holistic interventions beyond the project areas. CWISH had been providing holistic support to families and children within project areas, but educational materials were the only support provided outside this sphere. It would have been better to provide holistic support with each reintegration. Similarly, the project could have established handover procedures to the local child protection committees from the beginning of the project, preparing them from the outset to assume ownership.

3.7 PREVENTIVE ACTION IN SOURCE DISTRICTS

CWISH status reports showed that half of Kathmandu's CDWs came from the neighbouring districts of Sindhupalchowk, Kavre, Dhading, Nuwakot and Ramechhap. Children mainly ended up as domestic workers due to family poverty and desire for quality education.²⁵ CWISH realized that ending child labour in domestic work entailed stopping it at the source. Thus, CWISH intervened in the source districts to empower families and promote local schools as child friendly.

CWISH established REFLECT²⁶ centres for engaging parents and sensitizing them against child labour, provided business education training, and linked them to local cooperatives for accessing loans so they could begin or improve the earning of their own livelihoods. Among other measures, CWISH adopted the ILO manual *Start and improve your business*²⁷ to train 980 families over four years. CWISH also helped 897 families (represented by 283 male and 614 female participants) to use their business plans to access loans from local cooperatives. The repayment rate stood at an average of 90 per cent.



REFLECT participants discuss child labour.

CWISH worked with local schools to provide teacher training for child-centred learning, child-friendly classrooms and the promotion of child participation. CWISH also oriented teachers, school management committees and school-based child protection committees regarding the deleterious effects of child labour and the roles they could play in preventing child labour. Furthermore, in the four years from 2011 to 2015, CWISH, by supporting their families, prevented 1,735 children from ending up as CDWs.²⁸

3.8 POLICY INTERVENTIONS

CWISH promoted Labour Office concern for monitoring child labour in the informal economy, in part by registering the case of a CDW with the Labour Office in November 2009.

Although the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act had been passed nine years earlier, the Act had remained silent about the monitoring of informal child labour by authorities. Factory inspectors were mandated to monitor labour rights, but remained unconcerned with child labour, especially informal economy jobs such as domestic service.



A CDW with a broken hand, the result of a beating by the child's employer.

CWISH provided capacity building for Labour Office authorities regarding the monitoring of child labour, and persuaded the Office to address child labour issues. However, there were no clear guidelines on litigation procedures to prosecute employers who offended against the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act) 2000. CWISH lobbied with the Department of Labour and agreed to draft litigation procedures for reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of child labour. As of this writing, the legislation was in the process of being endorsed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

At the same time, CWISH began advocating with local governments (Village Development Committees and municipalities) to organize and mobilize local child protection committees (CPCs). CWISH supported committees in building their capacity to monitor child labour in their areas and to persuade employers not to employ children in domestic work. Kathmandu's District Development Committee sent circulars to all municipalities and Village Development Committees within Kathmandu to form CPCs in collaboration with CWISH. This established another milestone, one where locally formed and mandated CPCs worked together with CWISH to raise this agenda with employers and discourage child domestic work in their respective areas. Eventually, CWISH succeeded in encouraging local governments to recognize their mandate to work towards eliminating child labour in their localities.

In 2010, given its experience in working with local governments, CWISH advocated with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to incorporate indicators of child labour elimination in the Child-Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) framework. The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and UNICEF are scaling

up the concept of CFLG with local governments, child labour elimination being one of their target indicators.

CWISH organized consultations among CDWs, helping children to share their issues with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and Employment, and the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission. Such delegations engaged the attention of policy-makers and the media and familiarized them with CDW issues.

3.9 RESEARCH TO SUPPORT NEW POLICIES

Evidence-based advocacy provided a major CWISH strategy for introducing research findings into government policy and programmes.

In 2002, CWISH moved to take CDW issues to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children. A simple questionnaire designed to explore CDW problems was presented at random to pedestrians in ten different Kathmandu Valley locations. A total of 28,332 questionnaires were completed, and analysis of the findings produced alarming information: lack of formal education, sexual abuse and excessive work hours ranked as the top three problems prevailing among CDWs. This was an eye-opener in exploring CDW-related constituencies, and prompted the conduct of related research and production of associated status reports.

Milan Dharel, former CWISH Executive Director (2002–11)

Closed Doors Suffering (CWISH 2005). CWISH conducted the Closed Doors Suffering study of sexual abuse among CDWs.²⁹ This provided a basis upon which to work with the Nepali police in preparing a manual for measures to counter child sexual abuse; today, every newly recruited police officer has to learn about child sexual abuse as part of their training curriculum.



Consultations with CDWs in characterizing their situation.

CWISH designed both qualitative and quantitative techniques to study sexual abuse among 305 CDWs attending non-formal education classes in 17 Kathmandu Valley ORCs. Of the total respondents, 60.33 per cent were girls and 39.67 per cent were boys. Of these, 73.77 per cent were aged 10–14 years, 17.05 per cent aged 15–18 years, and 9.18 per cent 7–9 years. Most of the respondents (53.44 per cent) were from indigenous ethnic groups, 5.9 per cent were from the Dalit caste, and 40.66 per cent comprised Brahmin/Chhetri and others. A pictorial questionnaire was developed for CDWs and led by a female team leader accompanied by the ORC facilitators and a child psychosocial counselor. Before collecting information from the respondents, a day-long workshop on child sexual abuse (CSA) was held separately for boys and girls to familiarize them with CSA expressions.

The Closed Doors Suffering research revealed a high incidence of sexual abuse against out-of-school CDWs (55 per cent); contrary to general belief, CSA was similarly prevalent among the girls (59.52 per cent) and the boys (40.48 per cent). Surprisingly, contact forms of abuse (56.55 per cent) were higher than non-contact types (43.45 per cent). Among the 55 per cent of respondents who had

experienced sexual abuse, 48.53 per cent of the boys and 54.79 per cent of the girls experienced non-contact forms of such abuse. Almost 49 per cent of CDWs who experienced sexual abuse did not report it.³⁰

This research provided CWISH a basis upon which to initiate measures against child sexual abuse. CWISH also established a helpline service to provide immediate relief in cases of CDW sexual abuse, physical torture and exploitation. CWISH further engaged with local child protection mechanisms, including community police, to build capacity for responding to such cases. CWISH shared the report findings with the general public and concerned government stakeholders, raising public consciousness of the fact that children went unprotected in domestic work, something previously considered a safe form of employment.



A girl CDW shows her body after being beaten by her employer.

Invisible workers (CWISH, 2009). In 2009, CWISH conducted another study of domestic workers in nine out of Kathmandu Metropolitan City's 35 wards. The researchers visited 71,130 households and interviewed 1,429 CDWs. Local child protection committee members served as enumerators, so that local people could better appreciate the CDW situation and promote local vigilance.

The study found most DWs were women and girls (67.77 per cent), of whom almost 61 per cent were children. While 55 per cent of them were from indigenous ethnic communities, only 2.41 per cent were from the "untouchable" Dalit caste. Most of the children had been placed into domestic work by their parents (53.32 per cent), other immediate family members (21.41 per cent) and other relatives (19.17 per cent). Some 6 per cent of the children were taken into domestic work by other non-related people. Though 95.73 per cent of the children reported being pushed into domestic work by financial poverty and another 5.46 per cent by domestic

violence at home, 32.89 per cent said they had been lured by the prospect of education and 11.46 per cent had been attracted by visions of city life.

CWISH also used this research to ground holistic and preventive measures in the source districts. The study found that 52.67 per cent of CDWs were from neighbouring areas/districts of Kathmandu Valley. It also found that 73.69 per cent were willing to be reintegrated with their families. CWISH shared these findings among the partners/donors and with the Government, inviting them to collaborate on preventive measures. Thus CWISH began working on prevention and reintegration at the same time.

Reintegration research (CWISH and Family for EveryChild, 2014). With technical support from Family for EveryChild UK, CWISH conducted a three-phase longitudinal study of children's reintegration: 30 CDWs were interviewed before reintegration; 19 CDWs during reintegration; and 13 after reintegration. The research found poverty and desire for quality education were the key factors behind a child taking up domestic work. When asked why they wanted to return home, most of the children said they missed their families and they wanted to avoid ill-treatment from their employers. Most of the CDWs reported that their reunification went well, and they felt happy and loved by their families. The children were pleased that they could play, had time to study and no longer had to worry about work. The research indicated that, after reintegration, children became more social, fluent and articulate, and they seemed less afraid. Children settled into school and found secure spaces within their families.³¹

Tracer studies (CWISH, 2013). CWISH conducted tracer studies with 15 CDW attendees of CWISH outreach centres, using an ILO tracer study manual³² to assess the programme's major impacts on their lives. These studies concluded that the ORCs functioned as empowerment centres, with the CDWs getting an education, learning about child rights, and easing their situation as child workers while identifying options for reintegration.

The study:

- documented major impacts in key knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) areas, including study, work, education, violence, family situation and reintegration, and
- compared the respective changes over the three phases of the programme's interventions: before, during and after the programme. After leaving domestic work, CDWs experienced remarkable changes in their lives. Prior to the programme interventions, the children were largely unaware of their rights, and they failed to fully comprehend the potentially negative effects of child labour on their own well-being. After the programme interventions, however, children had become aware that child labour was illegal and that they had legal rights to parental care and education. Given the opportunity, all the children were happy to enrol in formal education. All the children were found to be self-confident and capable of talking to employers openly about their needs and wants. They had developed a strong sense of how important both formal education and decent work were, and of the value of building a career.

4 – RESULTS

4.1 CWISH GOOD PRACTICES BRING CHANGE

The table on pages 84 and 85 shows the changes in child labour in domestic work between 2001 and 2016. The 42 per cent reduction in the number of CDWs amounted to 8,926 fewer CDWs over 15 years. With respect to working hours, only 1 per cent of CDWs worked fewer than 12 hours per day in 2001, whereas in 2016 only 2 per cent worked more than 10 hours. Similarly, only 33 per cent attended school in 2001, whereas 96 per cent did so in 2016. Regarding remuneration, only 38 per cent received an average of 6,000 rupees per annum, whereas in 2016, 15 years later, 49

per cent received an average remuneration of 47,000 rupees per annum. The ratio of girls had increased, rising from 46 per cent in 2001 to 62 per cent in 2016. Over that same period, however, findings with regard to CDWs from ethnic groups, parental status, mediation and source district remained similar. Half of the CDWs came from indigenous (Janajati) communities, whereas more than 35 per cent came from Brahmin/Chettri, generally considered a privileged caste. In 2001, none of the CDWs were from the low-caste Dalit community, which is considered “untouchable”. In 2016, however, 3 per cent of CDWs were from the Dalit community.

Over those 15 years, then, CWISH improved CDW living and working conditions and prospects by way of raising awareness of the issues, rescuing and reintegrating CDWs, conducting supporting research and advocating for favourable policy interventions.

4.2 CDW SURVEYS, 2001 AND 2016

In 2001, the ILO conducted a rapid assessment of CDWs in Kathmandu. In 2016, CWISH conducted another rapid assessment to compare latest trends with those revealed in the 2011 rapid assessment with the following objectives:

- characterize CDWs in terms of personal and demographic information;
- document reasons for migration and involvement in domestic work;
- characterize the general working conditions and facilities among CDWs, including hours worked and workload, health status, educational status, employment contracts and treatment on the part of employers; and
- document various perspectives on eliminating child labour in Nepal, and proposals for achieving that goal.

Assessments and status report. From 2001, CWISH conducted annual assessments to raise awareness of CDW issues. Between 2001 and 2016, nine annual status reports were produced and disseminated among policy-makers and the general public.

In 2001, 2009 and 2016, household surveys collected the data using both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

In 2001, the surveyors visited 2,957 households, and 820 CDWs were interviewed in a single ward of Kathmandu. A 2009 household survey visited 71,130 households in nine wards of Kathmandu; 2,324 DWs (adults and children) were interviewed, of whom 1,429 were children. In 2016, rapid assessments of 4,086 households were performed in three wards of Kathmandu; 520 DWs were interviewed, of whom 177 were children. The 2016 rapid assessment estimated the number of CDWs has been reduced by 42 per cent over the 15 years since the 2001 ILO rapid assessment.

In the other years, assessments were conducted with CDWs who attended the CWISH outreach centres which provided the children with non-formal education and appropriate care.

Rapid assessments compared: ILO (2001) and CWISH (2016)

| Variables | ILO 2001 | CWISH 2016 |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Prevalence | 1 in every 5 households | 1 in every 20 households |
| Estimated number of CDWs in Kathmandu | 21,191 | 12,265 |
| Gender ratio | Girls: 46%; boys 54% | Girls: 62%; boys 38% |
| Age | 70% younger than 14 years; 30% aged 14–18 years. | 13% younger than 14 years; 21% aged 14–18 years; 66% older than 18 years. |
| Ethnicity | 50% Janajati; 39% Brahmin/Chhetri. | 50% Janajati; 35% Brahmin/Chhetri; 3% Dalit. |
| Parental status | 72% had both parents; 22% had a single parent (either mother or father); 6% were orphans. | 78% had both parents; 18% had a single parent (either mother or father); 4% were orphans. |
| District of origin | 31% were from neighbouring districts of Kathmandu including Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Kavre, Nuwakot and Dhading. | 47% of the CDWs (younger than 18 years) came from Province 3; Dhading, Sindhupalchowk, Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Makawanpur were the top five source districts. |
| Mediation | 45% by relatives; 16% by own parents; 23% by employers; 8% by villagers. | 32% by relatives; 28% by own parents; 17% by family members; 15% by villagers. |
| Employers' profession | 25% were businesspersons; 47% were employees. | 29% of employers were businesspersons; 21% were reputable professionals (e.g. doctors, engineers, bankers, teachers and development workers). |

| Variables | ILO 2001 | CWISH 2016 |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Working hours | Only 1% worked fewer than 12 hours; 30% worked 12–14 hours; 64% worked 14–16 hours; 5% worked more than 16 hours. | 37% fewer than 4 hours; 28% 4–6 hours; 21% 6–8 hours; 13% 8–10 hours; 2% more than 10 hours. |
| Remuneration | 38% received remuneration; 52% received no wages; (and most did not receive any other remuneration) 8% were unaware of the issue. Among those who received wages, 39% received as much as NPR4,000 per annum; 41% NPR4,000–6,000 per annum; 20% received more than NPR6,000. Parents collected the wages of 59% of those receiving remuneration; 35% of the CDWs received their wage themselves. | 51% received no remuneration; 49% were remunerated. Girls younger than 14 years, were better remunerated than boys (girls NPR3,917; boys NPR2,333). Likewise, girls aged 14–18 years received higher pay than boys (girls NPR3,643; boys NPR2,000). |
| Educational status | 33% of the total were attending school, but only 23% of girls attended schools. | 96% were attending school; 4% were not. |

Prevalence of domestic workers (adults and children). In 2001, 74 per cent of 820 surveyed DWs were younger than 18 years (CWISH, 2001). In 2016, 34 per cent of surveyed 520 DWs were younger than 18 years (CWISH, 2016).

The 2001 ILO rapid assessment of CDWs in Kathmandu reported an incidence of one CDW in five households. In 2001, CWISH action research also identified one CDW in five households. A 2016 CWISH rapid assessment, on the other hand, found the incidence in Kathmandu to be one in 20 households.

In 245,292 households overall in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, the 2001 ILO rapid assessment estimated 21,191 CDWs in Kathmandu, whereas the 2016 CWISH rapid assessment estimated 12,265 CDWs in Kathmandu ($1/20 * 245292$).³³ This indicates a 42 per cent reduction in CDWs over 15 years.

4.3 ACHIEVEMENTS

The following strategies and activities proved effective over CWISH's first 20 years (1996–2016):

- 1996 to 2015: 7,232 CDWs attended non-formal education in ORCs and eventually went on to enrol in formal schooling.
- 2008 to 2015: 917 CDWs were reintegrated with their families. Among the 810 reintegrated from 2011 to 2015, 95 per cent were living happily with their families, at the time of this writing, and 88 per cent regularly attended school.
- 2006 to June 2016: 371 survivors of sexual abuse were rehabilitated, among them 17 CDWs who had been sexually assaulted.
- CWISH supported 11 municipalities in monitoring child labour and working together towards its elimination.
- Reduced incidence of the worst forms of child labour was included as one of 39 indicators in implementing the Child-Friendly Local Governance Framework 2010 endorsed by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development.

- June 2014 till June 2016: the Green Flag Campaign against child labour, implemented by local governments, declared three Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City wards and 15 Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City wards child labour free.
- Litigation procedures for child labour reporting, inspection and prosecution were endorsed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- The first-ever registration of a CDW case occurred in the Baghmati Labour Office on 10 November 2009, thereby raising Labour Office awareness of the importance of monitoring child labour in the informal economy.
- 2011 to 2015: more than 500 officials of the Labour Office and the District Child Welfare Board were trained in monitoring child labour.

Policy interventions. CWISH took a stand to raise its voice against child servitude, taking actions to end this modern form of slavery. CWISH raised employer consciousness of the issues, convincing them to assemble CDWs into non-formal classes, traced the families of the children, reintegrated them with their families and brought the children into formal educational settings, thereby promoting their rights to education, protection and parental care. CWISH shared the reintegration model with the concerned officials at the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare as well as at the Department of Labour.

In 2009, CWISH conducted a National Assembly on Child Labour, followed by a consultation workshop with CDWs attended by Mr Subhas Chandra Nembang, Chair of the Constitutional Assembly, and Mr Madhav Kumar Nepal, Chair of the Constitution Drafting Committee, to identify issues and recommendations from CDWs to be addressed by the Constitution.³⁴ The Assembly recommended revisions to the 2004–14 National Masterplan on the Elimination of Child Labour, and CWISH submitted these to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, which did contribute to some revisions, envisioning elimination of the worst forms of child labour by

2016 and all forms of child labour by 2020. This version of the masterplan was not endorsed, however, and it thus lagged far behind its targets. At the time of this writing, no further progress had been made.

From 2002, CWISH had been working with local governments, including Ward 7 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. CWISH support included collecting CDW information within these localities and providing CDW identity cards to foster a sense of identity and confidence that there was concern for their welfare and protection among the children and others. CWISH also supported Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City, Hetauda Municipality and Biratnagar Municipality in developing strategies for eliminating child labour. As a result, these municipalities began allocating budgets for such efforts. The CWISH Green Flag Campaign worked with these municipalities to establish child labour-free zones. This initiative contributed to having the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development endorse “child labour reduction” as one of 39 indicators in implementing Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG), which as of this writing was expected to be implemented by local governments.

CWISH initiated the Green Flag Campaign against child labour, which was implemented in Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City, Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City, Panauti Municipality and Banepa Municipality with a vision of establishing “child labour-free zones”. Child protection committees were mobilized in local communities to follow up and monitor these efforts. Even before the campaign, CWISH had facilitated the formation of a loose network of relevant government authorities to monitor child labour in Chautara Bazaar, Sindhupalchowk. This network identified children in labour, rescued them and reintegrated them with their families. On 10 April 2014, Chautara Bazaar was declared a child labour-free zone.

CWISH registered the case of a CDW with the Labour Office that caught the attention of labour authorities engaged in monitoring child labour issues in the informal economy. This was the first such case registered in the nine years since the passage of the Child

Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 2000. However, no proper guidelines were available to support the labour authorities in reporting, investigating and prosecuting offenders because the Act was silent regarding enforcement procedures. CWISH then collaborated with the Department of Labour in preparing litigation procedures for reporting, inspection and prosecution – that is, the necessary guidelines to support the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act – and submitted these for endorsement to the Ministry of Labour and Employment. In 2013, CWISH also filed a petition to the Supreme Court demanding justice and state compensation for victims of sexual abuse. CWISH presented evidence that CDWs were vulnerable to sexual abuse, and that the State was failing to respond to victims. In 2015, the Supreme Court declared itself in favour of CWISH's petition, and asked the Government to prepare legislation with regard to provide state compensation and necessary services to survivors of sexual abuse.

5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

Non-confrontational approaches. It is always good to begin with a non-confrontational approach when encouraging employers to help improve conditions for CDWs and to promote reintegration. It may take time before results are apparent, but, if employers are involved in the process the impact will prove sustainable. Initially, CWISH had to convince employers by demonstrating the benefits of sending CDWs to ORCs. Later, employers began voluntarily sending CDWs into formal education and, eventually, reintegrating CDWs with their families. These employers received awards and were praised in community meetings. The Green Flag Campaign began that way, awarding the green flag emblem to households that did not employ child workers.

Zero tolerance. CDWs are vulnerable to abusive treatment including humiliation and degradation, economic exploitation, and physical violence. They need support groups to whom they can report such cases. Whether these groups are in the schools

or among community outreach activities, they should represent governmental or civil society authority.

CWISH set up a toll-free number which CDWs could contact anytime. From 1996 to 2016, the helpline team supported more than 1,060 children (857 girls and 203 boys) who were at risk or faced sexual abuse, torture or labour exploitation. Among these, 371 cases were of sexual abuse (rape or attempted rape, only six cases involving boys). CWISH provided legal aid support to 272 cases resulting in successful verdicts for the children. Employers should be brought into the legal framework in cases of abuse, exploitation or violence. Legal action against an employer can spread among the media, thereby alerting the general public and employers alike to the risks entailed in employing children in domestic work.

Social mobilization. Results may not be sustainable if an outside organization intervenes directly. Where collaborative local structures are capacitated and mobilized, however, results are more likely to be sustainable. CWISH has always worked with community-based structures such as child protection committees, community police, mothers groups and youth clubs who later became local advocates for CDWs. These structures continue to provide local vigilance in cases of CDW abuse, exploitation and reintegration back into the community.

Working with local governments. Local governments, whether municipalities or Village Development Committees, have the mandate to implement laws and policies at the local level. However, these authorities might not have wider experience and knowledge of CDW issues. CWISH collaborated with local governments in conducting surveys and situation analyses, as well as realizing the rescue of child domestic workers and their reintegration with their family and into education. CWISH capacitated local governments in the following ways: (1) formulating policies; (2) developing strategies for child labour monitoring and elimination and campaigning against child labour; and (3) encouraging local governments to take further steps in declaring areas as child labour free.

Working with schools. CDWs are generally out of school and, even where they attend school, their workload and, sometimes, social functions or festivals in the employer's house lead to irregular school attendance. CWISH collaborated with schools to increase CDW enrolment where the schools subsidized fees. CWISH provided school-based psychosocial training in counselling to teachers, and had them serve as focal persons to characterize CDW working and living conditions. Schools also served as referral points where CDWs facing abuse, exploitation and violence were identified. Schools can play vital roles in empowering CDWs with life skills including knowledge of their rights and entitlements.

Providing alternatives. Reducing CDW numbers means minimizing demand for CDWs. Providing alternatives for employers has worked in Kathmandu, where CWISH supported the establishment of a firm to recruit and place adult domestic workers in 2010. This effectively increased the number of adults in domestic work while reducing the demand for children. The 2009 CWISH domestic workers survey had identified 23 per cent of adults in domestic work; the 2016 CWISH survey indicated that number had increased to 66 per cent adults.

Networking and campaigning. Working in groups increases member strength and power, including a stronger voice for their concerns. CWISH collaborated with like-minded CSOs and government stakeholders to promote the "elimination of child labour" agenda, and succeeded in creating a positive buzz and momentum among both local communities and policy-makers. Green Flag became a much appreciated and widely acknowledged campaign, a non-confrontational scheme that led to declarations of child labour-free zones.

Prevention better than cure. It is important to address the factors behind child domestic work in the source areas. CWISH identified family poverty and limited educational opportunities as major determinants. CWISH thus contributed to preventing child domestic work by working with families and schools to improve both family livelihoods and the quality of education.

6 – CONCLUSIONS

Since 1996, in face of considerable challenges, CWISH had worked to end child domestic work. In the 20 years from 1996 until 2016, CWISH mainstreamed the CDW agenda into national policies and programmes. CWISH practices proved effective in the following areas:

- improving CDW living and working conditions and providing them with non-formal education;
- rescuing CDWs, reintegrating them with their families and into formal education; and
- conducting research for evidence-based advocacy campaigns and policy developments with national and local governments; and
- promoting decent work for adult domestic workers by setting up a recruitment agency, training them and helping them to organize.

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www.youtube.com/cwishnep

Multi-media information sources:

Face of Hope

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aqnuvTbquY&list=PLYR2n82P-kQYzql7smUzZdzVy4Yyld560&index=2

Popular comedy artist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMB0FD0A3N0&index=3&list=PLYR2n82P-kQYzql7smUzZdzVy4Yyld560>

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Domestic workers organize in UNITE, the Philippines.



ORGANIZING DOMESTIC WORKERS





Domestic workers discuss problems and solutions related to their working conditions, Rap Capacity Building Workshop, Yogyakarta, August 2015.

3 — INDONESIA: RAP – A METHOD FOR ORGANIZING DOMESTIC WORKERS

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ACRONYMS

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| C189 | ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) |
| CO | Community organizer |
| DW | Domestic worker |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| Jabodetabek | Greater Jakarta (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi) |
| JALA PRT | Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Pekerja Rumah Tangga (National Network for Domestic Workers Advocacy) |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| MID | Mitra Ima Dei (NGO, JALA PRT member, Indonesia) |
| Operata | Community-level domestic workers organization |
| PROMOTE | Decent Work for Domestic Workers to End Child Domestic Work (ILO Project) |
| PRT | Pekerja rumah tangga, “domestic workers” (Indonesia) |
| RGP | Rumpun Gema Perempuan (NGO, Jala PRT member, Indonesia) |
| SPRT | Serikat pekerja rumah tangga (Domestic Workers Union) |
| SPRT Sapulidi | Sapulidi Serikat Pekerja Rumah Tangga (Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union in South Jakarta) |
| UPC | Urban Poor Consortium (Indonesian NGO) |

1 – INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the application of the “Rap” method¹ to domestic workers (DW) mobilizing and support organizations operating in Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek), Indonesia:

- Mitra Ima Dei, which reaches out to and organizes DWs in Bekasi, Tangerang and Tebet;
- Rumpun Gema Perempuan (RGP), which operates in Kemuning and Pamulang; and
- Serikat Pekerja Rumah Tangga (SPRT) Sapulidi, a Domestic Workers Union that organizes DWs in Terogong, Cilandak, Cipete and Kemang (South Jakarta).

1.1 BACKGROUND

In order to address the structural and cultural problems of domestic workers, some NGOs, women’s organizations, DW unions, trade unions and other concerned institutions established the National Network for Domestic Workers Advocacy (Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Pekerja Rumah Tangga), or JALA PRT in July 2004 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. At the time of writing, Jala PRT had 41 member organizations and eight individual members. Most of them are women organizations, NGOs and DW unions and associations from 16 cities in Indonesia.

JALA PRT aims to:

- advocate and campaign for the adoption and implementation of national laws and policies, and international instruments on the protection of the rights of local and international migrant DWs;
- strengthen DW organizations through organizing and capacity building, and ensure the representation of DWs in social dialogue;
- support and provide services to DWs in areas where many of them work and live; and
- network with other DW organizations, trade unions, women's organizations, and employers' organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels.



Given that JALA PRT aims at developing women's leadership in DW organizations and the labour movement, its affiliate organizations currently accept only women as DW members and leaders. This affirmative action measure was taken because men tend to dominate discussions and decision-making. Male domestic workers who want to become members are encouraged to organize separately. Gender training is included in the DW training curricula, and discussed in community and policy meetings as both female and male DWs need gender training, just like the husbands of DWs, community leaders and policy makers.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

JALA PRT employs strategic organizing and advocacy methods traditionally associated with social movements. The DW network argues that national institutions such as the legislature and Commission IX (responsible for demographic affairs, health, manpower and transmigration) should take responsibility for the safety and well-being of DWs, including their recognition as workers with the concomitant entitlement to the same rights as other workers, and protection in law instead of having to directly engage and individually negotiate with their employers.

JALA PRT relies on community organizing strategies to reach DWs and organize them. Community organizing aims to consolidate scattered and voiceless individuals around a main issue, identifying its causes and, with reference to personal experience and social analysis, possible solutions. This approach intends to empower the collective to transform a situation of social injustice into a situation where the disadvantaged group's claims for inclusion, recognition and rights are recognized and acted upon based on the emerging collective DW needs, priorities and agenda in response to changing circumstances.

Thus, the objective of community organizing is to unite as many individuals as possible in a mass movement to shape community demands and advocate for them.² Mobilization is based on the experiences of the group, moving from concrete individual interests to long-term collective solutions that benefit all.

2 – CHALLENGES

Relative isolation, difficulty of access and discrimination.

In Indonesia, as in other countries, domestic work is typically undertaken in workplaces that are atomized, privatized and informal, with no work contracts, no standard work hours, no mandatory rest day, and no minimum wage. Domestic work is generally a low-pay, low-status, women's job, which makes it difficult to reach, much less organize those employed in this sector.

Limited time and other resources. Generally DW organizers have limited time and other resources to reach out to the target workers to invite them to join the organization. Furthermore, both DW organizers and community organizers (COs) are commonly rejected by the target DWs because of limited time, travel distance and family responsibilities — constraints sometimes exaggerated and sustained by mistrust or misunderstanding of the aims of the DW organization.

Lack of required capacity and a clear strategy. Over the years, COs and DW leaders who conducted the organizing employed no systematic approach, instead relying on friendships or social networking as well as word-of-mouth, door-to-door canvassing to reach out to domestic workers. Thus the organizers struggled to overcome rejections from the targeted DWs because they could not reliably and systematically respond to the targets' excuses and questions. Lacking a clear strategy and capacity to convincingly explain the benefits of organization membership, or to deliver information about decent work for DWs and the importance of being united in an organization, COs and DW leaders were unable to raise critical awareness among the workers or to persuade them to advocate for recognition and protection.

Organizers had also tried to convince DWs to join the movement by offering life-skills class such as cooking, sewing and English-language or computer literacy courses.

Before [Rap] I didn't know how to persuade domestic workers [to join the organizations]. I couldn't approach them in some areas and unite them in a community. I didn't have the "key" to enter and to start involving them; I didn't know what their main problems were, what cases they faced or why the state should be accountable for their condition. There have been times where I've had nothing to report [about the willingness of domestic workers to join the organization]; sometimes at domestic worker meetings just one or two domestic workers show up.

MID community organizer

Waning membership and participation. Moreover, in the past, DW organization members had not been directly or clearly responsible for recruiting new members, and they often simply invited their fellow DWs to join the Operata,⁴ instead of explaining the organization's objectives and vision they merely portrayed membership as a leisure activity, a context within which to meet with friends. Membership numbers had thus stagnated or even shrunk, and levels of participation among organized DWs in public discussion, advocacy and actions (e.g. demonstrations, public hearings in Parliament, hunger strikes) remained insubstantial.

3 – APPROACHES/METHODS

3.1 RAP: WHAT IS IT?

JALA PRT, the National Network for Domestic Workers Advocacy, adopted a new method of organizing women domestic workers. Rap⁵ presented a strategy to develop awareness of the causes and conditions of domestic worker (DW) issues while showing how a mass base organization could overcome these challenges. It provided a participatory, systematic and dynamic process to build membership-based DW organizations. It aimed to give members

the knowledge and skills to help them resolve their own problems and concerns as DWs, including, in both the middle and long terms, helping them to advocate on behalf of themselves and of their own organizations for recognition of their rights as workers.

JALA PRT facilitators, supported by the ILO PROMOTE Project, ran “Rap” capacity-building workshops for community organizers (COs)⁶ and DW leaders in Indonesia in August/September 2015 and January/February 2016.

In May 2015, JALA PRT held an internal discussion among DW organizations and supporting NGOs and decided on the following essential measures:

- developing Rap: a new community organizing strategy to increase the number of members of DW organizations;
- keeping existing members active;
- mobilizing DWs in new areas; and
- scouting DW leaders with the aim of building bigger and stronger DW organizations.

The discussion, facilitated by participants from the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC),⁷ identified Rap as a method that could effectively and efficiently reach out to and organize DWs who lived or worked in geographically widespread areas. Rap was considered especially adaptable to the DW context, a strategy superior to other community organizing strategies, which tended to demand both the collection of much data and long-term training and much time for development and implementation in the field.

Rap presented a participatory, systematic and dynamic method that enabled DWs, whether as rappers⁸ and/or as targets, to better understand their problems. It aimed to build the critical awareness needed to negotiate a joint action agreement through a DW organization. Moreover, Rap allowed the organization to broaden its network while establishing greater solidarity and a sense of belonging among DWs in identifying and promoting collective objectives.

The method applied six systematically repetitive steps, (see the next page) thereby linking the method to rap music, and helping to guide the rapper's interactions with the targeted unorganized domestic workers. If the target remained reluctant to join the organization at the end of the six steps, these were repeated. If the response was still negative, the rapper collected the target's contact information and approached her⁹ again on another occasion.

Rap provided a one-on-one approach to persuading a target individual, and demanded the participation of both parties, rapper and target. The conversation focused on the personal working situation of the target, and, in the light of that information, the rapper presented the benefits of joining the organization. More than simply representing a recruiting strategy, properly undertaken the conversation disseminated information about worker rights and decent work among DWs, which in itself caused them to reflect on reasons for and possible solutions to their problems.

Hence, organizers were advised to use the information and knowledge they had about decent work, workers' and women's rights, legislation, and DW organizations in responding to the issues raised by the targeted domestic workers. When talking to a given target, the rapper adapted such discussion to the relevant context. The aim was to encourage the target to reflect on the causes of her problems and persuade her to take action, for example by joining the organization.

As a method, Rap overcame the difficulties of limited time, geographically widely separated working and living areas, and isolation of DWs in reaching these individuals because of its following distinctive features:

- it required only short encounters (a conversation should last about 15 minutes);
- it was adaptable to field situations; and
- it did not require a specific time or place for target and rapper to meet.

RAP – SIX STEPS

- 1. Introduction.** The rapper introduces both herself and the organization, including its objectives. The introduction must be short, clear and presented in simple language. Ideally, this is the stage at which the rapper gains the trust of the target.
- 2. Explore the problems.** The rapper has to explore the problems actually faced by the target, rather than present a list of general DW issues. This moment represents a first step in raising awareness about DW conditions, and it allows the rapper to collect useful information to be later used in persuading the target to join the organization (steps three and four). It is important the target feels comfortable during the conversation, so rappers should make use of small talk and open-ended questions; they should avoid anything that suggests an interrogation. The aim is to let the target talk about her working situation and about the problems she may face with issues such as working conditions, wages, daily working hours, days off, payment, paid holidays, and social security.
- 3. Raise consciousness regarding issues of responsibility.** The rapper should use the information acquired in step two to discuss the causes of any issues at hand. The rapper needs to identify who should be held accountable for them and why. The rapper emphasizes how the target's problems are related not only to the individual employer/DW relationship and links the received information to DW rights, raising awareness about elements of decent work, the absence of relevant labour legislation, and about how the organization can more effectively advocate for DW protection while voicing DW interests. This step presents an opportunity for both rapper and DW to explore and better understand the issues regarding domestic work, first identifying the issues and then discussing who or what might be responsible for them.
- 4. Vision/dreams.** Various elements of awareness having been raised, the conversation moves to the target's dreams and expectations for the future. The rapper should encourage the target to discuss means of achieving these aspirations, and then discuss whether it is possible and/or easier to reach the dreams individually or in collaboration with other fellow domestic workers. Next the organizer describes how the organization – as a collective of fellow DWs, with similar issues and dreams – might help her achieve these objectives.

The rapper explains what the organization does for its members and the advantages of participation. This step provides the opportunity to present the organization's activities and visions, showing how it empowers DWs so they can advocate for their own interests – such measures as school activities, learning about rights, and learning how to negotiate with employers and to find support in handling cases brought against them.

5. **Invitation to join.** The rapper asks the target to join the organization and attend a meeting. If the answer is yes, the rapper collects her name and telephone number or the signed organization registration form. If the answer is no, the organizer tries to repeat step three, explaining again why it is important to join the organization. If the target still does not want to join it is important not to exert undue pressure. The rapper should simply take her contact information and approach her another time, repeating the Rap from step three.
6. **Encourage the target to take action.** If the domestic worker is willing to join, the rapper then encourages her to participate in the next meeting and to invite others, including friends.

3.2 CONDUCTING RAP

Rap can be readily adapted to different contexts; for example, it is suitable both in areas where a DW organization or community already exists and in areas where DWs are not yet organized. Ideally, any DW or CO can be a rapper. Once they learn and assimilate the six steps, rappers can converse to raise awareness among targets and explain the benefits of joining an organization. Given that awareness raising is the most important feature of Rap, rappers must not only be familiar with the six steps, but they themselves must develop a critical awareness of DW problems, including the following:

- issues related to informal working relations;
- lack of relevant legislation;
- difficulties in accessing the justice system;
- domestic violence and other abuses;

- causes of those problems;
- advocacy for more inclusive, more effective national labour legislation;
- definitions of decent work;
- rights of DWs, including the international labour Conventions related to domestic work and, more generally, to decent work; and
- the vision, objectives, activities and structure of DW organizations, and the benefits of participating as a member.

Rap is about knowing your organization, because you need to explain its objectives and what the organization represents. You need to know the issues related to domestic workers in order to raise the targets' awareness and to help the domestic workers to understand why they face problems and why it is important to have an organization which stands for their rights.

a DW member of Sapulidi

The critical awareness and knowledge were developed during special Rap capacity building workshops and education/discussion sessions at the Sekolah PRT (DWs school).¹⁰ On such occasions, organizers and DW leaders discussed women and workers' rights, organizing, advocacy, legislation and union formation. The education/discussion sessions at the DW school involved sharing and learning moments among COs, DW leaders, and members of the DW organizations.

Meetings were also organized specifically for rappers/DW leaders¹¹ that aimed to develop their capacity to lead their organizations and to conduct advocacy. These meetings focused on the following:

- defining organization activities;
- learning how to facilitate discussions and meetings;
- developing the capacity to address problems in organizing DWs and other internal issues; and
- reviewing and practising the six-step Rap method.



Domestic worker (on the right) and training facilitator (on the left) practise in the field during a Rap capacity-building workshop (Yogyakarta, August 2015).

The training facilitators' role – at the capacity building workshops as well as at the DW schools – was to tutor rappers in the articulation and strategic use of their new-found information and knowledge in convincing fellow DWs to join the organization and to start advocating for their rights. Applying Rap thus meant organizers were to pursue the following measures:

- use their acquired knowledge and information regarding decent work and organizational structure and goals in accordance with a given target's specific living and working conditions;
- raise the target's awareness on domestic work issues;
- challenge the target to reflect critically on her own situation; and
- share information with the target while recruiting her as a member on the basis of her particular needs and concerns.

Rap is not about imitating the facilitators and following a script; it is about practising and adapting to the situation in the field, to the person the rappers are talking to and to her problems and her dreams.

Capacity building facilitator

Rap included monitoring and evaluation (M&E) meetings among community organizers where they discussed challenges encountered in conducting Rap and proposed effective ways of persuading DWs to engage with their organizations. These discussions comprised rappers within the JALA PRT network, both COs and DW organizers, through dedicated workshops held every three months. Monthly meetings were also conducted at the individual DW organizations.

Through these sessions, DWs further improved their capacity to communicate with the target as well as prepared themselves to better respond to the target's questions and concerns. JALA PRT had compiled a list of the most commonly reported target excuses not to join the organization, and JALA PRT community organizers listed possible answers – on the base of rappers experiences – to be distributed among domestic workers.



Domestic workers meeting at Operata Kemuning.



SPRT Sapulidi M&E meeting.

Most commonly cited reasons targets did not want to join DW organizations

- The husband forbade the DW from participating in the organization.
- The DW wanted to join the organization only if there would be monetary compensation.
- The target was annoyed at the idea of organizing because she had no time; she was too busy with work and family or the organization was too far from her home or her job.
- The target reported no particular problem, and saw no reason to join the organization.
- The DW feared subsequent dismissal by her employer.
- The target lacked self confidence, and expressed shame at being a domestic worker.

Possible responses/follow-up identified by rappers

- The rapper should offer to meet with the target's husband to explain the advantages of the organization's activities and objectives.

- The organizer could explain that although there were no direct short-term economic benefits, the target would gain economic returns in terms of wages because she would learn about labour standards and how to negotiate with employers, including settlements for higher wages.
- The rapper could suggest that the target join a meeting only every other week, and that the rapper would keep her informed via channels such as SMS, WhatsApp and Facebook. Where the target also complained about the distance to the meeting venue, the rapper could suggest instead having meetings in her own community, if she had other DW friends willing to participate.
- The rapper could explain that whether current working conditions were acceptable depended on the good will of the employer, and that this situation could change at any time. The rapper could then explain how solidarity – membership in the organization together with other DWs – could better ensure their effective recognition as workers and protection of their labour rights.
- The rappers could clarify the workers' right to freedom of association, including the right to be part of a workers' organization, and explain that, if the target encountered problems with her employer, the organization would support her by joining her in discussions with her boss. In cases of dismissal from her job, the organization would also provide her with legal assistance. In addition, the rapper should emphasize that an important aspect of organization activities was learning how to negotiate with employers.
- The rapper could try to convince the target that there was no shame in being a DW, and suggest that the job was a valuable one, no less important than other kinds of work. The rapper could also explain that the DW organization aimed to change public mindsets regarding domestic work, and that the organization worked to win respect and full recognition of worker status for DWs.

When facing problems persuading someone to join the organization or when experiencing difficulties in the field, the organizer tried to visit the target together with other rappers. This strategy could both enable them to overcome their difficulties and to learn from observing friends as they conducted the Rap.

Rappers usually ascertained the working schedule of DWs in targeted areas so they could plan the best time to apply the method (e.g. before or after work or during a day off). Rap might be conducted in the target's working or living area, depending on the rapper's judgement. The rappers further started to reach out to part-time and live-out workers because they had both greater freedom of movement and more time to dedicate to the organization.



*Jala PRT M&E workshop, March 2016.
Domestic workers simulating Rap.*

The Operata in Bekasi, Pamulang, and Tangerang did Rap mainly in DW living areas, while the Operata Sedap Malam-Tebet, SPRT Sapulidi and, the Operata Kemuning conducted it in either DW living or working areas. Organizers, both NGO staff and DWs, often got access and information about the area from either DW or non-DW contact persons before arranging first contact with targeted domestic workers.

A single encounter with a DW was usually not enough to persuade her to come to a meeting, thus rappers typically met their targets a number of times. First encounters – which might occur outside apartment complexes or workplaces, outside schools, in public gardens, at neighbourhood meetings, at social activities (e.g. regular social gatherings for savings schemes) or at the market – allowed the rapper to explore information concerning difficulties



Operata Sedap Malam-Tebet meeting.

experienced by the target and to collect a phone number to arrange a further meeting in her community, generally at her house.

In addition to approaching new members, rappers were responsible for informing organization members about scheduled meetings or education classes at the DWs school, as well as inviting them to meetings and to external activities. By describing the benefits of attending meetings/activities and the importance of collective action, community organizers kept members informed and persuade them to get as involved as possible. Organization members used various strategies to establish contact with one another: social media (Facebook, LINE), WhatsApp groups, and SMSs or word of mouth in the neighbourhood. These strategies were also used by rappers/leaders to share information about education sessions and/or activities when members could not attend, and to convince them to take part in the next activity.

4 – RESULTS

JALA PRT stressed the essential role of building strong organizations to empower domestic workers, encouraging them to become agents of change, empowering them to advocate for their own interests. Over the years, community organizers (COs) under the JALA PRT programme thus reached out to DWs, helping them to establish organizations such as Operata (a community-level DW organization) and Serikat Pekerja Rumah Tangga (SPRT), a DW union.¹²

Following January 2016, DW organization member numbers grew, as shown by JALA PRT records of DW members, and all the organizations that designated new DW leaders were forming small, “Group of 10” community units.¹³ Each DW leader, who had to be a rapper, was responsible for establishing a group of ten DWs by recruiting them and keeping them active. Once the group was formed, the leader assumed responsibility for the following:

- coordinating the group;
- keeping the members informed of organization activities; and
- conducting education sessions for this small community in their neighbourhood, e.g. in a public park or a member’s home, where they discussed Rap, members’ problems and further activities.

Table: Recorded number of active¹⁴ DW members of three DW organizations affiliated to JALA PRT

| Organization name | Active members (July 2015) | Active members (April 2016) |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| MITRA IMA DEI | 16 | 121 ¹⁵ |
| RGP | 26 | 69 |
| SPRT SAPULIDI | 89 | 411 |
| Total | 131 | 611 |

Source: JALA PRT.

In inviting DWs to participate in organizing activities, organizers still offered services such as legal aid and skills classes (English language, computer literacy, cooking and sewing), but these no longer represented the core of the discussion while recruiting. Members did not join just to make friends or to acquire life skills, but rather to develop commitments to organizing around decent work and DW rights. Members took part in activities that included discussions of wage standards, written contracts, the need for more and more effective labour legislation, and how the organization could help members to improve negotiation and advocacy skills, giving them more power in working relations with employers.

Rap was effective because it responded to the needs of organizers, who were themselves DWs without time for long analyses to map actors and issues in the field. With Rap, the target raised issues for discussion arising from her own concerns, for example, her working conditions. In repeating and focusing on step three (take a stand/ agitate/raise awareness on the issues) and step four (vision and dreams), DWs were able to deliver clear messages regarding the advantages of becoming a member of a DW organization. In this way rappers managed to link individual situations to the general conditions of domestic work, raising consciousness of the issues while connecting the target's vision/dreams to those of the organization, thus convincing the target to participate. At the same time, by demanding relatively short encounters between the rapper and the target, Rap reduced difficulties related to limited time and relatively reduced mobility of both rappers and target DWs because it did not require long field practice or a specific venue.

Beside directly informing members, Rap activities spread information about the DW organization's actions and objectives inside the communities (the mapped areas), which enabled the organization to extend its networks and area of influence. Therefore some targets, when approached by the rappers, already knew something about the organization and were consequently less reluctant to join in. In other cases, news of the DW organization's existence had reached DWs who then took the

initiative in contacting it. One SPRT Sapulidi leader, for example, joined the organization in July 2015 because she first heard about it in her community and then requested more information on the organization's Facebook page.

Rap M&E activities, facilitated by JALA PRT (March 2016) and followed up by individual organization discussions among the various "Groups of 10", helped to identify the most common issues uncovered while rapping, and encouraged members to propose solutions in the course of discussions among rappers, including reviews of the practice itself and the training of new rappers.

Domestic workers could also use Rap to explain that, even if the organization did not seem to offer short-term material benefits (e.g. in terms of financial benefits, transportation costs, food), or if it seemed to represent a burden (demands on limited energy and time, including travel time), it in fact advanced worker interests. It enabled members to negotiate and advocate for their interests and, in the longer term, win recognition and protection of DW rights in law.

Furthermore, Rap enabled the organization to identify and develop DW leader capacity. Concomitant increases in duties and responsibilities strengthened member capacities while developing a sense of commitment. This could empower them, giving them more autonomy and ultimately – although they might still need support from NGO facilitators in the middle term – greater capacities for conflict resolution, communication and facilitating small groups.

At the time of this writing, a single rapper was able to recruit between three and ten DWs every month. The organizations had identified DW leaders to manage their "Group of 10" community units, and in SPRT Sapulidi the rappers/leaders were also able to train other DWs to do Rap.

5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed community organizers. Rap requires the community organizers and DW leaders to understand both the domestic work context and specific problems, including the following: prevailing work arrangements; absence of national legislation to protect DW rights; and cultural/traditional elements and institutional factors that contribute to precarious, unstable and exploitative working relations of women in informal jobs.

The organizers need sufficient knowledge of labour rights; decent work; relevant international labour Conventions; social analysis of social structure; and women’s perspectives. Moreover, community organizers who want to be rappers must be familiar with the organization’s vision, objectives and activities so that, in explaining the advantages of working together in an organization, they can link these to the hope and dreams of the targeted domestic workers.

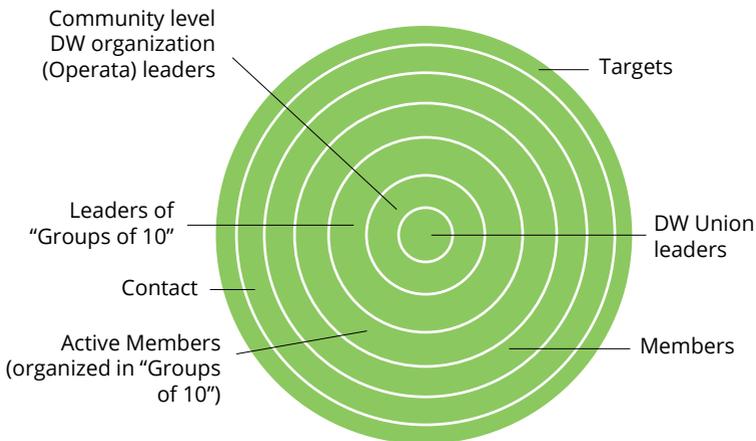
Mastery of the participatory elements of Rap. To master those elements, the organizers must practise the Rap method in dedicated capacity-building workshops or at the DW school. In both instances, the training takes a participatory approach,¹⁶ which includes discussions of DW issues (e.g. social analysis, working relations, legislation, vulnerability to abuses) and analysis of how DW organizations can serve as vehicles of change (vision, objectives, activities).

The training introduces the six steps of Rap, and provides participants with opportunities to practise what they have learned through role play, simulations, and exercises in the field that reach out to real targets. In the first field practice, the organizers are accompanied by the facilitators or a trained rapper. The facilitators and/or organizers must lead the DWs to identify their problems and invite them to propose ways to advocate for and act in pursuit of their interests.

JALA PRT action plan frame

The Rap method requires an action plan with a clear time frame and a target number of new members. The action plan needs to include M&E activities to check the progress of the organizing activities and to plan responses to challenges. JALA PRT sets three-monthly targets and, to achieve these targets, organizers have to reach out to twice the number of targeted DWs, since half that number typically refuses to join. JALA PRT graphically describes the action plan with a frame of concentric circles.

Organizers aim first to persuade targets (non-organized DWs) to become members, and then to become active members. Some active members will become “Group of 10” leaders; others, with more experience in leading group discussion and other activities, will become leaders of the Operata, in turn providing still other DWs with their knowledge and experience to serve as coordinators and leaders of Domestic Worker Unions (SPRTs).



One effective approach involves the following:

- the use of power games,¹⁷ small-group discussions among DWs about problems and possible solutions;
- practice of the six Rap steps through simulations and role plays; and
- field practice and evaluation of related experiences to review problems identified by the targets, including reasons for not joining.

Capacity can be improved by way of intensive rapper meetings designed to share information, discuss challenges and find new strategies to address these issues. Such encounters will encourage DWs to practise Rap and participate in such activities as organization meetings and discussions, the aim being to engage more DWs directly in activities that lead to greater organizational growth, independence and strength.

Rapper and leadership training for DWs. NGO COs can support DW organization members in becoming more independent and better versed in leadership skills by sharing and assigning them organizational tasks and greater responsibilities. The following measures are essential:

- training as many DWs as possible to become rappers;
- making these rappers/leaders responsible, in consultation with the NGO facilitators, for defining targets; and
- ensuring that these DWs facilitate small community meetings and provide Rap training to other DWs. A minimum of two meetings per month should be devoted to discussing organizational development, activities and internal issues, including reviews of Rap activities. This would appear to be a key element in enabling DW leaders and members to improve their capacity and knowledge by engaging with each other and with the NGO trainers.

Advantages of DW rappers. Being a DW is not a prerequisite for serving as an effective rapper, but Rap is better performed by the DWs themselves. Peer-to-peer exchanges reduce the rate of membership rejections because both parties have a similar direct

experience of the relevant difficulties. Rappers who are DWs are thus able to create feelings of solidarity and to explain more easily the benefits of being part of a DW organization.

This remains true when the Rap is performed by COs, who are generally middle-class female NGO staff, though class differences between DWs and COs tend to inspire greater humility and modesty among the COs.

The data regarding respective numbers of rappers and SPRT Sapulidi members¹⁸ showed how that organization, in which Rap was conducted exclusively by DWs themselves, was able to recruit larger numbers of DWs than were the other Operata. This outcome was also linked to the numbers of DWs able to Rap (41 in SPRT Sapulidi) compared to five to ten DW rappers in each of the other Operata, where Rap was still performed mainly by NGO community organizers.

Importance of sustainability. Promoting the direct involvement of DWs in recruiting members and organizing from the start increases the chance of developing sustainable DW organizations. The enabling and facilitating roles of organizations like JALA PRT in Indonesia or LEARN in the Philippines (see also chapters 6 and 7) and of their community or union organizers are vital for developing awareness and building capacity of DWs. However, making NGO staff responsible for most community organizing does not guarantee the sustainability of these activities in the long term, and hence of the DW organization itself, because DWs do not gain sufficient confidence and leadership capacities to conduct Rap and to lead their organization independently.

6 – CONCLUSIONS

RAP presents a good practice – a successful, replicable strategy to raise and develop awareness of the causes and conditions of DW issues while showing how these challenges may be overcome by building a membership-based organization.

USEFUL LINKS AND ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

For further information, contact Lita Anggraini, National Coordinator of JALA PRT:

jala_prt@yahoo.com or jala.prt@gmail.com.

Information regarding DW activities, including M&E on Rap, field practices and GROUP OF 10 discussions is available on Facebook:

JALA PRT <https://www.facebook.com/jala.prt.3?fref=ts>

SPRT Sapulidi <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011505167478&fref=ts>

Operata Pamulang <https://www.facebook.com/operata.pamulang?fref=ts>

Operata Sedap Malam (Tebet) <https://www.facebook.com/operata.sedapmalam?fref=ts>

Mitra Ima Dei <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009708969432&fref=ts>

- ¹ “Rap” is a community organizing model/method; a “rapper” is a domestic worker organizer or community organizer who does the Rap.
- ² JALA PRT had been advocating for DW rights since 2004. To this end, JALA PRT submitted a Domestic Workers Protection Bill to the Indonesian Parliament, and campaigned for the ratification of ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), or C189.
- ³ Domestic workers to whom organizers/organizations reach out.
- ⁴ Organisasi Pekerja Rumah Tangga, a community-level domestic workers association.
- ⁵ In part, rap music inspired this way of describing the method, which repeatedly follow six systematic steps. The method was originally used during the USA presidential election in 2008 by community organizers in mobilizing voters in support of presidential candidate Barack Obama. UPC organizers invited some of those campaigners to learn about this organizing strategy before Indonesia’s 2009 election (note 3). The method was then adapted to organizing DWs.
- ⁶ To distinguish between domestic workers, organizers and NGO staff organizers, the term “community organizer: (CO) will be used to refer to NGO staff who organize domestic workers.
- ⁷ UPC is an Indonesian NGO that mobilizes urban poor in slum areas. It is particularly active in working for the rights of this group, advocating against evictions and resettlement on the grounds of the negative socio-economic impacts of such policies, and instead promoting participatory solutions to upgrading slum areas. UPC has been using Rap since 2009 to mobilize urban poor communities in different cities around Indonesia, including Jakarta.
- ⁸ A “rapper” is a domestic worker organizer or community organizer who does the Rap.
- ⁹ This report uses “her/she” to refer to domestic workers because their organizations currently admit only women members.

- ¹⁰ Each Operata had a Sekolah PRT (domestic workers' school in a shelter or house rented by the organization) and the education/discussion sessions were held there. These sessions could last from two to four hours. The meeting schedule varied with each organization, but each organization conducted at least two meetings per month.
- ¹¹ The rappers/leaders meeting schedules differed with each organization, but as of this writing the most consistent was SPRT Sapulidi, which held Operata leader meetings every Tuesday or Wednesday.
- ¹² These DW organizations, although they lack legal recognition, have an organizational structure that includes leaders who are the secretary, treasurer and coordinators of SPRT and Operata. Most of the organizations also collect membership fees to support some of their activities, although JALA PRT still financially supports these organizations.
- ¹³ Smaller domestic worker units (ten members) inside the Operata.
- ¹⁴ "Active" DWs were those members who participated in at least 50 per cent of the organization meetings and/or education sessions.
- ¹⁵ Mitra Ima Dei started its organizing and DW training in three new areas (new Operata in Bekasi, Tangerang and Tebet) from September 2015 following the Rap capacity building workshop.
- ¹⁶ The difference lies in the structure and systematic approach. At one capacity building Rap workshop, the facilitators used a module and conducted different specific sessions: social analyses of domestic workers; identification of problems/solutions; explanation of community organizing; introduction to Rap; field practice; and evaluation. Whether at the school in the community at large, it is the trained rappers/COs who explain Rap; currently, however, no coordinated module is available, which means the training is less structured, though it emphasizes the same elements as the capacity building workshops.
- ¹⁷ Power games are a method used in social work where participants (in this case DWs) are divided into groups and asked, for example, to diagram the relationships and other elements that shape their working and living conditions. Through this sort of game, the disempowered group of DWs seek to identify the actors and institutions accountable for this asymmetrical situation.
- ¹⁸ Source: JALA PRT records, DW school attendance forms.

JALA PRT

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4 — INDONESIA: WORKERS, NOT HELPERS – ORGANIZING AND EMPOWERING DOMESTIC WORKERS

Jennifer Angarita

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------|--|
| DW | Domestic worker |
| IDR | Indonesian rupiah |
| JALA PRT | Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Pekerja Rumah Tangga (National Network for Domestic Workers Advocacy) |
| OSI | Open Society Institute |

1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Domestic work. In many countries around the world, nannies, caregivers and other domestic workers (DWs) comprise an invisible, mostly female workforce who help to sustain local economies. Yet the patchwork of labour and employment laws protecting DWs varies greatly both within and across countries.

A dearth of legal protection means many DWs face substandard pay and workplace abuse. The ILO defines domestic work as work occurring in or for a household or households that often includes multiple tasks and duties including childcare, laundry, landscaping, chauffeuring, housework, security, and care for the elderly or disabled.¹

Domestic work presents a largely female, minority and low-wage workforce. Because many DWs are their families' sole or main breadwinners, even small increases in wage earnings can have a meaningful impact on the lives and spending power of these workers and the families that depend on them. Creating networks and building organizations that empower and connect DWs can alleviate the challenges that isolated workforces face and help address the abuses and inequities these workers experience.

Domestic work in Indonesia. In Indonesia, as in many countries around the world, domestic work is relegated to the informal economy. As of August 2015, Indonesia had no legal provisions

guaranteeing labour standards, a living wage, health insurance or other rights to workers. A baseline survey of DW organizations in Indonesia found over 400 cases of violence against DWs in 2010 and 2011, and the number of unreported cases was presumably much higher than the number recorded.

There have been other attempts to organize DWs in Jakarta, but according to Lita Anggraini, National Coordinator of JALA PRT, the previous attempts largely failed due to a lack of worker leadership. The formation of the Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union represented an opportunity to examine the early practices of a new organization in a city with more than 1.4 million DWs.

This chapter examines the reasons Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union members decided to establish a union, the organizational process behind it, and the organization's accomplishments over the previous two years.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The exclusion of DWs from many labour policies was rooted in outdated beliefs that work in the domestic sphere did not represent a legitimate profession. Attempts to redress this situation by organizing DWs in Jakarta had not produced sustainable membership organizations.

Then, following its start in June 2013, the Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union, a membership-based organization of more than 100 female DWs in Jakarta, found success with a grassroots organizing model, one that emphasized having workers themselves assume leadership, member recruitment and movement building roles.

This chapter documents Sapulidi's formation, development and growth. It explores the organizations' initial challenges and emerging good practices with the following key aims:

- documenting the formation and development of a newly created DW organization;
- identifying and reviewing early good practices with relevance to improving the lives and working conditions of DWs;
- prioritizing promising good practices for more extensive evaluation;
- improved understanding of the initial stages of a DW organization; and
- providing direction for future areas of action in addressing DW organizing needs and challenges.

The benefits of benchmarking and recording good practices include the following:

- identifying challenges and strategies to address them;
- encouraging more innovative approaches to organizing practices;
- accelerating change by encouraging better practices; and
- establishing accountability and mechanisms for tracking organizational development and measuring success.

2 – CHALLENGES

Main challenges in building DW organizations are:

- the difficulty of connecting and mobilizing an informal, often isolated workforce;
- an ingrained cultural understanding of “domestic workers” as being somehow not genuine workers, as quasi “members of the family” undeserving of defined wages and working conditions;
- familial and spousal disapproval of women organizing;
- limited time and availability, particularly among women with children, single mothers, and live-in DWs; and
- financial constraints.

3 – APPROACHES/METHODS

The information presented in this chapter was collected by way of an organizational survey, in-depth interviews, and small focus groups with members of the Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union. These qualitative and anecdotal data were complemented with research of online materials and information collected during a two-day training session. Questions and topics covered the formation, history, goals, and structure of the union, its main activities, success factors, demographics and challenges.

The interviews were conducted in South Jakarta in August 2015 in the homes of DWs and in the office of Jala PRT, the national network for DW advocacy. Interviewees were recruited from the Sapulidi union, including both new members and long-time worker leaders. Audio-taped data collection was used. The interviews were conducted in English through a Bahasa interpreter and they were transcribed and analyzed for sharing with the DW organizations in Asia.

The Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union adopted three strategies which contributed to its success in establishing a new domestic workers union in South Jakarta as explained below.

3.1. FOR DWs BY DWs: ORGANIZING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

I am the leader in my household. I take care of my children and, although I am not the oldest child, all my siblings depend on me. If they have problems, all my nieces, nephews and siblings will come to me and share their problems.

Diah, married female DW



A key Sapulidi strength is that it is a DW union run for DWs by DWs. From the start, Sapulidi has trained its members to engage and attract unorganized DWs to join the organization, and has emphasized leadership development among DWs. Sapulidi members took part in training where they learned to identify themselves as leaders in their households, workplaces and within the organization. Those without formal leadership positions discussed what nevertheless made them leaders. The workshops asked members to identify the following elements:

- what a leader was;
- what leadership was;
- what it took to be a leader; and
- what functions or duties a leader was responsible for.

Asked why she considered herself a leader, Wiwi, a single parent, responded: “I am a leader in my household because I earn a living. I am a single parent, I work to take care of my children. Everything is my responsibility.”

Outcome. Through worker leadership development, individuals felt more empowered and more invested in the organization. The outcome of a strong emphasis on worker leadership led to DWs being more comfortable and outspoken and taking ownership of their organizations. Additionally, experience as worker leaders made them more comfortable in negotiating with their employers.

Success factors. If DWs in Indonesia are to take part in extracurricular activities such as organizing, they often require the approval of their families, in particular their spouses. Spousal support is an especially important factor for married women in determining the extent of their involvement.

3.2: NEEDS-BASED SKILLS TRAINING

I advocate, I help my friends when they face problems, negotiate with their employers when necessary. I just cried because I couldn't do much more. My friends said if only I could speak English as well as you do, I could also negotiate as well.

Wiwi, DW

Sapulidi members recognized the skills DWs needed to improve their wages and working conditions. Their recruitment strategy included trying to attract new members by offering skills training that addressed the needs of domestic workers. For example, seven out of the nine DWs interviewed expressed frustration at the lack of communication they experienced with English-speaking employers. Since their employers were expats and they faced language barriers, they believed English-language courses would help them negotiate effectively with employers.

Outcome. The language training had contributed to increases in membership. Workers reported that classes helped to convince the women that Sapulidi was a reputable organization, and to overcome any associated concerns or suspicions. English classes had also resulted in workers being able to negotiate more effectively with their employers.

As Santi explained, “After they set up Sapulidi, DWs were convinced to join after the union offered English courses.” Several Sapulidi members cited English classes as a way to first of all communicate better in general with employers and then as a mechanism to negotiate with employers more effectively.

Success factors. The English language training addressed a direct need among DW who wanted to learn English because their employers were English-speaking expats living in Jakarta. In countries where language barriers between DWs and employers were uncommon, this would have had less impact. The Sapulidi experience, however, shows how DW organizations can grow strong by providing services that their members need. Timing and schedules, for example, were other important factors that had to be considered, as classes had to be conducted at times and locations that were accessible for DWs.

3.3 NARRATIVE-BASED STORY SHARING

Sapulidi members practised sharing their stories with each other, with the media and with elected officials. In one activity, they mapped out major life events such as birth, marriage, first job, childbearing, times they quit jobs and the reasons, and other important life experiences, including the mapping of their careers or times they had to switch jobs. Sapulidi members also held a writing competition where winners shared their stories on a local news radio show. They also practised writing blog posts.

Outcome. Sapulidi members reported story-sharing as an effective way to mark their experiences, both sad and happy, of being women, of motherhood and of domestic work. They believed this activity helped to empower them.

Success factors. Many members cited having to overcome their shyness in sharing their stories. For this strategy to be effective, members had to also feel the organization was a safe space within which they could feel comfortable.

4 – RESULTS

4.1 THE START OF SAPULIDI

On a hot Sunday afternoon in July 2013, dozens of DWs gathered in Ragunan Zoo, a 140-hectare zoo in South Jakarta, Indonesia, in the first-ever large group convening of what would come to be called the Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union. During the meeting, about 68 women discussed the issues they faced as DWs in Indonesia. They touched on issues such as lack of health care and time off, persistent low wages, demanding and inflexible work schedules, and complete reliance on the whims of an employer.

Most of the women were intra-country migrants and mothers who had left their families and moved to Jakarta from other parts of Indonesia to work in households, often at very young ages. The meeting was described as a cordial, informal gathering, and many DWs brought their families and children.

Sapulidi began to come together in June 2013 when a DW named Vitri began having serious problems with her employer. When she told her employer she wanted to resign, her employer asked her to continue working for an additional two weeks to provide enough time to find a replacement.

APRIL 2013

Domestic worker named Vitri encounters problems with her employer and seeks assistance.

JUNE 2013

Vitri and Lita hold small-group discussion on issues facing domestic workers in Jakarta.

JULY 2013

First official domestic worker meeting; leadership elected.

JANUARY 2014

English classes offered.



Founding the Sapulidi Union, July 2013.

Vitri agreed, but as soon as a replacement was found, the employer stole Vitri's belongings and refused to pay her the agreed-upon wages still owed her. Frustrated, Vitri aired her grievances on a blog for expats in Indonesia, and was advised to get in touch with Lita Anggraini, a known labour organizer and the coordinator of JALA PRT.

After a discussion with Lita – who had decades of experience working with and supporting DWs throughout Indonesia – Vitri agreed to host an informal discussion with a few of her DW friends to discuss the broader needs and challenges they faced as DWs in Jakarta. At first, Vitri was sceptical of the idea of building a DW organization. Her friends reported that she was worried she had needlessly imposed by asking her friends to come to the meeting. Meanwhile, her friends had their own concerns about the organization. As one DW said, “They thought it was money politics” – they were afraid that JALA-PRT was some kind of fraud.

But Lita explained the mission behind JALA PRT at the first meeting, and talked about protecting and advancing DW rights. She told them about an established DW organization in Yogyakarta, and asked why a city like Jakarta – larger, more metropolitan and with a greater number of DWs – lacked such an organization.

According to Santi, Sapulidi's chairperson and an attendee at that first small-group meeting, the goal was to share their problems and experiences. Lita emphasized that the earliest goal of the organization was simply to share experiences. The meeting was framed as an informal discussion among friends. (Some members of that meeting later emerged as core Sapulidi leaders.)

The next meeting took place at the zoo, where many DWs attended with their families. At that formative meeting, the workers cited the issues and challenges they faced.

Santi explained the strategy behind the first meeting: "We agreed to build an organization. The name at that time was not Sapulidi. We had three other names. Ragunan is a zoo – we chose it as a venue to attract their friends to go to the zoo. If we say let's go to the zoo, they will be attracted. If we say there's a meeting at Santi's house, they won't go."

Eventually, through the support of Sapulidi and JALA PRT, Vitri was able to secure her back wages from her previous employer. As Santi reported, "They didn't go to court; it was settled with the employer. The employer said, "Here's your salary; get lost."

For the next two years, however, Vitri had trouble finding employment because she lacked a recommendation letter from her previous employer, and was thought to have been blacklisted.

4.2 MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Following the first official meeting, participants agreed to establish a monthly dues-paying membership structure. Initially, debate revolved around setting the amount of dues, whether it should be 5,000 Indonesian rupiahs (IDR) or IDR10,000. Members finally voted to collect monthly dues of IDR10,000, not an insignificant amount for a domestic worker.

Sapulidi members proposed three key goals for the organization:

- connecting DWs with each other;
- sharing experience of workplace problems and issues; and
- informing friends of job opportunities.

At the first meeting at Ragunan Zoo, members recalled, there was still debate over what the structure of the organization would be, who was going to serve as chairperson, and where the money would come from. Eventually members settled on a membership-based structure, which included a leadership body with leaders – including a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and executive committee – being elected. The leadership was elected at an early meeting in 2013, with re-election slated for September 2015. Members decided collectively to hold meetings twice a month, with members paying dues at those times. As of August 2015, Sapulidi had grown to 102 dues-paying members. In April 2016, Sapulidi's active members amounted to 411, according to JALA PRT (See the table on page 115). For a relatively new organization operating in the informal workforce, all the preliminary indicators suggested success.

One DW leader explained, "If [a domestic worker] is short on money and unable to pay, they can push back their payment to the following month. There is a strong understanding of the need for membership dues. The dues are used for supplies and food for meetings and events, with the eventual goal to establish their own offices in Jakarta."

The Sapulidi organizational model included a strong emphasis on membership recruitment in the kind of informal spaces where DWs gathered. The following, in non-sequential order, represents the Sapulidi model:

- **Recruitment.** Identify places where DWs gather and recruit members in informal, relaxed ways, asking DWs about their situation and challenges.
- **Field observation.** Try to understand the demographics and the situations in which community DWs live.
- **Short-term planning.** Having identifying the problems, establish short-term plans, programmes or activities to address the problems.
- **Collective strategies.** Revisit short-term plans to collectively decide on long-term actions.
- **Decision-making.** Decide collectively on activities, meetings and structures.
- **Assigning roles.** Designate roles, targets, methods, tactics and other technical needs, such as distributing tasks to accomplish specific goals.
- **Implementation.** Implement the collectively agreed-upon actions.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluate the actions, taking time to discuss what worked and what did not in a given activity, as well as what you would improve upon or demand and technical problems.
- **Reflection.** Reflect on any successes, as well as on what still needs improvement.
- **Next steps.** Further develop the DW organization. Create mechanisms to establish “Groups of 10” within the DW community;² establish relevant principles, goals and organizational roles; and plan activities to recruit DWs to join the organization.

5 – CONCLUSIONS

This chapter shows how domestic workers established a DW union, organizing women in informal jobs. Sapulidi's most effective strategies or good practices for establishing the union were as follows:

- an early emphasis on organizing of DWs by DWs and DW leadership development;
- attracting members through needs-based skills training; and
- narrative-based story sharing and social media networking among members.

A variety of factors have supported the development of the Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union. Significant pre-conditions included the following:

- a knowledgeable organizer (JALA PRT) to seed the idea of an organization;
- specific grievances or problems that the organization could address; and
- key worker leaders to help initiate and organize.

While it remains very much in its early stages, the Sapulidi Domestic Workers Union shows strong potential to evolve over the longer term as a vibrant organization. More generally, the above good practices may be useful to help domestic workers elsewhere and their supporters to build lasting DW organizations.

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- ¹ ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::p12100_instrument_id:2551460#A1 [accessed 16 Feb. 2017].
 - ² Smaller community units of 10 domestic worker members within the organization.



5 — PHILLIPINES: NO ONE STANDS ALONE – DOMESTIC WORKERS FIND THEIR VOICE IN UNITED

John Vincent S. Cruz

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------|---|
| Barangay | Smallest political unit in the Philippines (village, barrio, district or ward) |
| C189 | ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) |
| DOLE | Department of Labor and Employment (Philippines) |
| DW | Domestic worker |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| Kasambahay | Domestic worker |
| LEARN | Labor Education and Research Network |
| PHP | Philippine peso |
| RA 10361 | Republic Act 10361 |
| SENTRO | Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (Center for United and Progressive Workers) |
| SSS | Social Security System |
| TUCP | Trade Union Congress of the Philippines |
| TWG | Technical Working Group |
| UNITED | United Domestic Workers of the Philippines |

1 – INTRODUCTION

Intricate networks of neighbours and relatives in the Republic of the Philippines provided channels through which DWs were recruited into an industry where they lacked any formal, documented processes or, subsequently, regulations that protected them in their workplaces. The most distressing element of worker vulnerability in this sector was the prevalence of child labour.

She stood outside the day-care centre, surveying the adult companions who watched over the toddlers at this publicly funded facility in a lower-middle-class neighbourhood of Quezon City, the Philippines. “I would just hang out to see who among the adults were parents and who were the yayas, or the nannies,” said Maia Montenegro, aged 33 years, who, after her parents split up, grew up with her aunt for much of her young life.

As she looked around at the adults and children going in and out of the centre, Maia said she was observing the body language of her subjects, trying to determine who in this crowd were the domestic workers (DWs). Maia herself came from the ranks of DWs, recruited when she was 12 years old to work for her neighbour’s sister, a friend of her aunt.

Domestic workers: A profile. Maia was just one of the many Filipinos, mostly women, who worked in a sector often described as being dominated by the most vulnerable workers. Their services are at once immediate and tangible. They clean the house, they cook, they wash clothes, they look after the children. They work in the most private of settings – the household, where personal spaces are at once sacred and time shared. And their output is both intangible and intimate: providing for the comfort and convenience of strangers who are at the same time both familiar and distant.

The structure of the domestic work sector made reliable data relatively scarce, and estimated numbers of DWs in the Philippines ranged from as few as 650,000 to as many as 2.32 million male and

female workers.¹ And government data showed that only about 120,000 of that number were registered with the Social Security System (SSS), and even fewer with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG).²

The ILO added the following:

Many more domestic workers are not captured by the Labour Force Survey (LFS), namely: children less than 15 years old who work as “house maids” or “boys” but who are not counted in labour force statistics; adults who work as domestic workers as a secondary occupation (details are not collected by the LFS); and persons performing household tasks in the house of wealthier relatives without pay, in exchange for shelter in the city, education or simply daily subsistence.³

Maia’s personal recruitment story mirrored that of most DWs in the Philippines – networks of neighbours and relatives provided channels through which DWs were recruited into an industry where they lacked any formal, documented processes or, subsequently, regulations that protected them in their workplaces. That Maia was recruited despite her being a minor was but the most distressing element of worker vulnerability in this sector.

But the United Domestic Workers of the Philippines (UNITED), the Philippines’ first and, at the time of this writing, only organized trade union for domestic workers, was to use the same intricate networks of neighbours and relatives and fellow DWs, plus other channels, to establish a union.

2 – CHALLENGES

The structure of the DW sector demanded innovative ways of establishing contact and then drawing individuals into the fold.

Stories of DW exploitation and abuse go largely unreported, and reliable data are generally in short supply, because DWs often work and live in isolation from others, including their fellow workers. Each workplace – usually a private household – often employs a workforce of just one, who tends to remain “invisible” behind the closed doors of her place of employment. And that worker is further isolated in her vulnerability by the following factors:

- the dispersed nature of these workforces of one;
- her dependence on her employer; and
- the lack of social or legal protection in cases of exploitation or abuse.

Furthermore, as this chapter suggests, DWs are sometimes reluctant to take the initiative in joining their fellows to share their experiences.

3 – APPROACHES/METHODS

3.1 ROLES OF LABOUR CENTRES AND NGOs

DWs faced numerous problems too glaring for the labour movement to ignore. Given the “invisibility” of these workers, labour groups needed to find strategies for organizing them through initiating a general critique of the industry. Beginning in 2012, the Labor Education and Research Network (LEARN) began to demonstrate commitment to organizing the sector and to provide forums for discussion of the sector.

These efforts were inspired in part by discussions of DW living and working conditions at both the national and global levels. In 2009, the International Labour Organization (ILO) added to its agenda for the 2010 International Labour Conference the possibility of advancing an instrument for the protection of DW rights.⁴ At the national level, the ILO helped to convene a Technical Working Group (TWG) on decent work for DWs with the participation of DWs, labour unions, NGOs, labour centres, employers' groups, and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

They campaigned for Philippine ratification of ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) on decent work for domestic workers (C189), and the passage of the draft Kasambahay (Domestic Worker) Bill, which would express at the national level the Convention enumerating the rights that DWs should enjoy.

The TWG conducted All Workers Consultations that provided a common agenda for trade unions from the fragmented Philippines labour movement. The unions agreed there was a need to organize DWs into a national union of domestic workers and, in 2013, this unity project was to lead to a strategic action plan.

3.2 FINDING AN ORGANIZER

It was within this context that the Labor Education and Research Network (LEARN) began, in 2012, its efforts to organize DWs. In this, it enjoyed the support of a labour centre then known as the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL), and – due to its regional and global connections – with the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF). Cooperation between these three organizations led to an intensification of discussions and plans LEARN and APL had already initiated, with IDWF, as the global DW union, providing solidarity support for LEARN's endeavour.⁵

As far back as 2011, LEARN had been looking for an organizer who could serve as the focal person for its DW organizing, and, as luck would have it, Maia Montenegro (see above) would soon become acquainted with that NGO.

When she started working as a DW in Manila, Maia received no benefits. But she made one request to her employers: “I told them I wanted to finish my studies no matter how long it took, even if they had to deduct the tuition from my salary. I told them that I just wanted to finish my studies, not so I could go on to fight them, but because I wanted an education.”

She paid for that education through salary deductions, even though payment of her net salary would sometimes be delayed. It took her six years to finish her studies at the city college where she met Novy Palisoc, who also worked as a DW while studying.

Maia graduated with a degree in Education, and soon after that applied for a teacher’s position with the LEARN day-care centre in Bagong Silangan, Quezon City. This is where she was eventually recruited into the labour movement. And, given her background in domestic work, she was tasked with helping LEARN to establish a DW organization.

It was that day-care centre where she began identifying potential recruits for what would eventually become known as the United Domestic Workers of the Philippines, or simply “UNITED”, the Philippines’ first and, at the time of this writing, only organized trade union for domestic workers.

This represented a new arena for LEARN, and there were no hard rules. Maia had to rely on instinct. “I was not given any specific tools,” she recalled. They just told me that I should aim for initial contacts with about 50 workers by the end of December 2012. Other leaders gave me tips on how to go about my task, but I learned mostly by doing.” LEARN provided Maia and other core group members with some guidance, but on the ground the women were gaining momentum on their own. This was organizing by DWs for DWs.

For her part, Maia would befriend those she identified as DWs, memorizing their names so she could list them later, and kept in touch with them until she eventually learned where they lived. She noted the times these DWs were available, and learned their personal circumstances, including their working conditions. In particular, she would ask at what times they worked and for how

long. Maia was to discover that some DWs were deeply in debt to their employers. This condition, prevalent among DWs, would later prove important in her organizing.

Maia recruited DWs one by one, including Novy Palisoc, Maia's former classmate, who had started working as a domestic worker at the age of 18 years.

3.3 BORN LEADER

Growing up in a family where her brothers were given priority access to schooling, Novy wanted to study but was instead recruited as a domestic worker in 2007 by the grandchild of a trial judge. Aside from household chores, Novy's work included manning a travel agency owned by the family she worked for and running bank errands, all for a meagre salary of PHP1,500 (about US\$25) per month. When the family went to the United States for a month, Novy and another household worker were left with only PHP150 to fend for themselves. She left and soon found another employer.

She called her new employer Nanay (in English nanay is "mother"). This employer had a daughter who in 2011 recruited Novy to work for her in Qatar. While she was in Qatar, the daughter contracted her out as a DW to other households, supposedly to help defray the cost of her airfare. Novy was overworked, with less than six hours left for sleep every day, fed scraps, paid only irregularly and threatened with abandonment. Novy became convinced she would never be able to return to the Philippines. She called on Maia for help in getting back home; Maia persuaded Nanay to convince her daughter to send Novy back home.

Despite the hardships she had faced in Qatar, upon returning to the Philippines Novy went back to work for Nanay. And when Nanay got sick, it was Novy who took care of her. Nanay's family, including the abusive daughter who had taken Novy to Qatar, never even bothered to visit. Novy's loyalty is testament to the blurred lines between employee and family status when it comes to domestic workers. Despite her earlier experience in Qatar, Novy remained with the same employing family.



3.4 SAVINGS MOBILIZATION AS ORGANIZING PLATFORM

Novy's story was not unique, or even unusual. Stories of DW exploitation and abuse went largely unreported because of the settings in which they unfolded.

Despite their vulnerability as individuals, DWs did not go out of their way to associate with one another. It was in that context that Maia learned the hardest part about organizing DWs was winning their trust. "Sometimes they would be afraid that you were just fooling them or profiting from them, and some questioned who I was to be organizing them in the first place, since I was "just" a domestic worker like them."

To promote DW buy-ins, Maia and the other founding UNITED members, with coaching from LEARN, developed a savings mechanism. From around the time Maia began work in July 2012, savings promotion and mobilization became an important entry point for their organizing activities. At the time, however, the Kasambahay Law was not yet in place, and Maia had to convince DWs that, to protect their own interests, they would have to mobilize savings.

Maia and Novy each started establishing contacts with DWs. Using their networks of fellow DWs, they went house to house to get to know future members better, and to convince them to organize and join the savings scheme. When potential recruits began seeing others engaging in discussions with DWs, still others started to follow. After three months, Novy and Maia had achieved a critical mass of about 74 DWs who signed up for the Damayan savings scheme.

Damayan, which has since become a cooperative, does not issue loans. It is instead a kind of rescue fund to be used in times of emergency for members whose relatives have died, or in medical emergencies. Maia and Novy deposited the Damayan savings with the LEARN cooperative as an auxiliary member of that cooperative, using the security of a more established common fund to protect those savings.

The birth of the scheme was also an indicator that the UNITED organizers, including Maia, Novy and the others, were gaining the trust of more DWs. "In allowing us to collect their contributions," said Maia, "they had to trust that we would not run away with their money."

In the back of their minds, however, organizers such as Maia and Novy were aware that economic security was only the tip of the challenge that lay ahead of them. It was essential that their fellow DWs also recognized the need to protect the whole range of rights that they should enjoy, entitlements that the Government and employers have a duty to enforce.

4 – RESULTS

4.1 LEGAL TIDE TURNS IN FAVOUR OF WORKERS

The complexity of the typical DW situation, combined with DW susceptibility to abuse and other forms of inhumane and degrading treatment, powered union advocacy for legislation that recognized their distinctive contributions to society. LEARN's efforts to organize DWs served to add the domestic workers' voice to this campaign.

The call for protective legislation gained traction only after years of shocking reports of “household helpers” being beaten up, raped and subjected to other cruel treatment and inhumane working conditions. Because they worked in the most private of spaces – the home – their plight had remained effectively invisible until the concerted efforts of advocates, including survivors, to tell their stories precipitated government action.

The Philippines had been a consistent signatory to various Conventions that aimed to achieve decent work and other worker rights instruments – a total of 37 signed ILO Conventions in all. Once the workers' movement engaged in the Philippine campaign on decent work for domestic workers, advocates from both inside and outside Government successfully pushed for ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), in brief C189, on 5 September 2012.

However, the same workers, NGOs and government champions knew C189 needed enabling domestic legislation if it were to prove relevant to daily DW life. The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), and the APL through the Akbayan party-list, filed the necessary bill in the House of Representatives. Representatives Raymond Mendoza and Risa Hontiveros were the principal authors, while Senator J.V. Ejercito filed the Senate counterpart.

The Republic Act 10361 (RA 10361), also known as the Kasambahay Law, the Magna Carta for Domestic Workers, or Batas Kasambahay, was signed into law by former President Benigno Aquino III on 18

January 2013. Finally, there was law that recognized domestic work as work. As the DOLE itself put it, RA 10361 was “a landmark piece of labor and social legislation that recognizes domestic workers as similar to those in the formal sector. It strengthens respect, protection, and promotion of the rights and welfare of domestic workers or kasambahay.”⁶

After the President identified it as a priority measure during his State of the Nation Address in 2010, the measure took only two years to pass, relatively fast given the generally slow pace of lawmaking in the Philippines. (In part, a popular administration that began its tenure with an immense amount of political capital was what expedited smooth passage of the legislation.)

The last legislation to address DWs was RA 7655, passed in 1993, which merely increased the minimum wage for DWs. The Kasambahay Law, on the other hand, was the culmination of more than 16 years of lobbying by labour groups, women’s groups and others. This law introduced no language not already found in existing legislation, other than the recognition of domestic work as work in the eyes of the law. The rights therein codified were rights that the Labor Code and other relevant statutes had already mentioned, but the fact that now DWs also enjoyed them made the Kasambahay Law landmark legislation.

The Kasambahay Law also provided for a range of benefits that DWs should receive – from social protection such as health care and social security to requirements for employment arrangements and mechanisms for redress of grievances against abusive employers. The law also regulated employment of DWs in terms of work hours, rest periods, social benefits including a 13th month of pay and, most importantly, it set the minimum wage for DWs at PHP2,500 (US\$59) in Metro Manila, PHP2,000 (US\$47) in other cities and first-class municipalities, and PHP1,000 (US\$23) in other municipalities. However, it did not specify how such rates might be revised, leaving future minimum wage adjustments a matter for the National Wages and Productivity Board to determine, where wage adjustments usually work in favour of employers, and where rates are pegged to geographic location and not to industry conditions.

The Kasambahay Law also stipulates DW-employer contracts, which should set specific terms for their employment and incorporate all the protections afforded in law. Indeed, this law provided a landmark in the fight for equal treatment for DWs. As one of its co-authors said upon its enactment, “We have taken that major step in treating our kasambahays as workers and not servants. This is a clear yardstick for equality in the country, and it heralds better things to come for other marginalized sectors.”⁷

Even before UNITED was established, the labour movement formed an important part of the critical mass that pushed for the Kasambahay Law. In fact, in January 2013 LEARN organized its first gathering for the DWs that Maia and Novy were organizing to help consolidate their participation in the push for passage of that law.

It helped that the ILO TWG had provided the DWs with a venue where they could engage in dialogue with other stakeholders, from Government to employers, providing a foundation of intensive discourse and compromise for the Kasambahay bill, another factor behind its quick passage.

Maia, Novy, the IDWF and LEARN engaged in the ILO TWG, and this involvement also helped them to continue with the organizing in anticipation of a positive outcome on the legislative front.

4.2 BIRTH OF A UNION

UNITED continued coming together while the Kasambahay Law had yet to become law, its organization intensified with the Damayan scheme and its seven initial members in place and with the support of organizations such as LEARN, the ILO and the IDWF.⁸

By the end of 2013, the informal DW association had grown to include 273 members across Metro Manila. To systematize its organizing framework, LEARN began to structure the DW recruits into barangay-level collectives.⁹ This approach recognized that the DWs were best served by locating them either at their workplaces or at their residences. Since they were located in individual households, the barangay substituted for the factory as a site of

struggle, and bargaining units would be best organized at this level. It helped that the Kasambahay Law mandated the registration of DWs at the barangay local government unit. (It was the labour movement that pushed for this provision).¹⁰

On 26 April 2015, at a general assembly held at the Institute of Social Order inside the Ateneo de Manila University, the DWs met as a body for the first time in what would become known as the founding assembly of the United Domestic Workers' Union of the Philippines, or UNITED, the country's first union of its kind.

Participants agreed upon UNITED's guiding objectives:

- organize a democratic national union of DWs;
- foster camaraderie and mutual support among DWs by and for DWs;
- promote the enactment of laws for decent work for DWs, seeking to improve their and their families' working and living conditions; and
- continue upgrading the knowledge and skills among DWs needed to empower them to promote their own well-being and growth, both as individuals and as a sector.

The founding assembly elected UNITED's first set of leaders, with Novy taking the office of President and other DWs making up an executive committee comprising a vice-president, treasurer, secretary, secretary-general, deputy secretary-general and six board members.

The Executive Committee was to set UNITED's policies in the period before UNITED's first Congress. The Assembly differed from a Congress. It was agreed the Congress should be broader and encompass other areas where UNITED was still in the process of organizing. All the Committee's officers were UNITED members. LEARN acted as facilitating labour NGO, and LEARN policy ruled that its staff was not allowed to participate in the decision-making structures of the unions that it helped establish. This insulated the organizations from unduly influencing one another, while upholding the autonomy of a social movement union.

The founding assembly also affirmed the structure of the union, with attendees deciding they would continue to organize themselves into chapters at the barangay level, according either to where the DW lived or where she worked. Allowing for chapters based in places of residence helped unions better coordinate their activities. In addition, aiming to infuse their basic units with organizational life, and as a safeguard that would allow local units to stand on their own should the federation project fail at the national level, chapters were also allowed to propose and approve their own localized constitution and bylaws.

The chapters were then represented by their own set of officers which they elected for terms determined by the chapters themselves. Chapter presidents constituted UNITED's National Council, which met quarterly, and which was to provide the Executive Committee with strategic leadership in the interim as UNITED headed towards convening its first Congress in 2017.

UNITED members had to pay membership dues of PHP100, which LEARN shared on a 50-50 basis. In the longer run, it was hoped that UNITED would be able to institute a more formal, unsubsidized collection mechanism; in the meantime the prevailing setup allowed UNITED to support modest organizational efforts such as meetings.

As of October 2016, UNITED reported a minimum of 737 members spread across the country but mostly concentrated in the national capital of Metro Manila. More UNITED members remained subject to validation, while others were largely inactive and went unreported, as did more members in the provinces of Bataan, Rizal, Leyte and Zamboanga del Sur. UNITED was also initiating organizing efforts in Iloilo. This means UNITED had established a presence in at least six out of the country's 18 regions, and some uncertain number of members beyond the reported 737 minimum.

In the city of Ormoc, Leyte Province, in one of the poorest regions in the country, communities represented a rich source of labour for domestic work within the province, for recruitment in Metro Manila, or even abroad. UNITED had more than 40 members in

Ormoc spread over two barangays and organized into one chapter. Madelyn (see below) was deployed to the area as if by the hand of providence, as she had left work in Manila to go back to the province. To maximize her potential, UNITED leaders and LEARN tasked her instead with helping to organize the local chapter, with modest logistics and operational support from the national level.

4.3 AWARENESS AND EMPOWERMENT

Evelyn, chapter president in Bagong Silangan, a Quezon City barangay and a major source area of DWs, said what drew most of them to join UNITED, above and beyond the cooperative, was learning they were not alone, and the confidence this gave them to express their concerns. “Now if one of us has a problem,” Evelyn said, “UNITED can help us by talking to the employer.”

Members also learned about their rights as workers, Evelyn added, through UNITED’s educational work, backstopped by LEARN.

Another DW, Ormoc-based UNITED treasurer Madelyn, agreed: “UNITED can use the law to convince employers to treat domestic workers better.” UNITED helped to realize their aspirations with the backing of an entire organization that emphasized the immediacy of their calls for decent work, decent pay and improved quality of life.

Evelyn, meanwhile, cited the case of a DW who had barely finished high school before she started working for a household in Quezon City. She was receiving a meager PHP1,500 per month, so UNITED members talked to her employers, persuading them to help the DW go back to school. Their approach was non-confrontational but firm, and their familiarity with the legal provisions gave them the upper hand. The employers acceded to their request.

Certain distinctive features of the sector made such an approach necessary. The Kasambahay Law provided for penalties for violations of the law, but the fact that most DWs lived with or would go back to their employers even if a case was filed against them, put workers at risk if penalties were the first recourse in implementing the law.¹¹

Ultimately, effective negotiations with employers rely on organizational size and unity. Once they see they are dealing with a union that has the numbers behind it, employers recognize the potential costs in terms of legal action and reputation. UNITED members often accompanied claimants, formally identifying themselves to the employers and making it clear they were not threatening lawsuits, that they only wanted what was best for both DW and employer.¹² The confidence UNITED members needed to accomplish this was built up slowly and incrementally by the training they received.

4.4 EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP ON A BUDGET

Lynn, 56, from Bagong Silangan, Quezon City, worked part-time and on call for various households. She agreed that UNITED training helped members develop self-confidence: “It helps develop not just our ability to say what is on our mind, but also to find solutions to our plight as domestic workers.”

LEARN custom designed UNITED training schemes based on the union’s identified needs. Such interventions usually applied programmes based on the unifying elements expressed in UNITED’s founding assembly: organizing; political engagement; livelihoods and socio-economic status; dialogue and collective bargaining; worker education; legal and paralegal training; and gender issues. In all such training programmes, the provisions of the Kasambahay Law stipulated how DWs could claim their rights, from negotiating with employers to learning more about labour laws and how they could use these to improve the lot of domestic workers.

When resources were insufficient to mobilize larger numbers of UNITED members, LEARN instead devised training for trainers, such as the programme they conducted, with IDWF support, on leadership development (October 2016). They gathered a smaller group of about 20 participants from all regions with UNITED chapters and trained them to replicate or implement the same training within their own organizations.

UNITED included part-time workers as another strategy to seek the broadest possible reach among DWs. For example, Shyra, of Murphy, Quezon City, was a 17-year-old who helped her mother with chores in the compound where her mother worked as a domestic worker. Being underage, she was not compensated. Nevertheless, Shyra appreciated her UNITED membership because, even though she fell outside the formal definition of DWs under law, she saw what she could contribute as a youth worker. Because of the UNITED training that members underwent, Shyra became aware that she had rights. And, as she said, "I told my mother about these rights so she could in turn tell her employer about them."

UNITED membership raised worker consciousness, and that alone helped to empower the women. In 2012, for example, Maricel of Paranaque, aged 43 years, was recruited by the Filipina common-law partner of an Indian businessman to work as a DW in India. "I was hurt physically by my fellow Filipina," Maricel reported. "She accused me of abusing their special-needs child, withheld my salary, and subjected me to emotional trauma. She and her partner even made me watch them having sex. Because of UNITED, I know now that I should never let that happen to me again."

Maricel was also aware that these things should not happen to others. UNITED's Paranaque chapter, where Maricel was a member, conducted weekly meetings where they shared their stories, their concerns and their hopes. These meetings provided a cathartic channel through which they could also advise other women on how to look for solutions to their problems. Michelle, for example, was 27 years old. Her husband, an abusive drug addict, denied her visiting rights to her son to force her to remit her earnings to him, which he then used to support his vices. "You should report him to the police," the other members repeatedly advised her.

In a way, this also became a consolidating strategy because sharing, as Michelle said, "makes us aware of where to go and what to do if we have problems." She decided to wait for the right time to retrieve her son and leave her husband for good.

Another member, 41-year-old Let, suggested that, beyond mere catharsis, their meetings also allowed them to explore self-help options, saying, “We intend to echo the Paranaque chapter’s savings cooperative.” This meant that chapter members would pool their own savings with whatever contributions they made to the savings cooperative at the national level. They were encouraged in this by the fact their chapter mostly comprised DWs who lived next door to each other – predominantly live-out workers who performed chores in the high-rise condominiums sprouting in the southern suburban areas. They hoped that once they were able to pool their savings they would be better positioned as a self-help, community-based union.

4.5 CHALLENGES REMAIN

Despite its having broken ground with organizing, and having made headway in raising member consciousness of the issues and the importance of collective action, UNITED still confronted four major challenges:

- The strategy of maximizing networks to draw more DWs into UNITED could present problems if member networks reached their saturation point. At the same time, this strategy was neglecting other areas with high DW concentrations, failing to bring them into the fold as UNITED continued to develop its programmes.
- UNITED needed to stay alert to the delicate balance between providing services while raising the members’ political consciousness. This did provide short-term redress, but UNITED’s comparative advantage was its strategic orientation, that of radically transforming DW working conditions everywhere, at the same time encouraging members to buy into that objective. Political education as provided by LEARN needs to be sustained, given that raising DW consciousness is an ongoing process.

In practice this means that, in its educational work, UNITED must ensure members understand that their struggles and

issues in the DW sector are part of broader questions of inequality in Philippine society, and part of larger patterns of unequal development at the global level. By locating their issues within the national and international spheres, DWs can begin the process of sharpening their awareness and locating their own personal problems within a context shared with fellow workers.¹³

- UNITED's membership is predominantly female, and they face concerns not only as workers, but as specifically women workers. Domestic work has a feminine face, and its organizing framework is thus decidedly feminist. UNITED's gender programme needs strengthening, especially in light of reported cases of abuse, harassment and domestic violence. Remaining aware of these issues, which may go unreported even within UNITED's ranks, poses a challenge for the future. Unaddressed, these issues could reduce participation rates, disincentivizing expansion and genuine empowerment.
- UNITED operates within the context of a fragmented Philippine labour movement. The labour centres that engaged with the Decent Work for Domestic Workers campaign agreed on the need to forge a single national DW union. UNITED represents a step towards that union, and – while it was organized by LEARN, itself affiliated with the labour centre then known as APL, which later became Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (the Center for United and Progressive Workers, or SENTRO) – UNITED must remain conscious of the need to develop its niche. To avoid the pitfalls of labour movement dynamics in the Philippines, at the time of this writing, UNITED had not joined SENTRO, which allowed it to reach out to its target constituencies unburdened by the machinations of labour dynamics.

At the same time, however, keeping UNITED unfederated and unaffiliated prevents it from broadening its capacity for representation in larger, stronger platforms within a labour movement that still lacks sufficiently articulated DW perspectives.



5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt generally non-confrontational approaches, maintaining an awareness of unorganized DWs' sense of vulnerability and often, for only too good reason, typically mistrustful responses.
- Think outside the box. This led UNITE organizers to apply both “savings mobilization as an organizing platform” and door-to-door “retail organizing” in organizing efforts to extend the rights and benefits of social movement unionism within the DW sector.
- Such organization needs a solid database updated on a continuing basis, allowing it to arm itself with information for evidence-based decision-making, especially in shaping its programmes and policy interventions.
- Ultimately, effective negotiations with employers rely on organizational might. Once they see they are dealing with a union that has the numbers behind it, employers recognize the potential costs in terms of legal action and reputation.

6 – CONCLUSIONS

UNITED's experience as a grassroots union was unprecedented. It presented novel means by which union organization could adapt to the complex, ever-evolving conditions of the DW workforce:

- There were no handbooks for organizing domestic workers. The workplace was the household, and the bargaining units were individuals, rather than groups of employees. The structure of the sector demanded innovative ways of establishing contact and then drawing individuals into the fold. Thinking outside the box led to what might be described as “retail organizing” – LEARN's door-to-door organizing efforts in extending the rights and benefits of social movement unionism within the fragmented DW sector.
- A favourable policy environment helped provide a platform for organizing domestic workers. The enactment of the Kasambahay Law represented a breakthrough recognition of DW contributions to the country's economic life, and helped to reshape public conceptions of what constitutes work and how it should be compensated. In negotiating with DWs' employers who were unaware of the rights their workers should enjoy, or unwilling to acknowledge them, that legislation provided UNITED with the legitimacy and authority to negotiate on its members' behalf.
- Investment in personal relationships and addressing DW needs were key to organizing UNITED. A political agenda was not front-loaded when DWs were being drawn into what would later become UNITED. Instead, the personal was to represent the political. Similar to the Rap method used in Indonesia (see chapter 3), organizers like Maia focused on the target members' working conditions, and from there stressed the need for collective action as the only viable mechanism by which their grievances could be addressed.

- UNITED membership was dominated by women, but it also included men and youth. Evidence for the success of organizing for women's rights and welfare was clear in increased member DW ability to negotiate and advocate for better working terms and conditions.

But there remains a need to equip UNITED with a solid database so it could arm itself with information for evidence-based decision-making, especially for further developing its programmes.

7 – GOOD PRACTICES

- Retail organizing promoted household-level contacts, and maximized networking helped shape UNITED as an organization. The house-to-house strategy, combined with the referral system, was effective in identifying potential recruits. At the same time, this strategy harmonized with DW working hours. It did not disrupt their working hours, which also encouraged them to participate and eventually join.
- UNITED organized into chapters at the barangay level, and covered those both residing and working there. This facilitated organizational life at the chapter level, and ensured that members were able to keep in touch for updates and in mobilization for activities.

The Kasambahay Law required the registration of DWs in the barangay, moreover, which also opened possibilities for local-level political participation over the longer term, since the barangay presented the frontline government interface with communities.

- UNITED broke the barrier, in organizing DWs, by not limiting itself to the standard definition of a domestic worker in RA 10361. Its organizing framework was holistic, its membership included young child labourers, unpaid family workers, part-time workers and even those returned from working abroad who faced the challenge of resettling and finding work back



Discussing UNITED strategy.

in the Philippines. The DW union thus achieved a grasp on the whole range of issues that afflict the DW sector. Yet building sufficient capacities to respond to all these issues remains a matter for future programme development.

- UNITED used savings mobilization as an organizing platform. This strategy served the dual purpose of drawing more members into the union, while helping members to feel more secure, knowing they were prepared for financial emergencies.

While this strategy was not new, it was innovative when applied to DWs, who historically have had difficulties saving money, given that they remit most of their earnings to relatives and families in their places of origin. An efficient savings scheme has the potential to become a sustainable safety net for DWs in distress.

Overall, the UNITED experience presented uncharted waters for unionism in the Philippines. The structure and dynamics of the DW sector did not fit traditional organizational modes, nor did it suffice. The basic elements – social investigation and data collection, networking, and education – remained, but UNITED successfully navigated the demands of the sector to effectively mobilize individuals who would otherwise have remained isolated.

Every woman recruited into UNITED was one less victim, a DW who was far less likely to fall prey to what had been for too long the occupational hazards of domestic work.

The combination of organizational development and enhanced individual and group capacity meant UNITED members were making their voices heard by the public. They were taking incremental, progressive steps towards claiming spaces for their personal development and DW representation in policy advocacy. This empowerment was first of all evident in the courage UNITED members displayed in telling their stories. It took confident women, people who had successfully overcome a sense of victimhood, to relate their origins, to relate the horrors some of them underwent as people treated no better than servants, all the while expressing a hopeful vision, the promise that together they would overcome.

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- 8 Albano and Rasing interview, op. cit.
- 9 A village, district or ward, the smallest politico-administrative unit in the Philippines.
- 10 Albano and Rasing interview, op. cit.
- 11 Department of Labor and Employment Undersecretary Ciriaco Lagunzad III, in an interview cited by A.C. Nicholls: “Many domestic workers still without insurance” (CNN Philippines January 24, 2016), accessed at <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/01/24/many-domestic-workers-still-without-insurance-kasambahay-day.html> [accessed 24 Feb. 2017]. Interview with UNITED members in Paranaque (24 June 2016, Barangay Sucat Multi-Purpose Hall).
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DOMESTIC WORKER COOPERATIVES



House managers in Korean traditional dress celebrating International Domestic Workers Day.

6 — REPUBLIC OF KOREA: THE COOPERATIVE MODEL – DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR HOUSE MANAGERS

Peng Choi

2016

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|---|
| C189 | ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) |
| CSO | Civil society organization |
| DW | Domestic worker |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| KRW | Korean Won (currency) |
| KWWA | Korean Women Workers Association |
| NHMC | National House Manager's Cooperative |
| NPO | Non-profit organization |
| WURC | Women's Unemployment Relief Center |

1 – INTRODUCTION

Background. The National House Manager's Cooperative (NHMC)¹ applies a social cooperative model to improving working conditions among domestic workers (DWs). Members, all of whom are domestic workers, contribute financial resources to the cooperative, become shareholders and are co-owners. The NHMC, which was established in November 2004, operates a national headquarters and 12 branches across the country.

1.1 HISTORY OF THE NHMC

During the so-called International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis of 1997–98, the Korean economy experienced a serious economic crisis leading to mass lay-offs and unemployment. Women faced severe employment discrimination during this period, and bore the brunt of early dismissals. As the number of unemployed women increased, working conditions among women, especially low-income women, deteriorated and women faced even higher barriers to securing employment.

The Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA), NHMC's parent organization, established the Women's Unemployment Relief Center (WURC) in June 1998 to address gendered aspects of the IMF financial crisis and the rapid growth of women's unemployment. The WURC, which operated in eight different regions across the country, provided services such as counselling and assistance with delayed payment of wages, unfair lay-offs, job seeking and job placements.

During this period of deep financial recession, many women, especially women older than 40 years who functioned as the single breadwinners of their households, sought gainful employment but experienced difficulties due to high barriers to labour market participation, among these the lack of appropriate skills and career trajectories in what were highly discriminatory labour markets for women.

Compared to other jobs, the demand for middle-aged women doing jobs such as domestic work, baby-sitting, and elder care was relatively high, particularly in a society with an enduring gendered division of labour. Consequently, middle-aged women tended to find jobs as care workers after receiving some professional training.

The KWWA initiated a job placement programme² especially for domestic work, providing professional training to DW applicants, aiming to create more secure and continuous employment for middle-aged women facing high degrees of labour market discrimination. Women could instead turn to private employment agencies in the market, but they charged placement fees while providing no services apart from job matching. As a non-profit organization, the KWWA provided an alternative to fee-based job matching services by providing job matching services free of charge as well as offering an array of other services, including vocational training, refresher training for low-skilled workers, and self-help groups. The activities all aimed to empower women to work as DWs with self-respect, pride and dignity.

1.2 NEED FOR A DW ORGANIZATION

Prior to the establishment of NHMC, DWs could join self-help groups in each region. Through self-help group activities and KWWA support, DWs also gained practical benefits such as vocational training, social support from other DWs, and a sense of solidarity through networking with civil society organizations (CSOs).

The NHMC was founded as a national organization in 2004, when it emerged from an outcome of KWWA activities based in regional branches through the WURC from 1998 to 2003. NHMC aimed to find stable jobs for DWs and to enhance social recognition of DW through systematic training, collective job advertising and marketing, and collective action.

No-fee job placement services did provide an alternative for women who previously had to pay high fees to secure DW jobs.

Yet such no-fee job matching services offered only limited benefits:

- It was impossible to change the nature of domestic work solely through job matching. Job placement primarily matched people looking for jobs and people who needed people to perform certain kind of work. Consequently, the DWs might find temporary jobs, but it was more difficult to ensure continued work or decent work, despite NHMC efforts to exert greater control over working conditions by placing DWs in higher-quality jobs. As long as domestic work remained informal, the practice of job matching could not substantively improve working conditions for DWs in terms of job stability, collective security and labour protection.

The need thus became apparent for a DWs-owned organization that could represent the voice of DWs in demanding relevant policy changes while promoting the kinds of economic activities that ensured jobs with greater stability, better working conditions and greater economic self-reliance.

- DWs also faced problems related to social recognition. Terms such as “maids” or “helpers”, often used to refer to DWs, tended to stigmatize and devalue domestic workers. This kind of social attitude further degraded working and living conditions among DWs. Denying the professionalism and social and economic contributions of DWs devalued domestic work and presented an obstacle to improving relevant labour policy and legislation.

Promoting social awareness of the value and contributions of DWs thus represented a key means to enhancing the social acknowledgement of DW as professional work.

- The primary role of the no-fee job placement agency model was matching individual job seekers with individual clients. It failed, however, to foster among DWs a sense of belonging and relevant social support and protection. Such agencies did not take responsibility for follow-up management after job placement. For example, DWs were offered no source of relevant support where they encountered problems with a client, perhaps facing a situation where there had been damage to household items or where a DW was injured on the job, a common event.

DWs needed an organization that empowered them to protect themselves collectively and to take collective responsibility for themselves.

2 – CHALLENGES

Following the 1997 IMF financial crisis, unemployment became a priority social concern. But job creation and placement for unemployed women, especially middle-aged women, was not enough in itself to address certain prevailing social and institutional problems. To address DW-related socio-structural problems, they needed to establish an organization that functioned on their behalf, and which they could manage on their own.

DWs needed an organization that empowered them to protect themselves collectively and to take collective responsibility for themselves. The KWWA and its member DWs sought to establish an organization that would qualify as a social partner of the Government, with clear commitments, in the social cooperative spirit, to the public interest.

When the NHMC was founded, discussions of social enterprise and social economy were superseding talk of job creation and economic growth, especially among CSOs. At that time, in law a “social enterprise” was an institution that realized workers’ cooperative spirit. But there was no way NHMC could acquire the necessary legal status in the Korean institutional context – there was no legal provision according to which an organization like the NHMC could register as a cooperative.



Care workers rally in the Republic of Korea.

3 – APPROACHES/METHODS

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

Government-led active labour market policy. The Roh Moo-hyun Government, which came to power after the IMF crisis, implemented a labour market policy³ to combat widespread unemployment in an era of economic depression.

Public job creation in the social service sector. The Government conducted a job creation programme in the social service sector to create new jobs and to expand and improve social welfare services. One of the Roh government's major initiatives included public job creation for women and the elderly through public-private partnerships. The Government provided financial support for the cost of public job creation, while NGOs or non-profit organizations (NPOs) developed and operated job creation projects in the social service sector, especially for vulnerable social groups.

CSO discussions: Revitalizing the social economy through social enterprises. As of 2004, law and regulations governing worker cooperatives were non-existent. After 2004, social enterprises were to become a leading topic of discussion.

KWWA and DWs chose the workers' social cooperative model.

Why? Prior to the foundation of the NHMC, some KWWA branches had been implementing public service projects commissioned by local governments, aiming to provide jobs for middle-aged women. Following the 1997 IMF financial crisis, when unemployment was of great social concern, the KWWA conducted no-fee DW job placement projects funded and commissioned by governments. The KWWA organized domestic workers gradually, forming self-help groups. It recognized, however, that as important creating job opportunities through job placement might be, it would not in itself change institutional and social problems. The KWWA and the DWs concluded that, beyond promoting economic gains among its members, they needed an organization that provided DWs with a voice. For the following reasons, they concluded they needed an alternative, something that would promote a worker's social cooperative spirit:

- Beyond a mere socio-political organization or pressure group, DWs needed an organization that promoted economic benefits through job creation/matching and securing comparatively stable incomes. The KWWA had fulfilled these requirements to some extent with its public service projects. Since KWWA job placement was largely dependent on government policy and funding, however, it could be terminated at any time, leaving the economic welfare of DWs who joined the project vulnerable to sudden change.
- They needed an organization where DWs were the owners, and which more surely represented DW interests over the longer term. Domestic workers generally found jobs through a fee-charging placement agency, and went on to work in conditions where they could neither enjoy the legal rights of employees nor organize to pursue their own interests.



Joint press conference of DW organizations to condemn the Ministry of Labor being slow in legalizing DW rights, Republic of Korea.

To address DW-related socio-structural problems, they needed to establish an organization that functioned on their behalf, and which they could manage on their own. DW empowerment also meant that every member should become a co-owner of the organization with an equal vote in decision-making.

- At the outset, government subsidies transferred through social job creation projects were crucial to stable organizational development and stable member incomes. Thus the KWWA and its member DWs sought to establish an organization that would qualify as a social partner of the Government, with clear commitments to the public interest. Its founding declaration shows that, from the beginning, NHMC sought a social enterprise that would embody a social cooperative spirit – adopting a social cooperative/social enterprise model, aiming to earn economic benefits through needed public service activities, activities in which profit-making enterprises were unlikely to become involved.
- When the NHMC was founded, discussions of social enterprise and social economy were superseding talk of job creation and economic growth, especially among CSOs. At that time, a “social enterprise” was considered an institutional means of realizing workers’ cooperative spirit.

3.2 FOUNDING THE NHMC: FROM PREPARATORY STAGES TO INAUGURATION

- **July 2003.** Created the “commission of social enterprise for women in poverty” with the aim of founding NHMC as both a national organization and a social enterprise.
- **April 2004.** Characterized the current situation of DWs in five regional branch areas; discussed plans for establishing a national organization; created a timeline.
- **May 2004.** Discussed the organizational structure (e.g. cooperatives’ inspiration, vision) and the principles and manner of its operation.
- **May 2004.** Discussed details of plan with main focus on:
 - education, including newcomer education planning and education materials;
 - promotion, such as branding, promotional materials, a website, leaflets, work clothes, newsletters, outreach to apartments, community surveys;
 - developed checklist for clients and domestic workers.
- **June 2004.** Examined articles of association, rules for operation, terms and conditions for work (service).
- **July 2004.** Reviewed a unified body of vocational training material.
- **September 2004.** Produced unified promotional material, fridge magnets, and unified promotional leaflets.
- **October 2004.** Reviewed articles of association and rules for operation, discussed alternatives to forming a DW social enterprise.
- **October 2004.** Held nationwide rally of DWs as “house managers”.
- **November 2004.** Launched NHMC website.
- **November 2004.** Held general meeting including representatives of all five branches.
- **26 November 2004.** Held NHMC inauguration ceremony.

3.3 FUNDING SOURCES

- Community Chest of Korea, 2004.
- Levi Strauss Foundation, 2004.

3.4 OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- The KWWA established NHMC and, following that, supported it not only on the planning level but also on the level of everyday operations. For example, many NHMC branches shared KWWA branch facilities, and NHMC headquarters was located in the KWWA head office. Even office supplies were being shared. From the beginning, the KWWA and its branches supported, in total or partially, personnel expenses for one NHMC staff member in each branch.
- Both among CSOs and with the Government, the KWWA initiated research projects that engaged with government-led job programmes and held discussion forums on DW-related agendas. The KWWA, as a CSO, was actively involved in a regime of participatory governance. KWWA collaboration with government agencies was an essential resource in establishing stable NHMC operations. For example, many KWWA branches operated government-commissioned organizations such as the Self-sufficiency Center for Recipients of National Basic Livelihood Security. The KWWA's organizational position won access to government subsidies for early establishment of NHMC. KWWA influence was crucial in having NHMC take part in government public job creation programmes. For instance, NHMC conducted a programme providing care services to low-income households as a part of government-led public job creation programme.

3.5 NHMC GOALS

Founding NHMC declaration

1. The owners of NHMC are its members. We members seek an alternative economic community movement to promote self-reliance, adopt a democratic and cooperative model, enhance accountability, and promote social support and cooperation.
2. NHMC strives to solve the unemployment problem of low-income middle-aged women through job creation and job sharing as an alternative to unemployment and poverty.
3. NHMC asserts that domestic work, which has not been recognized as an inherently valuable form of labour, should earn social recognition as such. At the same time, NHMC fosters the capacity of its members as agents of change who develop a communal culture, rid workers and their families of deprivation and alienation, and become recognized as “house managers”, proud and dignified owners who operate and manage economic organizations (enterprises).
4. NHMC demands social support for domestic work and care work to ensure the work-life balance of working women and an effective supportive policy to promote the economic activity of low-income middle-aged women.

3.6 FOUNDING VISION

The NHMC is an economic community in which domestic and care workers are members and realize “participation and self-governance” by operating democratically based on voluntary participation and the principle of cooperation and solidarity between members, clients, and community actors. NHMC seeks to realize the spirit and philosophy of a worker social cooperative to enhance economic self-reliance among members; to expand decent job opportunities for members; and to contribute to their social influence on issues such as the employment of social vulnerable groups, the provision of social services, and the promotion of environmentally ethical markets, all the while acknowledging the value of “cooperation and sharing”, production and sale of domestic services, and cooperative enterprise activities.



11th Annual General Meeting of the NHMC.

3.7 OBJECTIVES

- provide women from vulnerable groups with jobs to attain economic self-reliance;
- improve the quality of life of local residents by providing social service to vulnerable groups in the community;
- transform domestic work into a profession by promoting an image of professionalism in domestic and care work through the education and training of domestic and care workers;
- lead the social revaluation of domestic work and care work by enhancing social awareness of the value and contribution of domestic work; and
- seek a legal framework for protection of labour rights among domestic and care workers.

3.8 NHMC MEMBER COMMITMENTS⁴

Membership qualifications

Persons who share the NHMC spirit and vision, and who consent to the articles of association, rules and regulations as follows:

1. Member consent entails agreement to NHMC vision and objectives, participation in NHMC operation and management, contribution to the cooperative's work, and co-financial investment in the cooperative's finances.
2. Members are those who complete vocational training in a timely manner after the submission of their membership application for admission.
3. Members must pay investment money after completion of the educational training. The investment money shall not be transferable to others.

Member rights

1. Members each have one vote regardless of how much money they invest or their position. Each enjoys equal voting rights and participation in decision-making.
2. Members should be informed regarding all NHMC-related matters including planning and operations.
3. Every member is entitled to attend training and education for empowerment.
4. Members are entitled to participate in all NHMC-related activities.

Member duties

1. Every member must contribute investment money as stated above.
2. Every member should work in accordance with the articles of association and NHMC goals.
3. Members should behave with faith and dignity and refrain from damaging NHMC honour.

4. All members are required to attend every meeting and education programme that the board determines.
5. Members should maintain a sense of collective responsibility, make acting to NHMC's advantage a priority, and be committed to understanding and caring for other members.
6. Every member has to pay monthly dues.
7. Members must take part in regular NHMC promotion/ advertisement activities.
8. If any financial loss occurs at the year-end settlement, every member holds joint responsibility.
9. Members pay an indemnity insurance fee (KRW33,000 per year).

3.9 NHMC MEMBER SERVICES

3.9.1 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **Newcomer training.** New members received more than 20 hours of basic occupational training and education in professional consciousness ("in-depth skill education").
- **Membership education.** NHMC held monthly meetings where members received education and regular training. Education and training fell into three general categories:
 - vocational training to improve professionalism;
 - self-development education on themes such as communication, self-confidence, conflict management, and upgrading skills at conducting meetings; and
 - awareness-raising on issues, such as social agendas, gender justice, and health.
- **Leadership training for NHMC leaders.** NHMC leaders received training in leadership for women, getting opportunities to reflect on their roles and build confidence through education. All leaders of NHMC branches used to be DWs before being elected branch heads. In addition, all NHMC presidents except the third such office holder had worked as domestic workers.

3.9.2 JOB PLACEMENT

- **Matching supply and demand.** NHMC branches collectively recruited new clients who asked for domestic service at their house, and placed member DWs in the listed jobs. If a client terminated a job, the member who was working for the client was placed with another client. If members encountered difficulties in dealing with a client, they were transferred to other jobs, and other members went to the original clients or, in some cases, the NHMC terminated the service agreements with problematic clients.
- **Marketing and advertising.** NHMC promoted the acquisition of clients to secure stable jobs for their members through such materials such as advertising leaflets, the organization's website, and promotional activities by individual members.
- **Website promotion.** NHMC operates a website⁵ to introduce itself and its services, and to receive service requests.
- **Promotion of clients through advertising material.** NHMC produced and distributed advertising material such as leaflets and fridge magnets, and advertised through daily-living information journals, banners, fliers, and telephone directory service centres. NHMC also displayed its leaflets on apartment building notice boards.

In securing jobs for members, it was critical to both procure new clients and retain existing ones. Due to increased demand for domestic service, some NHMC branches experienced an insufficient supply of member DWs.

To recruit new member DWs, NHMC joined job fairs, especially those held by local government agencies for career-disrupted women. NHMC also recruited new DWs; existing members introduced new DWs. and NHMC posted classified ads in daily living information publications. After being introduced to NHMC, potential recruits received training for newcomers before becoming member domestic workers.

3.9.3 CLIENT MEMBERSHIP AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- **Establishing client membership.** The NHMC aimed to create stable and decent jobs for domestic workers as “house managers” while providing consistent quality service to client members through building mutual confidence and trust. Clients were to pay yearly membership fees and to enjoy benefits such as service discounts.
- NHMC strove to provide high-quality service to clients by adopting a customer satisfaction system:
 - Unified initial consultations using a checklist provided tailor-made service – consulting staff checked client demand and signed a domestic service contract based upon that.
 - A post-service provision log facilitated communication between house managers and clients, and improved the quality of domestic service.
 - The “Happy Call” customer helpline aimed to improve service quality by confirming client satisfaction regarding service (work done by house managers); consulting staff exchanged emails and phone calls in prompt response to clients demands.
 - Customer satisfaction was regularly monitored to help improve the quality of domestic service.
 - Liability insurance provided compensation in cases where a house manager had to take responsibility for client household damages.

3.9.4 LEGISLATION AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The NHMC approached legislation and institutional improvement in two different ways. The first approach was to promote policy measures to enhance job stability of member DWs; the second involved legislative action to uphold DW rights, focusing on legal recognition of DWs in labour law.

1. Promoting policy measures to achieve job stability

- Secured stable jobs by expanding government care services:
 - Held an open forum on “the actual condition of care work in informal economy and policy alternative” based on relevant research outcomes.
 - Proposed and implemented government-support care work service for low-income households as part of a public job creation programme.
- Policy to support social enterprise services in the public interest rather than for profit, including government subsidies and participation in government initiatives.

2. Advocacy to uphold DW labour rights

- Actions promoting legislation to protect domestic workers’ rights:
 - Held an open forum on legal measures to protect domestic workers’ rights.
 - Held an open forum on legislative implementation and issues to assure DW labour rights.
 - Established the “Alliance of Care Work”, and demanded legislation to protect care workers’ rights.
 - Attended government-led round-table meetings with the Ministry of Employment and Labour to discuss a DW-related agenda, including the improvement of working conditions for vulnerable social groups (domestic and care workers) and a plan to protect DW rights.
 - Pressed for enactment of a law to improve DW employment prospects and quality (ongoing at the time of this writing).
- Advocacy for ratification of ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) on decent work for domestic workers (C189).

3.10 SOCIAL AWARENESS IMPROVEMENT AND REVALUATION

3.10.1 “LET’S WRITE A CONTRACT!” CAMPAIGN

- The NHMC conducted research to develop the Domestic service work standard manual. The manual clarified for both DWs and clients the difference between basic domestic service and extra service with extra charges, to decide which services the DW was performing at the client’s house, and to calculate the relevant charges. It detailed the categories of domestic work, whether basic or extra; domestic work procedures; time needed for each kind of job; and service rates calculated by house size. These standards could provide the basis for concluding a domestic service work contract.
- Developed a standardized form for the Domestic Service Work Terms and Conditions and Domestic Service Work Contract, based on the research used to ground the standard manual. The Terms and Conditions form provided both guidelines for applying for domestic service (service request), and basic information on service details, charges (service rates) and service hours (working hours). It also established mutual rules for DWs and their clients. It aimed to ensure the quality of domestic service that NHMC house managers provided, and to ensure basic labour rights and dignity for those workers.
- Launched the “Let’s write a contract!” campaign on July 2015. In the first year of the campaign, each NHMC branch set a target number of contracts, achieving 246 written contracts in total.

3.10.2 “CALL US ‘HOUSE MANAGERS!’” CAMPAIGN

In June 2010, NHMC launched a nationwide campaign: “Call us not ‘day maids’ but rather ‘house managers!’” through press conference and posters to raise both social awareness and the social status of DWS. The term house manager was intended to emphasize the professionalism of domestic work by describing it as household management.

- The NHMC monitored TV drama and other mass media to see how it depicted domestic workers. For example, NHMC strongly insisted that the titles of public channel TV dramas “Kitchen Maids” and “Suspicious Maid” be changed, arguing that these were derogatory expressions for DWs. As a result, “Kitchen Maids” was changed to “Romance Town”. “Suspicious Maid” was not changed at that time but, later, on the same public channel, it did adopt the term “house manager”, and described these workers as professionals who dealt with clients on an equal footing.
- In 2014, NHMC conducted a survey which found that, among 787 total respondents, 46.2 per cent described DWs as “house managers”, another 42.2 per cent used “domestic helpers”, while the remaining respondents reported such descriptions as “day maids”, “maids” and “aunties ”.⁶

3.11 DECISION-MAKING

- The NHMC conducted a central steering committee meeting six times per year and a general assembly once a year.
- Every branch held a monthly meeting which every member was supposed to attend, a branch steering committee meeting at least six times per year which branch representatives were to attend, and a yearly general assembly.
- Democratic decision-making required regular monthly member meetings, forums where every member had an opportunity to share her opinion and openly discuss the issues in arriving at a consensual decision.
- The monthly member meetings also provided a venue for educating and mobilizing DWs for relevant policy agendas, especially those involving NHMC and KWWA operations. In addition, the meetings provided an educational opportunity, including the sharing of organizational information, events, client complaints against members, and ways to counter these or improve client services.

3.12 MAJOR ACTIVITIES AFTER INAUGURATION

26 November 2004. Inauguration of NHMC with seven branches (Seoul, Incheon, Ansan, Bucheon, Daegu, Busan and Gwangju).

March 2005. Conducted the first of the Ministry of Labor's "domestic/care work service to low-income households" social/public job creation programme.

October 2005 – September 2008. Conducted the Community Chest of Korea-funded "free child-care service to low-income household" project.

November 2005. Conducted the Ministry of Labor's "child-care service to low-income household" social job creation programme.

March 2006. Established the Machang and Jeonju branches.

April 2006. Held a panel discussion on the real state of care work in the informal economy and policy options.

April 2006 – March 2009. Conducted second, third and fourth "domestic/care work service to low-income households" initiatives for the Ministry of Labor's public job creation programme.

26 May – 5 June 2008. Visited "Care service social enterprises" in Europe.

June 2008. Established the Suwon Branch

October 2008. Established the Seoul West Branch.

March 2010. Established the Bucheon child-care branch.

June 2010. Launched "Call us not 'day maids' but 'house managers'!", a nationwide campaign to improve social awareness of care workers.

August 2010. Held a forum on legal protection measures for care workers.

October 2010. First women care workers' rally.

January 2011. Urged the implementation of C189 on decent work for domestic workers.

October 2011. Second women care workers' rally.

December 2012. Joined the international campaign to demand implementation of C189 on decent work for domestic workers.



Launching the Let's Write a Contract Campaign.

- June - October 2013.** Conducted a fact-finding survey on domestic worker health and working conditions.
- November 2013.** Held an open forum on findings from the survey on domestic worker health and working conditions, and published the handbook *Speak of domestic workers' health*.
- September 2013.** Held a press conference to demand changes to "Suspicious Housemaid", a TV drama series.
- October 2013.** Attended the founding congress of the IDWF.
- March - October 2014.** Conducted research to support development of a domestic work manual.
- October 2014.** Hosted the Women Care Workers' Festival in celebration of the NHMC's tenth anniversary.
- November 2014.** Held a forum and then published a related handbook: *Let's set standards for domestic work/Let's write a contract*.
- July 2015.** Held a debate on legislative issues, aiming to secure labour rights for domestic workers.
- November 2015.** Held a joint press conference involving NHMC branches, other DW organizations and allied CSOs to criticize the Ministry of Employment and Labor for going slow with domestic work legislation.
- February 2016.** Tabled a legislative bill on improving employment rights and conditions among domestic workers.

4 – RESULTS AND GOOD PRACTICES

4.1 MORE STABLE JOB PLACEMENTS AND IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS

The NHMC provided more stable jobs and better workplace conditions through client recruitment, collective and organizational promotion, and various types of advertising.

- **Growth in yearly membership of clients.** New client members numbered 1,352 in 2015 (among a total of 3,199 clients), a rise of 41 per cent compared to the previous year. Securing job stability for DWs meant building mutual trust with an annually increasing client membership.
- **Government public job creation programme.** NHMC proposed and implemented government-supported care work services for low-income households as a public job creation programme.
- **Counteractions against wrongful client behaviour.** In cases where a client requested excessive and/or unreasonable work, or otherwise treated DWs unfairly, NHMC informed the client of the wrongful action and demanded redress on behalf of the worker. If the client failed to correct matters, NHMC terminated the employment agreement with that client and matched the DW to another client. A clear-cut and important distinction existed between a workers' organization (e.g. NHMC) and other fee-charging placement agencies. Fee-charging agencies or profit-driven companies were generally indifferent to these issues, or even took the side of the clients. But NHMC intervened on behalf of domestic workers in any instances of unfair treatment.
- **Domestic service manual.** Aiming to improve working conditions by professionalizing domestic service, this product comprised a standard work manual, terms and conditions for domestic service, and a standardized employment contract.

The manual systematized and standardized domestic work in the way other types of labour were defined before being exchanged according to law and regulation in a labour market. It enhanced the social recognition of DW, while establishing a rational basis for providing domestic and care services. It presented domestic work as valuable skilled labour, showing its social value and how much strength and skill DWs needed to perform it. It promoted improved working conditions by educating clients and the general public regarding the value of domestic work socially.

4.2 ENHANCED DW SELF-RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE

- The NHMC branded DWs “house managers”, as alternative to the denigrating terms “maids” or “helpers”, highlighting the professionalism needed to provide these services and raising social awareness of the value of domestic workers to society.
- It developed their capacity as social actors through engagement with a civic organization together with the associated education, skills training, and participation in community action.
- It improved their self-confidence regarding their ability both to do their jobs well and to establish relationships of greater equality with their clients.
- The NHMC involved its members in developing the domestic service manual. This engagement raised member awareness of their work and the recognition that it deserved social respect. NHMC also used the manual as an educational resource, where it demonstrated to DWs in practical terms that they performed valuable skilled work, thereby fostering pride in their work and consequently giving them greater confidence both in dealing with clients and in claiming social and legal recognition.

4.3 IMPROVED COLLECTIVE PROTECTION

- NHMC members benefited from liability insurance that provided compensation for damages for which a house manager had to take responsibility.
- Each NHMC branch represented its members in negotiations regarding client claims of damages, theft or other issues. NHMC guidelines for clients suggested that, if they had any complaint, they should make it to NHMC, not to an individual member. NHMC aimed to protect its members from groundless complaints or dissatisfaction.
- Following the enactment of the Framework Act on Cooperatives (Act No. 11211), 2012 some NHMC branches legally changed their status and became a “cooperative” because cooperatives or social enterprises could secure access for members to basic social security, including health insurance, unemployment insurance, national pensions, and occupational health and safety insurance. As of this writing, several other NHMC branches were in the process of transitioning to cooperative status, registering according to the Framework Act on Cooperatives. Such cooperatives were deemed to be employers, and members of registered workers’ cooperatives were thus entitled to social security scheme benefits.

In the Republic of Korea, employers and employees shared social security payments on a 50-50 basis. With registered cooperatives, however, members were both employee and employer. Therefore members in fact made the full payment, contributing both employers’ and employees’ shares, and this accounted for about 25 per cent of their income. The potential drain on their income made many NHMC members reluctant to join the registered cooperatives. Some registered cooperatives, however, received government subsidies for social security on the same terms to which enterprises with fewer than ten personnel were entitled. Within this scheme, the Government subsidized both employers’ and employees’ share of national pension and unemployment insurance payments.



NHMC members call for ratification of C189 and better legal and social protection, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

- As of this writing, NHMC was promoting enactment of a law to protect DW rights, one that would provide social security coverage through government subsidies.

4.4 HEIGHTENED SOCIAL AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

- The NHMC registered strong complaints regarding a popular dramatic TV series, the title of which used the expression “maids” to refer to DWs, and succeeded in having the title changed. After that, the term “house manager” started to gain currency in TV programming. A for-profit company that provided domestic services, a subsidiary of a well-known company, also began using the terms “manager” and “home manager”. Most non-profit DW organizations had already adopted the term house manager instead of domestic helper.

| | Total | | Seoul | | | | Incheon | | | | Bucheon | | | | Ansan | | Busan | | Daegu | | Gwangju | | Jeonju (jeonbuk) | | Ma-Chang | | Suwon | | | |
|---------------|-------|----------|---------|------|------------|------|---------|---------|------------|------|---------|------|-------|--------|---------|---------|-------|------|-------|---------|---------|------|------------------|------|----------|------|---------|------|-------|--|
| | | | Seoul | | Seoul-West | | Bucheon | | child-care | | Bucheon | | total | | full | | total | | full | | total | | full | | total | | full | | total | |
| | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | total | full | | |
| 2006.1 (2005) | 642 | 176 | 59 | 11 | | | 108 | 54 | 57 | 15 | | | 44 | 17 | 280 | 59 | 47 | 5 | 47 | 15 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2006.12 | 715 | | 59 | | | | 131 | | 45 | | | | 68 | | 309 | | 40 | | 31 | | 22 | | 10 | | | | | | | |
| 2007.12 | 877 | | 63 | | 58 | | 147 | | 70 | | 47 | | 81 | | 290 | | 20 | | 46 | | 21 | | 16 | | | | | | 18 | |
| 2008.12 | 931 | | 64 | | 29 | | 136 | | 88 | | 45 | | 66 | | 302 | | 59 | | 45 | | 25 | | 45 | | | | | | 27 | |
| 2010.11 | 575 | | 53 | | 27 | | 50 | | 45 | | 30 | | 44 | | 179 | | 24 | | 46 | | 45 | | 18 | | | | | | 14 | |
| 2011.12 | 589 | 462 | 51 | 46 | 20 | 10 | 46 | 25 | 71 | 37 | 56 | 28 | 37 | 33 | 167 | 167 | 16 | 14 | 53 | 38 | 33 | 31 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 19 | 19 | 16 | | |
| 2012.12 | 590 | 479 | 46 | 44 | 25 | 10 | 40 | 26 | 33 | 33 | 56 | 29 | 38 | 31 | 181 | 165 | 16 | 14 | 60 | 43 | 33 | 31 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 42 | 42 | 33 | | |
| 2013.12 | 601 | 446 | 50 | 46 | 27 | 10 | 41 | 22 | 38 | 38 | 87 | 35 | 35 | 27 | 161 | 151 | 15 | 13 | 58 | 45 | 33 | 29 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 38 | 12 | | | |
| 2014.12 | 545 | 386 | 50 | 43 | 36 | 10 | 41 | 21 | 41 | 32 | 72 | 33 | 33 | 30 | 140 | 134 | 22 | 14 | 25 | 25 | 27 | 22 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 44 | 8 | | | |
| 2016.1 | 535 | 444 (82) | 46 (14) | 33 | 9 | | 45 | 22 (11) | 39 | 39 | 60 | 30 | 28 | 25 (9) | 154 (9) | 150 (9) | 38 | 38 | 22 | 19 (19) | 25 | 25 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 34 | 31 (15) | | | |

*Total number of members.

Number of full members.

Numbers in parentheses represent cooperative members for which the cooperative has yet to obtain formal approval.

Number of members by branch

-
- ¹ The name of the National House Manager's Cooperative does not derive from its legal status but rather from its founding philosophy. Some branches took the form of "associations", while others were described as "social enterprises". However, NHMC adopted "cooperative" as part of their name to help realize thereby the principles and philosophy of workers' cooperatives. Following the enactment of the Framework Act on Cooperatives (Act No. 11211) 2012, some NHMC branches legally changed their status to that of "cooperative". As of this writing, some branches remained in the process of transformation; others were still discussing whether or not to change their organizational status. See: <http://idwfed.org/en/affiliates/asia-pacific/national-house-managers-cooperatives-nhmc-south-korea> [accessed 16 Feb. 2017].
 - ² The KWWA was able to start a job placement programme by registering as a free service to local government.
 - ³ This policy promoted measures to seek relocation of the labour force, provide new skills for job seekers, and develop new employment opportunities.
 - ⁴ NHMC articles of association.
 - ⁵ See: www.homeok.org [accessed 17 Feb. 2017].
 - ⁶ NHMC press release (15 June 2014) regarding a survey of social perceptions of domestic workers.



Skills training at the Confederation of Trade Unions Training Centre, HongKong, China.

IV

SKILLS, JOBS AND ORGANIZING



香港家務助理總工會



7 — HONG KONG, CHINA: DOMESTIC WORKERS – TRAINING, JOB PLACEMENT AND ORGANIZING WITH THE HKCTU

Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) and the Hong Kong Domestic Workers' General Union (DWGU-HK)

June 2017

ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| CTUTC | Confederation of Trade Unions Training Centre |
| DW | Domestic worker |
| DWGU-HK | Domestic Workers' General Union |
| ERB | Employees Retraining Board |
| HKCTU | Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions |
| HK\$ | Hong Kong Dollars (currency) |
| ISLDH | Integrated Scheme for Local Domestic Helpers |
| LDW | Local domestic worker |
| SLS | Smart Living Scheme |

1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) was founded in 1990 under the banner of worker solidarity, democracy and justice. In 1996, the HKCTU set up the Confederation of Trade Unions Training Centre (CTUTC), and began offering courses for prospective domestic workers. The classes quickly expanded amid government support for boosting jobs in Hong Kong for unemployed women with limited education. The CTUTC had great success providing accreditation for trainees and later matching them with decently paid jobs – from 1996 to mid 2017, the centre matched trainees with over 40,000 jobs. In 2001, the Domestic Workers' General Union (DWGU-HK) was founded, as one of HKCTU's 90 affiliates, on the basis of this network of predominantly female domestic workers from Hong Kong. The CTUTC and the DWGU-HK worked hand in hand to foster decent work conditions and the recognition of domestic work as a profession in Hong Kong, China.

Domestic workers (DWs), previously unemployed women, could now be provided with a decent living income, one that could be two to four times greater than the statutory minimum wage.¹ The DWs could also be seen as a backbone of the Hong Kong economy because, if not for their help, many professionals, especially those from middle-class families, could not rest assured their families were being taken care of while they worked.

The information presented in this chapter is based on reviews of training materials, placement reports, government statistics, union documents, and interviews and focus group discussions with CTUTC management, and DWGU-HK leaders, domestic workers, employers and trainers.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

This chapter describes 20 years of HKCTU experience in training DWs — known as “helpers” in the Hong Kong context — helping them find jobs and safeguarding their labour rights. It serves as a practical guide on how Government, unions and training centres can collaborate to boost employment in domestic work while ensuring both adequate working conditions and quality of service to clients.

2 – CHALLENGES

It is common for Hong Kong households to hire domestic workers. According to a 2000 survey “Views on employment of domestic helpers”² more than 10 per cent of the 2 million households polled employed domestic helpers, of whom nearly 88 per cent were foreign and the rest local in origin. With unemployment at 3.8 per cent in 1995 and rising to 6.2 per cent in 1999³ after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the Government sought to alleviate joblessness among women by creating more opportunities for them in the field of domestic work.

In 2002, the Government thus commissioned the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) – established under the Employees Retraining Ordinance to help workers adjust to the changing job market by acquiring vocational skills – to undertake a comprehensive strategy to expand the job market for local domestic workers (LDWs).⁴ The programme was initially funded by collecting a retraining levy from employers of foreign domestic helpers, and later through a direct capital injection from the Government (HK\$1.1 billion in 1997 and HK\$15 billion in 2013).⁵



CTUTC training to professionalize domestic work.

3 – APPROACHES/METHODS

3.1 TRAINING PROGRAMME

3.1.1 CURRICULUM

The courses focused mainly on helping the trainees find successful employment as DWs by meeting employer needs. Course designers conducted a detailed analysis of employer needs by means of case interviews and a literature review, and compiled a list of job skills and competency standards underpinning the curriculum. In 2002, the ERB standardized the curriculum, which was to be strictly adhered to by all training providers according to the following objectives and guidelines.

Course objectives included mastering the knowledge and skills needed for the following jobs:

- basic household cleaning;
- household laundry;
- caring for people of different age groups; and
- enabling trainees to enter the domestic work industry.

Class size: 20–25

Training hours: 40 hours (as of 1997), 128 hours (as of 2014).

Target group: 30+ years old, seeking jobs in domestic work, able to read basic Chinese.

| Module | Content |
|---|--|
| (A) Industry overview (4 hours) | |
| Introduction to the course and the industry | Job description, roles, responsibilities, service culture and professional ethics. |
| | Job market, mode of employment and wage trends, psychological preparation for entering the industry, reminders on terminating contracts. |
| (B) Skills training (82 hours) | |
| Principles of cleaning | Home and personal hygiene. |
| | Use of different detergents and cleaning methods, household ornaments and cleaning; sterilization. |
| | Chemical sensitivity to detergents among human beings and animals. |
| Applied knowledge for environmentally friendly households | Principles of replacing, reducing, reusing and recycling in the household context. |
| | Methods of saving energy in households and reducing domestic wastes. |
| | Household waste separation and different recycling projects. |
| | Green lifestyles and alternative cleaning methods. |
| Household cleaning and tidying – procedures and skills | Cleaning walls, ceilings, windows and doors. |
| | Cleaning and maintenance of floors (wood, plastic and tile); cleaning carpets. |
| | Cleaning toilets and bath facilities. |
| | Cleaning kitchen facilities and utensils. |
| | Cleaning furniture. |
| | Cleaning general household electric appliances and computers. |
| | Bed-making (changing bedsheets, pillows, blankets, bed covers; bed-making in different household settings). |
| | Home tidying: skills and methods. |
| Clothes care | Laundry and ironing. |
| | Washing products, stain removal, dry cleaning. |
| | Procedures and skills for ironing shirts, trousers, suits, etc. |
| | Use and maintenance of ironing facilities. |
| Basic food and nutrition | Food labelling, food safety and hygiene. |
| | Choosing and buying vegetables, meal preparation, balanced diet and cooking menus. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Common diseases among various household groups and basic caring skills | Getting to know the special needs and the changing needs of pregnant women and post-natal women, the newborn, toddlers, children and elderly people; early detection of signs and symptoms of common diseases. |
| | Nutrition, preventing accidents, basic nursing skills, the relationship between clients and the care-giving person. |
| (C) First aid and work safety (8 hours) | |
| Home and occupational safety | Knowledge of home safety, occupational health for domestic workers. |
| | Basic first aid principles. |
| (D) Self-efficacy and job search skills (33 hours) | |
| Personal skills | Intra-personal. Cognitive and emotional management; problem solving; self-awareness and self-management; time management. |
| | Inter-personal. Communication skills and interpersonal relationships (both theory and domestic work case studies); working with others and team-building; customer service. |
| | Understanding job culture; stress management. |
| Job search skills | Job-search and interview skills. |
| | Related laws (Employment Ordinances, Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, and Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme Ordinance). |
| (E) Course assessment (1 hour, plus external assessment) | |
| Continuous assessment (15%) | Class performance with respect to personal attributes and job-searching skills. |
| Final assessment (85%) | Written test (1 hour, can retake in case of failure). |
| | Practical skills (assessed by external examiners; can be retaken twice): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General cleaning. • Bed-making. • Cleaning bathroom and toiletries. • Cleaning kitchens. • Floor care. • Ironing and clothes folding. |

3.1.2 TRAINING CURRICULUM FEATURES

Knowledge and skills. The training was outcome driven. Trainees had to acquire the basic knowledge and theory, but the main focus was on practical skills, with a 1:3 ratio of theory to practicum. To pass the standardized assessments at the end of the course, trainees were expected to participate in practice sessions, above and beyond the training hours, staying behind after class to practise. Classmates were organized into groups so they could assist one other.

Standardized assessment and competency cards. Upon course completion, trainees were given a standardized assessment. The evaluations covered the competencies, as described in the table above. Grades were awarded on the use of equipment and detergent, workflow, observation of occupational safety and health (OSH) standards, and the quality of the outcome. To ensure impartiality, the assessments were conducted by an independent examiner in a specialized venue. Trainees who passed the standardized assessment were awarded competency cards.

Personal skills and attitudes. Trainees enrolled in the DW courses were usually low-skilled, poorly educated and new to the workplace. Building their self-confidence was as important as equipping them with practical skills. To this end, the first session of the course was usually devoted to establishing a supportive and encouraged learning atmosphere. Ice-breaking games such as bingo underscored the trainees' potential and encouraged collaboration. In the later practice sessions, classes were divided into smaller groups to facilitate sharing, discussion and teamwork. The course emphasized communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, active listening and appropriate presentation.

Emphasis on professionalism. Domestic work was often not regarded as being a proper occupation, and hence was deprived of legal protection. Thus the course also emphasized the importance of maintaining professionalism as a domestic worker. This was critical. At the same time it encouraged trainees to take pride in their chosen occupation.

Awareness of labour rights. Trainees were briefed on their rights under law in the following areas:

- **Employment status.** To avoid any confusion over DW employment status, the legal meaning and importance of their written contracts was clearly explained to the trainees. For instance, under the Employees Compensation Ordinance, all employers had to take out a labour insurance policy for DWs regardless of the number of hours they worked. Many employers failed to do this, however. The CTUTC stressed the importance of formalizing this employer-employee relationship so as to ensure legal protection for the workers.
- **Occupational safety and health.** The intensive, repetitive duties of DWs often posed risks to their safety and health. Many suffered from chronic carpal tunnel syndrome (painful compression of a nerve in the wrist), for example. Since most DWs often worked for more than one employer, when it came to compensation it was almost impossible to ascertain wherein lay the actual employer responsibility. Therefore, the course also covered OSH-related issues. The centre also organized DWs to campaign for a central OSH compensation scheme.
- **Other issues.** These included pensions for the elderly, sexual harassment, and the double burden (own household duties and job) of working women.

3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The CTUTC enforced a stringent quality assurance mechanism. Feedback on training was regularly collected from all stakeholders: DWs, employers, instructors and external advisors. The frontline clerks involved in the placement service collected daily feedback from both employers and employees on the application of the skills taught in training.

A quality assurance committee with representatives from employers, employees and the training body itself was also set up to critically evaluate the courses. The committee met on a regular basis within each district, and had to submit reports to the central committee. No opinions were considered too trivial for action.

3.3 ADDITIONAL MODULES

The first Domestic Helpers' Training Course started in 1996. The course was subsequently improved and updated to meet current domestic work needs. The following modules were added to the course later:

- **Post-natal care.** In 2000, a union member in domestic work suggested post-natal care as a skills upgrade. In developing the course material, the CTUTC conducted market research and visited employers in need of such services. The CTUTC launched this module on a trial basis and later formally added it as a part-time, 18-hour course with ERB subvention. Later, a full-time, 152-hour Foundation Certificate in Post-natal Care Worker Training was also offered with ERB funding.
- **Training for the hearing impaired.** In 2009, as part of the larger societal effort to integrate the disabled into the workforce, the CTUTC custom designed five courses for trainees with hearing impairments. The results were impressive: 76.4 per cent of the trainees were able to enter the job market after the course. Ms Chen Jun, one of the trainees, won the Outstanding Trainee award.

OUTSTANDING TRAINEE AWARDS

Ms Chen Jun

Ms Chen suffers hearing impairment and encountered tremendous difficulty in finding jobs. Her situation was exacerbated because she was a recent immigrant from China and a total stranger to Hong Kong. She received DW training at the CTUTC and found jobs that earned her a decent income. Through her work as a DW, she became well integrated into Hong Kong's social life. An article about her appeared in the 2014 spring issue of *Lighten Up*, a local magazine focusing on vocational skills training.



Li So-chun

Li So-chun is a single parent who has to work hard to secure enough for her two children. She was totally committed to her DW job after completion of her training. Initially she worked as a DW, while accumulating experience and expertise in post-natal care. She studied traditional Chinese medicine and developed her own recipes for new mothers. She gained much support from her employers, and they continue to refer her to other new employers.

She was so successful that a local publisher asked her to write a book on post-natal care in 2008, and since then she has published six post-natal culinary books. Li also finds time to share her experience with CTUTC domestic workers.

From a 15 December 2014 interview with Ms Li So-chun.



- **Household cooking for domestic helpers.** Forty-five hours.
- **Elderly care.** Fifty-four hours.

3.4 TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

In addition to skills workshops offered by the ERB or other institutes, the CTUTC also organized meetings and training workshops for trainers, ensuring they were familiar with both labour rights and the issues confronting DWs. Class audits were conducted regularly to ensure the quality of training, and the trainers received related feedback. The CTUTC also trained senior DWs to become mentors, or “big sisters”, to newcomers. They returned to the centre as guest speakers to share their “sweet and bitter” work experiences (甘苦談) with new trainees. They also participated as volunteers to help trainees during practical sessions. Two of these senior DWs went on to become part-time instructors in the training course.

4 – RESULTS

4.1 HKCTU TRAINING CENTRE (CTUTC)

In 1994, aiming to organize and assist unemployed workers, the HKCTU became an accredited ERB training body. Initially, the union only offered part-time evening classes, which were well-received by its members and other workers alike. Given increasing demand for skills retraining, the HKCTU then set up its own training centre, the CTUTC. The centre comprised a team of professional staff responsible for the administration and conduct of quality retraining programmes. The CTUTC grew from one training centre to six centres located in the poorest areas of Hong Kong.

The first CTUTC Domestic Helpers Training Course, conducted in December 1996, included only 20 students. Given the city's economic downturn, however, this number soon grew. Between 1995 and 1997, joblessness soared, and men that used to be the family breadwinners became unemployed, prompting many of their wives to seek additional income. Many of those who first enrolled in the DW courses were wives of laid-off construction or manufacturing workers that were HKCTU members; others were simply residents of neighbouring areas who had confidence in CTUTC services.

Between 1999 and 2009, when the number of DW trainees was at its highest, the CTUTC gathered a professional team of seven full-time trainers and organizers responsible for the DW courses:

- four training officers who acted as course coordinators responsible for trainee progress and the smooth execution of the entire course;
- one full-time skills instructor whose duty was to ensure the consistency of course standards across the six centres; and
- two full-time organizers responsible for organizing the graduates under the DWGU.

In addition to this team, the CTUTC also hired 15 part-time skills instructors equipped with professional skills in cleaning, nutrition and cooking, laundry and nursing care.

4.2 JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES

A key performance indicator for ERB-funded courses was a placement rate of 70 per cent. The CTUTC had to meet this target. At the same time, it was also opposed to pushing trainees to accept whatever job came their way regardless of wages or working conditions. Thus the CTUTC adopted a comprehensive approach that aimed to:

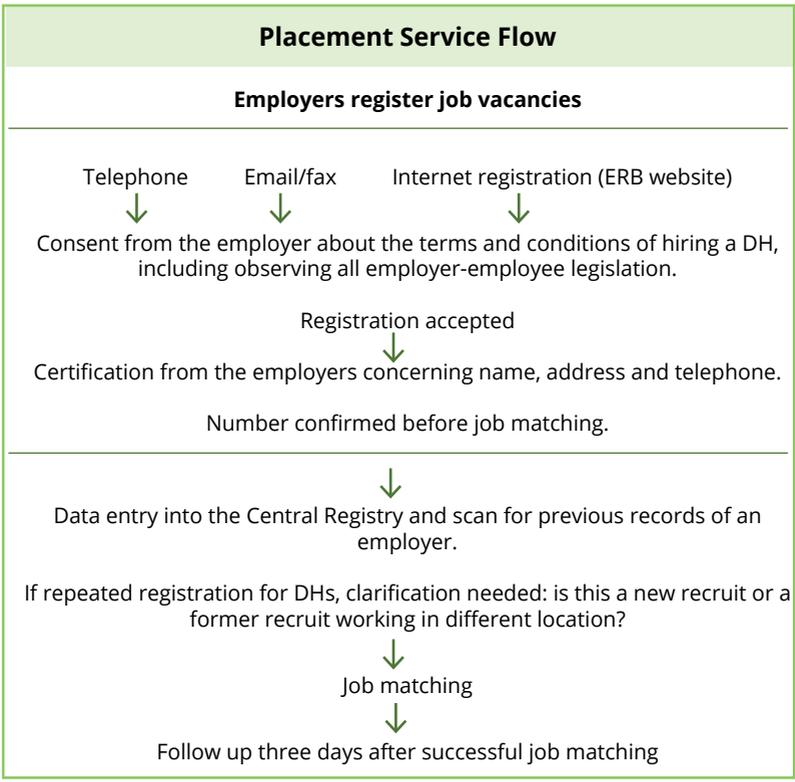
- improve its training standards; and
- expand the number of employers; while
- ensuring a decent wage through the DWGU-HK.

4.2.1 PLACEMENT TEAM

The CTUTC placement team comprised two elements: job matching and marketing. The marketing team was responsible for promoting the trainees and expanding and maintaining the employers' network. The marketing team used advertising and other programmes to publicize the availability of professional domestic services, for example penetrating housing estates to make potential employers aware of such services. This vigorous promotional strategy meant the number of registered job vacancies was adequate to meet DW needs.

The job-matching team was responsible for ensuring good matches between employers and DWs. The team also provided a follow-up service three days after a job match to see that both employers and DWs were satisfied with the service.

See the illustration of the placement service flow on page 206.



4.2.2 INTEGRATED SCHEME FOR LOCAL DOMESTIC WORKERS

Amid an official push to boost female employment by promoting domestic work in 2002, the Government commissioned the ERB to set up the Integrated Scheme for Local Domestic Helpers (ISLDH) to facilitate job-matching at the district level. Through a competitive bidding system, the CTUTC won the contract to run the New Territories East scheme, thus expanding the centre’s placement service beyond its own trainees.

Under the ISLDH, a central registry for employers and qualified LDWs was set up and run by the Government, with a hotline service for all enquiries. Now employers could register a job through the hotline, and placement staff were then able to match the job to a suitable LDW using a computer system. This service was free to employers.

The CTUTC was given a quarterly lump-sum grant. All centres needed to meet a list of key performance indicators to renew their funding. Full funding was provided if more than 90 per cent of the standards were met, whereas a rate below 70 per cent resulted in termination of funding.

4.2.3 PLACEMENT SERVICE OF SMART LIVING SCHEME

The ISLDH became the Smart Living Scheme (SLS) in 2009. It was organized around the community, since the jobs were usually part-time and it was reasonable to match DWs with employers within the same district in which they lived. The SLS aimed to provide reliable, sustainable and high-quality referral services, including orientations, follow-ups and, if the match proved unsatisfactory, change of employers/employees.

The referral services helped DWs with the following activities:

- signing employment contracts;
- settling insurance arrangements (employers who did not provide insurance were naturally excluded from the service so as to ensure DW protection in case of accident);
- mediating conflicts between employer and employee to ensure the worker's legally protected rights were not violated;
- raising the placement rate by filling job vacancies that pay a decent wage;
- increasing job opportunities by building an employers network within the community;
- building a DW network through recruitment posters, mobile phone messages and the internet;
- organizing workshops dedicated to upgrading DW skills;
- helping to promote the "Big Cleansing" (see below), opinion surveys and data collection.
- collecting feedback through questionnaires and word of mouth; and
- handling complaints.

From 2002 to 2014, trainees from the HKCTU's SLS were matched to 40,186 decent domestic jobs in New Territories East.

| Year | Job vacancies registered (in New Territories East) | Vacancies filled (in New Territories East) under the Smart Living Scheme* |
|--------------|---|--|
| 2002-2003 | 2 657 | 1 585 |
| 2003-2004 | 3 238 | 2 191 |
| 2004-2005 | 3 657 | 2 555 |
| 2005-2006 | 3 655 | 2 485 |
| 2006-2007 | 3 478 | 2 334 |
| 2007-2008 | 3 901 | 2 509 |
| 2008-2009 | 3 738 | 2 357 |
| 2009-2010 | 4 376 | 3 006 |
| 2010-2011 | 4 479 | 3 062 |
| 2011-2012 | 4 057 | 2 789 |
| 2012-2013 | 4 758 | 3 785 |
| 2013-2014 | 4 117 | 2 887 |
| 2014-2015 | 4 201 | 3 113 |
| 2015-2016 | 3 815 | 3 124 |
| 2016-2017 | 3 582 | 3 004 |
| Total | 57,709 | 40,186 |

* The discrepancy between number of vacancies registered and vacancies filled is partly attributable to the CTUTC practice of adhering to decent work standards, that is, fair wages, a decent work environment, and labour insurance.

4.3 LABOUR RIGHTS AND WAGES

Formalization of employer-employee status. The ERB committed significant resources to DW training, which contributed to a growing supply of DWs. However, DW labour protection and employment status lagged far behind. The CTUTC believed that, without a sizable DW trade union to look after their rights, there would be no end to the pain and fatigue of their work.

One main issue was formalizing the employer-employee status. The DWGU-HK had developed a sample employment contract for use by the LDWs and their employers (see the sample contract

at the end of the chapter). However, given the informal nature of domestic work by LDWs, employment contracts remained a large grey area. This was especially true in the many cases where DWs worked fewer than 18 hours a week for a single employer.

Thus the CTUTC aimed to focus instead on the issue of labour insurance. Under the Employees Compensation Ordinance, all employers had to take out labour insurance for their employees. Since many jobs in the field were short-term, one-off or stemmed from referrals through friends, many employers failed to realize that they were employers in law and had to comply with this ordinance. So when workplace injuries occurred, many DWs were not able to seek compensation from their employers.

The CTUTC and the DWGU worked together to address this problem. The DWGU-HK persistently petitioned the Labour Department to enforce the law. It also held rallies to raise public awareness of the issue. The CTUTC, meanwhile, negotiated with insurance companies to provide a user-friendly insurance policy for DW employers. In 2006, after a six-year struggle, the DWGU-HK and the CTUTC successfully had all 13 ERB service centres stipulate that employers had to take out insurance policies before accepting job referrals.

Wages. After years of struggle, the statutory minimum wage remained at HK\$34.5 per hour,⁶ while the standard hourly wage of a trained domestic worker was HK\$75–\$85.⁷ The hourly wage before Lunar New Year was HK\$110–\$125.⁸

In May 2016, the monthly median wage of workers with a primary education was HK\$11,000, while that for workers who had completed three years of secondary education was HK\$12,800.⁹ For a trained DW with skills in post-natal care, the ERB suggested a monthly salary of HK\$15,000–HK\$18,000¹⁰ for LDWs working eight hours per day with a statutory holiday each week. The CTUTC, on the other hand, would only match DWs with jobs paying monthly wages of about HK\$20,000–HK\$25,000 or HK\$20,000–HK\$50,000 for overseas work.¹¹

UNION ROLES

At the outset, even with government support, labour protection for DWs was minimal. The organization of DW graduates and the subsequent formation of the DWGU-HK played a significant role in formalizing the employer-employee relationship. Once their relationship was formalized, the fight for decent wage and labour protection became much more effective. As DWs toiled, generally isolated in separate households across the city, often employed only in short-term jobs, it was never easy for them to gather, let alone achieve consensus on issues such as wages and labour rights. The union provided a platform for discussion.

DWGU membership has remained steady over the years amounting to around 600 local domestic workers. From the start, solidarity and close cooperation existed between the DWGU-HK and the unions and associations of international migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong.

Given how widely scattered the employers were, the DWGU-HK conveyed its message partly through extensive mass media promotion. Events and road shows showcasing professional DW knowledge and skills were held throughout the city. For more than one and a half years, at the request of a prominent newspaper, the DWGU-HK even submitted a column on cleaning skills and home-care tips. These efforts helped the DWGU-HK to win the hearts of employers and convince them that, given the professionalism and industry of its members, the wages they demanded were well merited.

The DWGU-HK also kept its distance from the training centre, which proved a successful strategy. The CTUTC focused primarily on its role of providing professional training and quality services. They maintained standards of excellence that helped to build employer confidence in recruiting CTUTC graduates. Meanwhile the DWGU-HK unwaveringly advocated for DW rights. The push for enforcement of labour insurance is a good example of how successful this strategy could be.

Trainee participation. Trainees could provide inputs to the design of the teaching and learning content and process. They completed forms, giving feedback to the instructors, the management, the centre in charge, or the union committees.¹² The trainees also commented on the design of the notice boards and other facilities at the training centre and on both the class and extra-curricular

activities.¹³ Informal class unions were established in which class representatives collected comments during the bi-weekly union gatherings. Comments could also be submitted to the opinion boxes found in each class room, or through Whatsapp or Wechat groups. With such influences on operational matters, trainees were trained to pursue parallel responsibilities. Aside from expressing their voices, higher levels of participation actually allowed individual DWs to influence governance at the centre. Trainees owned their training centre experience, leading to a concomitant greater sense of belonging. They also promoted concern for the government training policy. In 2014, some trainees even held a press conference advocating increased training hours for trainees.¹⁴ These DW trainees, formerly unpaid housewives, were starting to participate and find representation in the classrooms, in the union, in the industry, in society at large, and in shaping domestic work with decent pay.

4.4 SOCIAL NETWORKS

CTUTC's job-matching services also depended on word of mouth. Employers introduced the service to others in need, while obstetricians and housing-estate management companies helped to distribute recruitment leaflets in their offices or place advertisements on their websites to promote the service.

4.5 SPECIAL EVENTS

Chinese Lunar New Year Big Cleaning Campaign. The CTUTC and the DWGU first worked together to organize this major event in 1999, taking advantage of the annual Chinese "cleaning" custom before Chinese New Year. As these were usually one-day jobs and very labour intensive, the DWGU thought this presented a good opportunity to set a wage standard. In the first year, after much heated debate, the DWGU decided to ask for an hourly wage of HK\$75.¹⁵ The DWGU then organized members to promote the campaign with a road show, banners and flyers. Meanwhile, the CTUTC's placement team set up an administrative structure to

WORKING WITH THE UNION ON THE CHINESE NEW YEAR CLEANING CAMPAIGN

As union members, we participate in the following ways:

- making and hanging more than 100 employer recruitment banners each year;
- handing out flyers daily on busy streets, some of them specifically designed for the Lunar New Year Big Cleaning;
- attending four compulsory “remedial class” sessions for new members who are new to domestic work, giving them a chance to meet and work with experienced DWs; and
- providing voluntary cleaning services to elderly people living in poverty in the neighbourhood, an activity that helps us practise and build stronger ties with our members.

From a 31 Dec. 2014 interview with Ms Ip Pui Yu, former DWGU-HK organizer.



support job-matching¹⁶ for the occasion. This collective effort proved successful in the first few years, with the demand for DWs outstripping supply. So appreciative were some employers of the DWs' work, they paid them tips of as much as 20 per cent of their wages. The DWGU was able to raise wages and secure jobs for its members while strengthening ties among them.

That situation prevailed for several years as the market was growing accustomed to minimum wages. In 2003, however, when the government-run ISLDH also launched the Chinese New Year Cleaning Campaign, the wage standard set by the CTUTC was challenged. The 13 service centres and ERB could not compromise on a standard wage. The CTUTC stuck to its position and upheld the standard wage of HK\$75–HK\$85, while the other service centres accepted jobs in the HK\$45–HK\$60 range. Nevertheless, in that year the CTUTC matched 544 jobs, which was comparable to other ERB service centres. This represented a big success for the CTUTC, showing that the wage standard they had set was socially acceptable in the market.

Economic slump in the year of SARS (2003).¹⁷ Domestic workers stood firm on the standard wage despite the fact Hong Kong was plagued with SARS, and many other industries imposed massive wage cuts. To counter this, the DWGU posted notices in the streets promoting disinfectant methods. This attracted more employers while also furthering public education in hygiene. The union's workers were proud to say that, while maintaining their wage standards, not a single family they worked for came down with SARS.

Annual baby show. The DWGU organized domestic workers with post-natal care experiences to launch a promotional campaign at the annual Baby Fair in Hong Kong for the opportunity to reach multitudes of prospective parents. At the Fair, the DWs demonstrated various skills in taking care of babies. New mothers were impressed and many of them registered as potential employers; some even added that they fully supported paying a fair and decent wage to such professionally trained helpers.

Demonstration of infant care at the baby show.



5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

Training. Equal emphasis should be extended to job skills and to attitude/mindset training. The core job skills are important in meeting immediate employer needs. However, training should also aim to enhance the self-esteem of DWs so they can acquire the confidence to communicate their opinions and wants to employers. Training DWs to do a good job at an employer's home without promoting mutual respect between worker and employer represents a wasted opportunity to advance the situation of DWs. In addition, the training stimulated participants' critical thinking as they were encouraged to comment and contribute to increase the training quality, and were familiarized with unionizing through the informal class unions.

Job placement and decent work. Jobs for local DWs are highly informal, and can be temporary, short-term, long-term or simply ad hoc. The advantage of having union-led and organized job placement services is that DWs are only placed with employers who respect the minimum labour standards for DWs. In addition, to better safeguard DW welfare, it is important to formalize the employer-employee relationship at the outset, providing employment contract templates to both parties, and encourage DWs and their employers to sign an employment contract. In this way, employment terms and conditions, including wages, working hours and other benefits are clearly established from the outset.

Quality assurance. A sound quality assurance mechanism is essential to ensure that both training and job placement services are efficiently and effectively administered. Improving the standard of services will entail effective administration and procedural activities; systematic measurement and monitoring of processes; and consistent collection of feedback from the major stakeholders, DWs, employers and trainers.

Complementary roles of the CTUTC and the DWGU-HK. It proved useful to separate the roles of the CTUTC and the DWGU-HK. The CTUTC focuses mainly on training and on the provision of both



job placement services, and professional service standards that promote both employer and DW confidence. The role of DWGU-HK, on the other hand, is to advocate DW rights, including decent wages, labour protection and occupational health and safety.

6 – CONCLUSIONS

In Hong Kong, domestic work is typically an informal, short-term, part-time job undertaken by Hong Kong citizens, while full-time domestic work is mostly carried out by international migrant domestic workers in separate households across the city. Domestic workers in Hong Kong are striving to improve their working conditions, something that cannot be achieved overnight. This document records the efforts of the CTUTC and the DWGU-HK in helping local domestic workers attain a more professional status, hence improving wage levels and legal protection.

The CTUTC largely succeeded in earning the support of employers. They chose to hire their DWs through the CTUTC because they could count on reliable service, respect for privacy, credibility of the union, satisfactory follow-up, and lack of agency fees. The CTUTC familiarized DW trainees with organizing, and interested graduates joined the DWGU to represent DW interests in society.

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¹ The minimum wage at the time of this writing was HK\$30 per hour. The proposed increase was to take it to \$32.5. See the 2015 Policy Address, <http://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2015/eng/index.html> [accessed 11 Feb. 2017].

² Census and Statistics Department: Thematic household survey report no. 5 (Hong Kong, 2001), <http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11302052001XXXXB0100.pdf> [accessed 27 Feb. 2017].

³ Census and Statistics Department (Hong Kong, 1995 and 1999).

- 4 The ERB accomplished the following: (1) It set up a central job referral service, the Integrated Scheme for Local Domestic Helpers, comprising a central register of job vacancies and qualified local domestic workers (i.e. those with competency cards). (2) It established 13 centres to offer job-matching services at the district level, and expanded training capacity for LDWs from 1,700 in 1997-98 to 12,000 in 2001-02. (3) The ERB implemented a common skills assessment for DW courses, issuing a competency card to graduates who successfully passed the six related evaluations. (4) It launched a Special Incentive Allowance Scheme that provided travel allowances to qualified LDWS to encourage them to commute across districts or work during the “unsocial” hours between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- 5 Legislative Council Panel on Manpower: Injection into the Employees Retraining Board, LC Paper No. CB(2)279/13-14(03), 2013, <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/panels/mp/papers/mp1119cb2-279-3-e.pdf> [accessed 11 Feb. 2017].
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- 10 From an internal ERB document on pay scale reference. (陪月員/嬰幼照顧員薪酬參考(陪月一站)).
- 11 Some trainees found employment opportunities in Canada and Shanghai, according to Ms Tse, a post-natal care course instructor (16 Jan. 2014 interview).
- 12 Feedback from trainees: Evaluation form: CA_FORM36A V1.1.
- 13 Forms and scope of trainee participation were shared by Mr Mui Sik-chi, HKCTU organizer (29 Dec. 2014).
- 14 HKCTU press release (19 Feb. 2014) 改善職業培訓安排 釋放潛在勞動力.
- 15 The generally accepted wage level in New Territories West at that time ranged around \$60.
- 16 The Chinese New Year Big Cleaning Campaign is usually the peak season in demand for domestic cleaning work; the CTUTC can receive notice of over 600 vacancies per month.
- 17 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (discovered in Hong Kong in 2003).

APPENDIX

Sample employment contract (drafted by DWGU-HK)

Employment Contract

This contract of employment is entered into between _____ (hereinafter referred to as 'Employer') and _____ (hereinafter referred to as 'Employee') on _____ under the terms and conditions of employment below :

Address of Working Place: _____

Address of Employer's residence: _____

- 1. Commencement of Employment** Effective from _____
 until either party terminates the contract.
 for a fixed term contract for a period of _____ * day(s), ending on: _____

- 2. Working Hours** Fixed, at _____ days per week, _____ hours per day
from _____ *am/pm to _____ *am/pm

- 3. Meal** Meal *is/ is not provided by employer.

- 4. Rest Days** On every _____
(Employee is entitled to not less than 1 rest day in every period of 7 days)

- 5. Wages**
(a) wage rate Basic wages of \$ _____ per * hour/ day / week / month;
plus the following allowance(s) :
 Travelling allowance of \$ _____ per * day / week / month
 Others (e.g. commission, tips) \$ _____ (amount)

_____ (details of criteria and calculation of payment and date of payment)

- (b) overtime pay** At the rate of \$ _____ per hour
- (c) payment of wages & wage period(s)†**
- Every month, on _____ day of the month
for wage period from _____ day of the month to _____ day of *the month/ the following month.
- Twice monthly, payable on
- (i) _____ day of * the month / following month
for wage period from _____ day of the month to _____ day of *the month/ the following month.
- (ii) _____ day of * the month / following month
for wage period from _____ day of the month to _____ day of *the month/ the following month.
- Once for every _____ * day(s) / week
(s)
for wage period from _____ to _____.

- 6. Working Item(s)** Taking care post-natal baby Taking care post-natal lady Preparing Meals
 Preparing Soup Basic House Work Others: _____

† Please put a "✓" in the clause(s) as appropriate

* Please delete the word(s) as inappropriate

- 7. Holidays†** The Employee is entitled to:
 statutory holidays as specified in the Employment Ordinance
 public holidays
 plus other holidays (please specify) _____
- 8. Termination of Employment Contract** A notice period of _____ * *day(s)* or an equivalent amount of wages in lieu of notice (notice period not less than 7 days).
- 9. Deposit** Fixed amount HK\$ _____, Employee receive the deposit when sign the contract.
- 10. Others** The Employee is entitled to all other rights, benefits or protection under the Employment Ordinance, the Minimum Wage Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and any other relevant Ordinances.

The Employer and the Employee hereby declare that they understand thoroughly the above provisions and agree to sign to abide by such provisions. They shall each retain a copy of this contract for future reference.

Signature of Employee

Signature of Employer

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| Name in full : _____ | Name in full : _____ |
| HK I.D. No : _____ | HK I.D. No : _____ |
| Date : _____ | Date : _____ |

Remarks

- This sample is drafted with reference to the Sample Employment Contract of Labour Department for continuous contract of employment by the same employer for four weeks or more, with at least 18 hours worked in each week.
- The Employment Ordinance is the main piece of legislation governing conditions of employment in Hong Kong. Employers and employees are free to negotiate and agree on the terms and conditions of the employment provided that they do not violate the provisions of the Employment Ordinance. Any term of the employment contract which purports to extinguish or reduce any right, benefit or protection conferred upon the employee by this Ordinance shall be void.
- According to the Minimum Wage Ordinance, statutory minimum wage (SMW) is expressed as an hourly rate. In essence, wages payable to an employee in respect of any wage period should be no less than the SMW rate on average for the total number of hours worked.
- An employer must be in possession of a valid insurance policy to cover his liabilities both under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and at common law for the work injuries for his employees. The Employees' Compensation Ordinance applies to both full-time and part-time employees who are employed under contracts of service.
- For any specific job requirements, an employer should negotiate with his employee and state clearly in the employment contract.

† Please put a "✓" in the clause(s) as appropriate

* Please delete the word(s) as inappropriate

PHOTO GALLERY



Attentive trainees watch as trainer Mr Ma King-pong demonstrates how to make a bed in the domestic work course. (Tai Po Training Centre, 30 Dec. 2014).



Purpose-built classrooms and domestic work facilities at the CTUTC, Ma On Shan in the New Territories.



Having accumulated rich front-line experience in post-natal services, Ms Li So-chun, a former trainee, becomes a trainer herself (Tai Po Training Centre, 19 Dec. 2014).



Domestic workers promote post-natal services at the annual baby show held at the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Centre. Employers support the promotion by “lending” real babies for demonstrating proper post-feeding care.



The “baby” used here weighs as much as a real one, and feels lifelike.

Local press coverage of the campaign for decent wages of \$100–130 per hour before Chinese New Year (Dec. 2014).

大掃除助理時薪\$130

**2015年家務助理
大掃除建議時薪**

| 日期 | 1/5-2/6 | 2/7-2/13 | 2/14-2/18 |
|----|---------|----------|-----------|
| 時薪 | 100元 | 120元 | 130元 |

資料來源：職工盟

【本報訊】大掃除季節將至，家務助理工會上月臨時估測一批家務助理，急在農曆年前落實，該會呼籲市民聘請家務助理為家務大掃除，促進就業，該會建議時薪為100至130元。

該會與職工盟亦在旺角行人專用區宣傳「歲晚大掃除工互助計劃」，並宣傳家居清潔安全贴士。過去一年家居意外頻生，該會建議市民及家務助理該會「伸手不彈人」，使用伸縮桿抹大玻璃，切忌以實新用力；清潔窗或大花時要把細塵放在短面，並帶上防護鞋；使用清潔劑時要戴上手套，保持空氣流通，切忌使用應量或混合不同清潔劑。

歲近農曆新年時薪越高

該會指出，歲晚大掃除工作量大，家務助理須於短時間內完成，且內勞強即難兼顧，並且大多為兼職打工，不受勞工法例保障，為了確保家務助理大掃除的家務質素及職業安全，該會特頒發同一工率做大掃除的特殊技巧和清潔程序。

該會又列出建議時薪，歲近農曆新年，時薪提高，明年一月初至二月初每名家務助理的時薪為100元，二月初至二月中旬的時薪則升幅或至120元，歲年歲五天的時薪則為130元。



Healthy, delicious meals prepared during a culinary session.



Bulletin boards outside the classrooms display an introduction to the global movement to safeguard domestic workers' rights, as well as updates from the union.





COMMUNICATION NETWORK



IDWF COMMUNICATION NETWORK



8 — GLOBAL: DOMESTIC WORKERS UNITE – CREATING AN ONLINE COMMUNICATION NETWORK

International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) and ILO PROMOTE

June 2017

ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| DW | Domestic worker |
| GAP | Global Action Programme (ILO) |
| IDWF | International Domestic Workers Federation |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| PROMOTE | Decent Work for Domestic Workers to End Child Domestic Work (ILO Project) |
| OPC | Olaf Palme Centre |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| US | United States |

1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Domestic workers (DWs) make up one of the most vulnerable work forces globally. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 52 million people, most of them women, undertake domestic work, and they believe this figure is probably much higher because of the informal nature of this work in many countries.

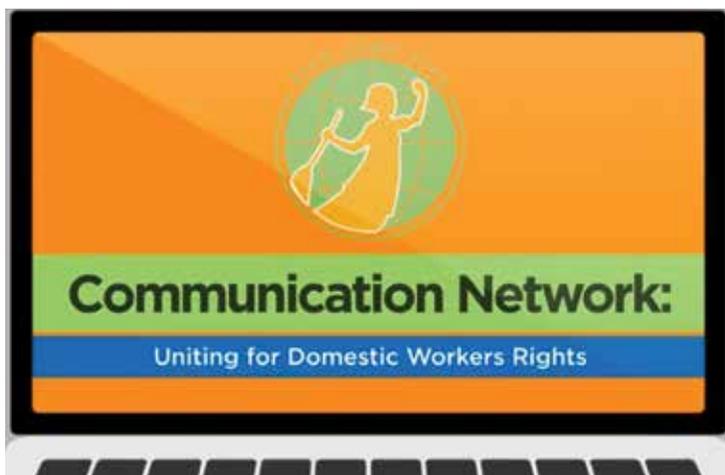
Domestic workers face unique workplace hazards and, because they often come from backgrounds of poverty and limited access to education, they are often exposed to labour exploitation. This is especially true when they are forced by economics or through trafficking to migrate across borders for work.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The IDWF was founded in Montevideo, Uruguay, in October 2013 by a congress and regionally affiliated DW organizations with the following goals:

- organizing workers;
- promoting ratification of ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) on decent work for domestic workers;
- campaigning for better working conditions; and
- overcoming exploitation of DWs.

In this informal and often unregulated or under-regulated industry, children are at heightened risk in the domestic labour force, though their employment is not necessarily illegal. Girls in many societies are expected to undertake housework, and this may lead to formal employment, which can be unlawful if the child is under the legal working age. This creates problems for girls and women from poor backgrounds, especially as they may forego formal education to work to support their families.



The IDWF communication network was the first initiative of its kind to connect DWs online. Domestic workers had been organizing themselves for years. Due to the private nature of their work, however, they often faced difficulties in communicating, even when living in the same community. International communication was even more difficult, given variations in language, customs and access to technology and information. Labour laws, or lack thereof, could also hinder DW ability to access information, where workers had limited days off or legal barriers to union participation existed.

To combat abuses in the industry and the trafficking of women and children for domestic work, it is vital that DWs formally organize to share ideas, knowledge and resources with one another in real time.

The IDWF communication network was established with the help of the ILO Project "Promoting Decent Work for Domestic Workers to End Child Domestic Work" (PROMOTE), which is supported by the United States Department of Labor. The network was developed as a platform to promote a consistent flow of information between DWs and their organizations, including the IDWF membership base of 63 organizations, known as "affiliates", in 51 countries, as of August 2017. These affiliates are active, paying IDWF members.

This communication network has helped DWs and their representative organizations to accomplish the following:

- collect information regarding affiliated organizations and connect with these organizations and other DWs in the region or in other areas of the world;
- engage in dialogue and collaborate with other DWs, develop joint initiatives, and engage in multilateral cooperation;
- share news and updates from their respective communities;
- learn about activities and news concerning domestic work;
- join and promote upcoming events and report on past activities;
- enhance global recognition of issues faced by DWs globally or in their regions;
- request solidarity, support and action from affiliated organizations; and
- find and post photos, videos and resources such as reports, policy research, technical manuals, newsletters and other resources related to domestic work.

The network also serves as a knowledge bank for non-affiliated organizations and individuals by providing access to publications, campaign materials, information, activities and news.

1.3 HOW IT CAME ABOUT

To best determine what DWs needed from the communication network, the IDWF, with the help of ILO, held one visioning event in Asia, followed by two consultation and training events, one each in Africa and Latin America – all of these regions in which domestic work is most prevalent and which have large informal economies that create challenging conditions for domestic workers. IDWF staff, an ILO support team, affiliate organizations, and member DWs engaged with one another and discussed the most pressing issues facing DWs. The Asia event, hosted in Hong Kong, China, helped to highlight the key outcomes and products DWs hoped to see from the communication network.¹

Events and development timeline

| Time | Event |
|----------------------|--|
| 2013 | ILO and IDWF began collaborating on the idea for a communication network. |
| 27–29 April 2014 | IDWF with the help of the ILO held a visioning event in Hong Kong, China, which was attended by 69 people from 16 countries. |
| 22–26 September 2014 | A discussion/training event was held in Santiago, Chile, for IDWF affiliates in Latin America. |
| 18 October 2014 | A discussion/training event was held in Burkina Faso for IDWF affiliates in Africa. |
| 16 December 2014 | The IDWF held a press conference to announce its formal launch in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. |
| 13 February 2015 | IDWF staff received training from the coder on maintaining the site. |
| 28 March 2015 | IDWF and affiliates met in Singapore for training |

A team of designers and a coder met with the IDWF after the visioning event in April 2014, and it was decided to switch from the earlier IDWF content management system Drupal, to Plone, which is more flexible. The coder and the design team set up the new system in close cooperation with the IDWF in the following months, and the new communication network was launched in December 2014.



2 – CHALLENGES

2.1 TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Making the communication network easy to navigate for the wide variety of users presented an ongoing challenge. What was clear to designers and programmers, for example, might not have been readily understood by the target users. This was a major consideration in applying any technology to the online web pages. It was also important that the network did not use unnecessarily complex technology that would confuse users or take too long to load on slow internet connections (for example animations or JavaScript).

Establishing effective connectivity among target users, primarily DWs and their organizations, meant these users had to be able to access the internet. It also meant they had to be sophisticated enough that they were interested in and actually used the relevant technology. The IDWF did a practice run with four of the ethnic DW unions in Hong Kong, showing them how to use the website and collecting their feedback and many training and feedback sessions followed in other countries and regions.

Migration of old documents such as reports and newsletters, mostly PDFs, from the previous IDWF webpage to the new communication network was difficult. Since this could not be accomplished automatically, IDWF staff had to move the documents manually from the old website to the new page, which was time-intensive and tended to introduce errors into the materials. This did allow the IDWF to refresh old documents, however, and to add details the previous website had omitted. The migration project was completed by the end of 2015.

Change in the content management system – As Plone was administratively more difficult to operate than the previous system, IDWF dedicated considerable time to learning the new system with training and coaching from the coder. In this way IDWF staff became capable of solving administrative and small technical problems independently.

Solving bugs in the network code and other technical difficulties in a timely fashion proved to be the biggest challenge the IDWF faced in creating the communication network. The problems ranged from design and layout issues to technical issues such as the inability of some users to register. These difficulties were compounded by the fact that the coder and designers worked remotely (albeit in the same time zone). To address these problems, the IDWF applied Excel spreadsheets with columns for:

- “problems”,
- who was responsible for solving them, and
- the current status of a given problem.

The designers and coder then solved the problems before they were double-checked by IDWF staff. The IDWF also used funds to fly both designers and coder to Hong Kong, China, for face-to-face meetings and training sessions.

2.2 LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Multi-lingual network. Since target users were global and varied widely in their English-language ability, the network was designed to be multi-lingual (English, Spanish and French). It accommodated other languages by using Google's automated translation function.

Accommodating character-based languages. The IDWF employed designs and graphics that allowed for the fact that character-based languages may translate differently, among other things rendering passages in longer or shorter versions than the English translations.

Simple design and function. Site design and functionality had to be as simple as possible so that members could readily understand the platform and solve problems themselves where possible. A Help tab allowed users to contact network facilitators where a problem proved intractable. The language also had to be simple enough to communicate ideas effectively and avoid translation errors.



3 – APPROACHES/METHODS

3.1 NETWORK DESIGN PROCESS AND ACTORS

The IDWF collaborated with ILO PROMOTE, a coding team, and a design team, all of whom were located in different countries, which at times made communication difficult. Each actor was vital, however, to establishing the communication network and shaping its strategy.

The various parties worked together as a team. The ILO helped oversee the project and provided expert insight on best practices from other, similar projects. The ILO also hosted the visioning and training events. The coding team, recommended by the ILO, accomplished a demanding technical task in creating the skeleton of the website and providing insights into what types of technology were available for the network. The coder also provided both training in the website's functionality and support with fixing bugs. The design team worked with IDWF staff on a design and layout that communicated the ideals of the network and provided continuous support for minor changes in the layout.

Training. An IDWF event in Singapore in 2015 helped both to boost participation and to identify any problems IDWF members and users were experiencing with the network. DWs were keen to learn the new technology and IDWF organized many learning-by-doing training sessions for its affiliates in Africa, Asia and Latin America to build DW online capacity. Ongoing training for DWs was time-consuming, but training at the national level was crucial to build DW capacity.

Feedback. Continuing constructive feedback from the target users played a key role in shaping network design and functionality. Without the support of both IDWF staff and DWs who tested the website to find bugs and dead ends, many problems would neither have been caught in timely fashion nor reported by general users.

Funding. Establishing the network required more than a year of support from developers and the coder, who then provided an additional year of technical support. ILO PROMOTE played a key role in funding and helped with expenses related to design, programming, support, testing and training. Funds from OPC provided another major source of support.

Technical resources. The IDWF team enlisted the help of key partners, including support and input from multiple ILO advisers, a coder with experience in building similar networks for non-profit organizations, and a flexible team of website designers.

Other specialists. The IDWF used the support of ILO consultants experienced in related topics, including women's issues, child labour, communication, and technical support. The ILO website Asia Pacific Migration Network² proved a useful template for facilitating ideas.

Translation and other language support. The IDWF communicates primarily in English, and was able to hire communications facilitators in Latin America and Africa who assisted with translation of content on the English-, Spanish- and French-language pages.

Sustainability. Developing the online network demanded a communication strategy, technical network design and support, and trained administrators. Its sustainable operations requires human and financial resources. Currently the IDWF employs two network facilitators, one in Asia and one in Latin America, to circulate news and address the needs of English and Spanish users respectively.

3.2 MAJOR NETWORK FEATURES

To best serve their target users, the designers aimed to provide the communication network with the following qualities:

Accessible and appropriate. As domestic workers often come from backgrounds of poverty and/or limited education, it was a priority to make the platform easy to navigate and understand.

A major feature of this was making the network language accessible for as many viewers as possible. To accomplish this, the entirety of the website was written in English and then translated into Spanish and French to create mirror sites in those respective languages. Google translate was further employed as a tool to assist in customizing content for speakers of other languages.

Member registration for the network was kept simple, requiring only a username, full name, and email address. In keeping registration simple, the IDWF strove to ensure that members did not feel the registration process was burdensome or invasive. Members were then prompted to create a password via email to complete registration.

Oriented both prospectively and retrospectively. The IDWF wanted to ensure the website provided a forum for action, where DWs could not only share information about past events and ongoing initiatives, but where affiliate organizations could also call on others to take part in future initiatives. The network enables members to report on activities and reports from the past, share current news and updates and campaigns, while bringing attention to and gathering support for future activities and actions. Campaign pages and tools help users share material templates such as posters; news, including that of campaign progress; and calls to action.

Inclusive. In designing the network, there was some debate regarding what types of member would be allowed to join: should only DWs and affiliates be allowed to join the network, or should anyone be able to register? To promote understanding of domestic work, the IDWF decided to allow any interested party to join the

network, while providing varying degrees of accessibility based on whether they were affiliate, administrator, or registered members.

Affiliated pages both at regional and individual organization levels. To encourage affiliates and DWs to use the site, the IDWF created regional pages for Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America. These pages help users find information relevant to their region of interest. Each individual affiliated organization has their own page, which includes name, history, address, email, phone number, website, number of members, objectives and the capacity to upload pictures. Though some affiliates already administered their own website on other domains, the separate affiliate pages allowed some organizations to have an online presence for the first time. Additionally, the network provides a map of global affiliates to make it easy for users to locate affiliates physically on a map, adding to the site's accessibility and transcending language barriers.

Serving online discussions and problem solving. The IDWF debated the creation of an online discussion board, upon which anyone could post comments or start discussion topics, much like a chat room. Ultimately it was agreed that online tools such as Facebook or mobile apps were already available usually in local languages for facilitating discussion and DWs were already using them effectively, so there was no reason to recreate these tools.

Discussions were then opened by an administrator and set for a specific period, usually about two weeks, during which any member could post comments. Discussions were conducted in English, though members could post in any language that employed Roman script. Discussion contents were summarized in a report and then translated into Spanish and French. This allowed the IDWF to get feedback about specific DW topics and general feedback about the website, content, and what was expected from the network.

Inviting feedback from the community on content, functionality and layout. Consulting DWs on the communication network's layout was a crucial design component. Such feedback was to help pinpoint where members were having problems,



whether these issues were due to misunderstanding the content, or whether they reflected larger issues that had to be solved by the coder or designer.

The IDWF used the Africa and Latin America consultations/training events to get feedback from DWs on content and layout. The IDWF also visited DW unions in Hong Kong, China, to help them with registering for the network and to teach basic site functionality. This helped pinpoint issues, one of which was that the design appeared inconsistently on various internet platforms (e.g. Mozilla Firefox, Chrome and Internet Explorer).

The DWs did not always access the internet from desktops, often using mobile phones and tablets instead, so coders and designers had to accommodate screens of various sizes and to make it easy to post and share via mobile. The age and relative sophistication of devices also had to be taken into consideration, given that unions and NGOs might be using outdated equipment for their communications and would not be able to access websites created using JavaScript or other sophisticated technology.

Optimum functionality also meant avoiding dead-end links, and this required double-checking all links to ensure that all information was easily accessible from the home page. If information was difficult to find, the networks risked having users simply sign off. The IDWF also wanted to be sure that content from the old site was accessible from the new network.

Promoting collaboration. The prime network function was to engage key players in working together across borders, reducing the need for expensive in-person meetings. Creating a successful network of this type, however, meant engaging directly with DWs to ensure their understanding of and interest in the project, and this was a costly endeavour. The ILO PROMOTE Project provided the resources for identifying DWs' communication needs, the design and the start-up of the online network and the IDWF received additional funds from the ILO Global Action Programme (GAP) to help host the event in Burkina Faso. The Olaf Palme Centre (OPC) also joined as a funder, allowing the IDWF to finance the regional workshops in Africa and Latin America and continue facilitation in the Spanish language.

Increasing DW visibility. In addition to providing a way for DWs to connect with one another, the network helped to provide an effective yet low-cost means of amplifying and promoting their events and activities. A hunger strike in Jakarta in April 2015 was shared over the network, for example, resulting in messages of support and solidarity from affiliated organizations, while use of IDWF and affiliate social media further spread the message to other DW groups and the media.

Connectivity with social media platforms. The IDWF strived not to re-create the functions of popular social media websites and applications, instead building off their functionality to enhance user experience of the communication network.

4 – RESULTS

From the launch of the IDWF communication network in mid December 2014 up to end of April 2015, the network logged more than 4,400 registered members in 152 different countries. By mid 2017, the number of registered members amounted to 45,210, a more than tenfold increase, in 170 countries. Thousands of news stories, updates, activities, documents and photo's were shared. The number of users per month, or those who have initiated at least one session during a given time period is also steadily increasing as can be seen in the table with the network statistics on the next page. This indicates that the network is reaching a wide audience.

One year after the visioning event in Hong Kong, China the IDWF communication network had succeeded in creating platforms to share the top five products requested by DWs at the event, including audio and video training materials, case studies and good-practice reports, and a membership database.

With respect to the top five services, the IDWF communication network succeeded in providing members with the following advantages:

- the capacity to connect with one another;
- a regular newsletter, domestic work news and updates; and
- online discussions and an up-to-date online calendar.

The most requested service at the visioning event was an “ask an expert” service, which allowed members to receive quick responses to questions related to domestic work. This service, however, proved difficult to implement in practice.

As of June 2017, the network continues to have proportionally higher memberships from prominent domestic migrant worker destination or origin countries, indicating that the network is reaching its target audience. Around two-thirds of the visitors are women and one-third are men and the largest category of users is between 25 and 34 years old. An increasing number of users accesses the site from a mobile device.

Statistics on the use of the IDWF online communication network

| Time frame | 16 Dec 2014 to 30 Apr 2015 | | 1 Jan 2017 to 30 June 2017 | |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Registered members/ users | 4 400 | | 45,210 | |
| Registered members/ users: Top ten countries | 1 | United States | 1 | United States |
| | 2 | Hong Kong, China | 2 | Hong Kong, China |
| | 3 | Philippines | 3 | India |
| | 4 | Indonesia | 4 | Mexico |
| | 5 | Canada | 5 | Singapore |
| | 6 | Mexico | 6 | Macau |
| | 7 | India | 7 | Philippines |
| | 8 | United Kingdom | 8 | Peru |
| | 9 | Peru | 9 | United Kingdom |
| | 10 | Switzerland | 10 | Argentina |
| Number of users (per month) | 16–31 Dec 2014 | 518 | Jan 2017 | 2429 |
| | Jan 2015 | 1 428 | Feb 2017 | 2388 |
| | Feb 2015 | 1 424 | Mar 2017 | 3264 |
| | Mar 2015 | 2 519 | Apr 2017 | 2708 |
| | Apr 2015 | 2 675 | May 2017 | 2967 |
| | | | June 2017 | 3459 |
| New/ returning visitors | New visitors | 68.3% | New visitors | 74% |
| | Returning users | 31.7% | Returning users | 26% |
| Gender | Female | 66.01% | Female | 68% |
| | Male | 33.99% | Male | 32% |
| Devices | Desktop | 78.13% | Desktop | 61% |
| | Mobile | 17.74% | Mobile | 36% |
| | Tablet | 4.12% | Tablet | 3% |
| Age | 18–24 years | 22.41% | 18–24 years | 16% |
| | 25–34 | 36.20% | 25–34 | 33% |
| | 35–44 | 15.46% | 35–44 | 24% |
| | 45 + | 25.93% | 45 + | 27% |

The IDWF has received positive feedback from its user members. They consider that the communication platform is easy to navigate and very resourceful, it is a good way to get news about domestic workers from around the world, and helps DWs to learn a new language. DW leaders have also formed different social media groups to promote the latest news on the IDWF communication network.

5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

To combat abuses in the industry and the trafficking of women and children for domestic work, it is vital that DWs formally organize to share ideas, knowledge and resources with one another in real time. The following practices promote successful networking:

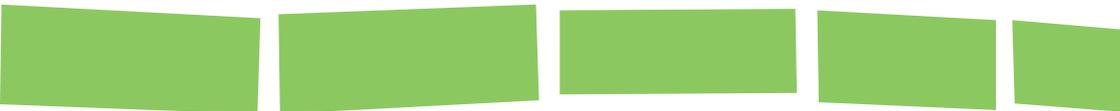
- **Develop any network in close consultation with the intended users.** It was important to consult with the prospective users on the type of products and services that they expected from the network. In addition it was necessary to try out the network features with the users during the design stage to see what worked and what was not useful to them.
- **Avoid re-creating social media or blog platforms.** Make use of what is already available, rather than trying to reinvent it. Social media were already popular with the target users, and linking with these proved more effective than efforts that essentially tried to duplicate their functions. Domestic workers routinely performed networking and sharing on Twitter, Facebook and other sophisticated social websites that provided direct ways of sharing, often in local languages.

The network also aimed to strengthen user engagement, however, and the IDWF wanted to make it possible for users to register by way of their Facebook or Google+ accounts. This became possible, the IDWF communication network allows users to maintain a basic user profile (invisible to the public except for a username and photo) and to easily link news, updates, calendars and discussions back to social media.

This allows for continued debate, discussions and sharing over social media, leaving the IDWF communication network for more formal types of sharing. Users can access social media content directly from the IDWF home page.

- **Help facilitate as many connections as possible, not just between individuals and the organization.** The network's primary goal was to increase communications between all users, minimizing any IDWF role in the process and avoiding a heavy administrative burden on IDWF staff. This required giving users access, with IDWF approval, to a variety of information and the ability to post and share news and updates. Though affiliated organizations and their members were the primary audience, the IDWF did not want to alienate other DWs, organizations or individuals who were interested in the network. Some functions and discussions were made private, which allows members to feel comfortable enough to share. Meanwhile, most documents, resources and news are open to the public, which allows non-affiliate users to access information. In addition to having basic site access, registered members maintain a personal profile and are able to share news and updates and participate in discussions. Administrators upload resources as well as edit and post news, activities and affiliate pages.

See the table on the next page.



| Non-members | Registered members | Administrators |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Find news and updates | Establish a personal profile | Edit and post news and updates |
| Read discussions | | |
| Read about activities | Post news and updates | Participate in and monitor discussions |
| Access resources | Participate in discussions | Edit and post activities |
| Download campaign materials | Read about activities | Post and edit resources |
| | Access resources | Post and edit campaign materials |
| | Download campaign materials | Edit affiliate web pages |
| | | See website statistics |

- Continue to train administrators and users.** IDWF employees continue to train affiliates globally in response to many requests, even if it is a challenging and time-consuming task. The IDWF has developed how-to tutorials and a users manual for the site as evidence of its commitment to operate and expand its communication network.



6 – CONCLUSIONS

The IDWF and the ILO³ collaborated in developing an online communication network that facilitates knowledge sharing and communication between domestic workers (DWs) across different countries and ethnicities. The online platform is expected to reach out to increasing numbers of DWs, their organizations, DW employers and supporters to realize decent work for domestic workers worldwide.

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¹ IDWF: Visioning event: Building a community of practice on domestic work, Community of Practice on Domestic Work Report (Hong Kong [China], 27–29 April 2014), http://archive.idwfed.org/files/files/publication/IDWF-COPEvent_Rpt_Web.pdf [accessed 7 Feb. 2017].

² See: <http://apmigration.ilo.org> [accessed 8 Feb. 2017].

³ ILO Promoting Decent Work for Domestic Workers to End Child Domestic Work Project (PROMOTE): *Decent work for domestic workers to end child domestic work*, http://www.ilo.org/jakarta/whatwedo/projects/WCMS_210965/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 7 Feb. 2017].

IDWF COMMUNICATION NETWORK: IDWFED.ORG



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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IDWF Communication Network Home page in English: <http://www.idwfed.org/en> [accessed 7 Feb. 2017].

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The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)

The IDWF is a membership-based organization of domestic and household workers. A domestic or household worker is any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. The IDWF believes that domestic work is work and all domestic and household workers have the same rights as all other workers. Its objective is to build a strong, democratic and united global organization of domestic/ household workers to protect and advance their rights everywhere.

As of August 2017, the IDWF has 63 affiliates from 51 countries, representing over 500,000 domestic/household workers' members. Most are organized in trade unions and others, in associations, networks and workers' cooperatives.

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International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations agency devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

The Organization has 187 member states and is unique amongst United Nations agencies in being tripartite: governments, employers and trade unions all participate in its work and in its decision-making processes. In bringing together governments, employers and workers to set labour standards, supervise their implementation, raise awareness, develop policies and devise programmes, the ILO aims to ensure that its efforts are rooted in the needs of working women and men.

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Strong domestic workers' organizations – in the form of trade unions, cooperatives, associations or other membership-based organizations – have been emerging in Asia where the fight for more and better jobs, and the elimination of child labour in domestic work are priorities for domestic workers and their organizations. The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) documented eight good practices of IDWF affiliates in Asia with longstanding experience in promoting more and better domestic service jobs and empowering young and adult domestic workers. Their expertise on what works and what to avoid can help and inspire action by domestic workers and their organizations in other contexts and countries.

All initiatives demonstrate the vital importance of domestic workers organizing for domestic workers, and how to do it successfully. Other promising good practices illustrate how to eradicate child labour in domestic work, they show how skills development and job matching services benefit domestic workers and their employers alike, and how to realize online communication and networking between domestic workers, their organizations and the outside world.



International Domestic Workers Federation

DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

EIGHT GOOD PRACTICES FROM ASIA



International Labour Organization