

MANUAL FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Organising For A Better Future



Prepared by:

Suguna Papachan with the assistance of domestic workers attending the 'Domestic Workers Organising Strategy Workshop' held from 25 to 31 March 2007.

Editors:

Lee Siew Hwa
Lucia Victor Jayaseelan
Deepa Bharathi
Niza Concepcion
Juliette Li

Publisher:

Committee for Asian Women (CAW)
386/58 Soi 42 Ratchadapisek
Ladyao, Chatujak
Bangkok, Thailand 10900
Tel: +66(0)2930 5634
Fax: +66(0)2930 5633
Website: www.cawinfo.org

Layout and designed by:

Mosaic Street Sdn Bhd
109, Jalan SS20/1, Damansara Kim,
47400, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
Tel: +6037726 0580/1
Fax: + 6037726 0582
Website: www.mosaicstreet.com

Sketches by:	Suguna Papachan
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About CAW

Committee for Asian Women (CAW) is a regional network of 46 women workers groups in 14 Asian countries that aims to empower women workers to protect, advocate, and advance their rights. Since her birth more than 30 years ago, CAW is part of the global movement advocating workers' rights.

CAW's Vision

CAW envisions a world where all people are free to develop their potential without any form of domination and exploitation based on class, gender, colour or religious belief. This is a world where the common wealth is used for the common good, workers enjoy the fruits of their labour, women prevail against patriarchy, and women workers determine their own destinies

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Preface

Much progress has been made by domestic worker groups/unions in Asia since 2003, when a preliminary survey of the conditions of local domestic workers and organisations were done. It was carried out by the Committee of Asian Workers. This was initiated by the then programme officer, Sujatha Gothoskar.

In 2004, the survey results were presented at a workshop on informal workers. In the same year an exchange workshop brought domestic worker organisations from five countries where they shared their experiences and challenges.

Following the exchange workshop in October 2004, the Asian Domestic Workers Network (ADWN) was born. It's a network of domestic worker organisations from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Indonesia and Hong Kong. This was a milestone achievement as it is the first Asian based network linking local adult domestic worker' organisations and it put the Asian domestic worker into regional labour agendas.

The ADWN has been active in organising exchanges between countries so that domestic workers would be able to share their organising and advocacy skills with one another. This has proven a success as the region has seen some successes for domestic workers. For example, in an exposure visit organised by ADWN to the Kasambahay project organised by the SUMAPI in the Philippines in October, 2004, one of the participants noted that several common issues such as social protection and rights at work would be useful in advocacy campaigns. The Kasambahay programme is a pilot innovative approach launched in 1995 by Visayan Forum¹ to provide immediate direct services to child domestic workers at risk at five shelters.

ADWN and with CAW's initiative organised the '**Domestic Workers Organising Strategy Workshop**' between 25 and 31 March 2007 held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia which has been the basis in preparing this manual. The many dedicated domestic workers who came from Indonesia, Hong Kong, India and Korea shared their numerous strategies in campaigning for domestic worker's rights. Numerous aspects of their reports and discussions on building a stronger domestic workers' organisation are presented in this manual. The manual specifically draws experiences from Indonesia, Hong Kong and India.

This manual is a timely effort by CAW to help establish the recognition of domestic workers' as workers and to have Asian domestic workers' speak out at the 99th session of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention in 2010. A standard setting for domestic workers has been put in its agenda for this session. Hopefully the manual would inject the strength and push towards a stronger movement.

It is hoped that this manual could be translated into local languages and will be the starting point for more research and information on building a strong domestic workers movement in Asia.

¹ Visayan Forum is an NGO assisting child domestic workers. They started organizing child and adult domestic workers since 1995.

Acknowledgments

CAW would like to thank the following organisations for their information and support during the Domestic Workers Organising Strategy Workshop held between 25 and 31 March 2007: Tunas Mulia Domestic Workers Union, National Network of Domestic Workers (Jala PRT, Indonesia), Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union, Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union, Women Workers Organisation (Penn Thozhilargal Sangam, Tamil Nadu, India).

Also we like to thank Susi Apriyani (sadly missed), Yuli Maiheni, Lita Anggraini, Ip Pui Yu, Sister Clara, Parimalar Jayanthi, Ah Bo and many other participants of the Domestic Workers Organising Strategy Workshop for giving their time and views for the interviews.

This manual is dedicated to Susi Aprianti who died suddenly in a road accident on 11 August, 2007 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She was the Chairperson of Tunas Mulia Domestic Workers Union in Yogyakarta, which is the only domestic worker's union in Indonesia and South East Asia. She was a very determined, creative and dedicated leader.



Introduction

“One has to know how to approach them, speak to them in a friendly tone, because at the end of the day they are very tired. We discuss things with them, and we give them literature on their rights and a membership form to fill in ... People are angry, they are very motivated to build a stronger union that will make things change”.

- South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU)

Domestic workers, most of whom are women, work very hard to feed their families and, like any other worker, they want to earn a living wage and be included in protective labour legislation and social protection schemes. They enter this work due to poverty and want to work themselves out of it.

Some estimates say that one-third of the world's household have some form of 'hired-in support'. There are 2.5 million domestic workers in Indonesia. The Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union in India has a membership of 7,000 who come from 3 districts in Tamil Nadu alone. In Hong Kong part-time domestic workers number around 40,000 to 60,000.

Their work is hardly valued, and poorly paid. This is because it is connected with the unpaid caring work of the 'mother in the household'. Domestic work is rarely seen by society or by governments as 'work', just something that women, do in the homes of others to 'help out'. The contributions the domestic worker makes to the economy is never factored in the Gross National Product (GDP).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) in a 2003 study of domestic workers found that there were no hours of work or rest period, no standards on night work, poor wages, no clear defined weekly rest, poor social protection and poor standards of termination.

Thus, on 19 March 2008, the Governing Body of the ILO agreed to include the item "Decent Work for Domestic Workers" (Standard Setting) on the agenda of the 99th session (2010) of the International Labour Conference. This means that an ILO Convention on domestic/household workers' rights will come up for approval in 2011.²

Domestic workers are rarely defined as 'workers' and usually left out of protective employment legislation. This leaves them open to abuse by those who employ them.

They come from the poorer sections of society. Many are migrants within their own countries; many migrate to other countries due to poverty. They are often viewed as 'second-class citizens', or even not as 'citizens' at all. The child domestic worker gets the worse end of the stick.

Asian Migrant Centre estimates that there are at least two million migrant domestic workers in Asia and most are women mainly from Indonesia, Philippines and Sri Lanka.³ Child domestic workers are rampant in countries which have poor implementation on laws on the minimum working age. Usually women's groups and domestic worker organisations assist these children to organise and advocate for change.

² Respect and Rights, Report of the International Conference, Amsterdam, 8-10 Nov, 2006, published by IRENE and IUF

³ Same as above

Women are generally at higher risk of poverty than men, according to the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), domestic workers are among the lowest income categories of all.

So, the 'decent work' strategy of the ILO to reduce poverty can only be realised if it is combined with the promotion of gender equality. And domestic labour must be included in the concept of 'work'.

Domestic work could be 'decent' work - if the workers who do it are paid and treated decently. The work itself is not 'indecent'. What is indecent is the way that many, many domestic workers are treated around the world.

Chapter 1 Purpose of this Manual

Domestic workers have to be recognised as workers/employees. They work very hard to keep homes clean, food cooked and provide the care for their employer's children so their employers would be able to work elsewhere. Domestic workers are an unrecognised lot as their work is seen as women's work and the work is in the confinement of a home. The potential for exploitation and abuse here is greater than in the formal workplace where regulations on hours, tasks, wages and other characteristics of work do exist. In a private household, there are none – except those agreed between the employer and domestic worker.

The domestic worker, who would come from a background where the father dictates the terms in the home and where the family back in her village is obliged to the landlord's handouts, is powerless in any negotiation over terms and conditions of work. Often the terms are dictated by her employer and she obliges.

Because of the powerless position of the domestic worker, their contribution to the economy is not calculated into the wealth of a nation. It's vital that domestic workers portray their role and their importance in their country's economy and the global one. They play an important role in the economy and towards supporting the Gross National Product (GDP).

The lack of recognition of their status and household role, accounts for them being hidden, invisible and inaccessible. Therefore, they need to be:

recognised because they provide work to the most vulnerable people in society, children, elderly, the sick and increasing the well-being of all.

visible as domestic workers should be recognised by the government and society because of their social and economic contribution to the economy.

accessible so that their voices be heard. They are tired of others speaking on their behalf.

This manual aims to assist the leaders of domestic worker groups to come out of a powerless situation by embracing the strength of the domestic worker organisation (DWO) or union. It is an empowering process to be involved in the union's or organisation's struggle for recognition of her contribution to the economy.

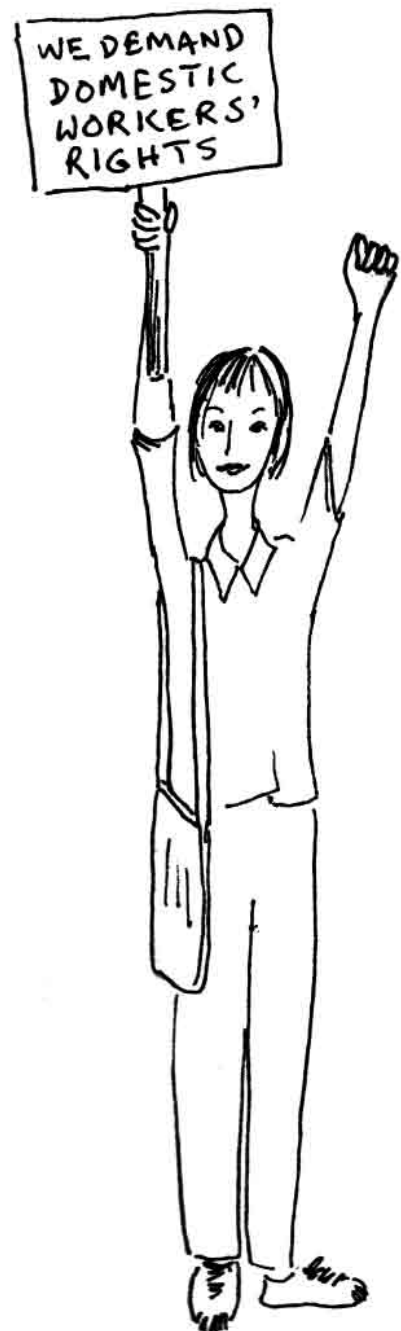
The situation of domestic workers can be improved by building solidarity and strengthening the organisation's or union's capabilities. Labour laws will definitely improve the domestic workers' situation.

This manual targets adult domestic workers in their own countries.

The manual looks at how leaders can

- strengthen their solidarity at the grassroots, national, regional and international level.
- use information about their struggles for public awareness, dissemination, campaigns, negotiations with government, unions and other groups.

- use standards like ILO conventions, CEDAW in organising, awareness raising, negotiations.
- strengthen their research and information gathering techniques.
- network with trade unions, women's groups, media, employer groups, regional and international organisations.
- share experiences of other groups (sometimes the experiences may not be used but sharing these experiences with domestic workers can be useful in strengthening solidarity).
- strengthen their capacities especially in voicing, organising, leadership, negotiating, fund raising and networking.



Chapter 2 Level 1: Components for Building Solidarity

"I got involved in union organising not because I came across some problems. I did it because the sisters had no means to come together ... with the trade union, local domestic helpers can catch more attention. When the media wants to cover this issue, they will come to us. So, it helps with our call for changes."

-Ah Bo, Chairwoman of the Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union

Domestic workers need to come together and work as one force in a systematised and well-planned manner over a long period of time in order to:

- a) Understand their situation
- b) Consolidate their views
- c) Come to consensus on what they want
- d) Plan together how they will achieve their goals

In conducting advocacy for domestic workers, there are several components or tasks that DW organisations must undertake to build their strength and capacity to work towards their goals. An organised, disciplined and determined movement of DW shall greatly benefit from the sustained, effective and systematic application of these components into their work. These can be done simultaneously or one by one depending on the capacity of the members and the timing of their advocacies.

Building solidarity with workers, with others associated with the issues of domestic workers is extremely important. This will help to enhance the validity and the strength of domestic worker groups. Building solidarity can be through many means as listed below. It is the solidarity of workers, their interaction with one another, which would bring changes to the position of domestic workers in the country.

This involves:

- Research
- Training and Education
- Providing services
- Advocacy
- Media – case highlights
- Networking
- Fund raising

Research

Many think research is writing papers by academics for academics but its not. It's about finding out the situation before we can draw out strategies for campaigns or rallies.

In Indonesia domestic workers had to knock on employer's doors to find out about the situation of domestic workers. In Hong Kong this was not possible as many live in flats not in housing estates. They worked with a union which conducted courses for workers who were unable to find jobs during the economic downturn in Hong Kong in the late '80s. These are some ways of doing research:

1. Conducting a survey in each area helps in identifying domestic workers, the problems they face. This can also be used to recruit domestic workers. One way is going door to door to obtain information. Some can approach resident's organisations in the area or talk to people who are familiar with the area. In Hong Kong where most people live in flats, they recruited members when the umbrella Union organised training sessions for women.
2. Finding out the problems the workers face, employer-employee relationships, working conditions, wages paid or unpaid, communications with the employer, abuses by the employer, work time records, categories of work done as each category has specific wages.
3. Holding outreach programmes at places such as a garden or like in Indonesia they meet in a mosque. A place where the domestic workers usually hang around. For example in Indonesia the domestic workers gathered at a tennis court to feed their young charges and that's where they held sessions with the workers.
4. Home visits are held to try and organise public dialogues with the employer directly.

When we have gathered all this information what are you going to do with it? You would be putting a face to the domestic workers: Are they young, old, from the rural or urban areas, what are their work experiences and many other things? You have a mountain of information to sieve through and you need to get the workers together for the next phase - training.

Training and Education

You must have found out that the wages vary for the same work from different households in the same area. How is that? What should we do?

1. **Awareness building:** Domestic workers are trained to understand that they are workers and the employer should adequately compensate them for services rendered. The various household duties should be spelt out clearly and wages marked out on hourly or weekly basis. Awareness-raising and assistance for domestic workers to organise, through targeted organising activities within union structures or by supporting efforts at self-organisation or through domestic worker organisations (DWO).
2. **Labour education:** Training on tripartite discussions, part of the labour education, should be held. What's this? This is a discussion between three parties - the employer, worker and a union official or person well versed in domestic workers' issues and labour laws. Other aspects of labour education includes knowing labour laws, unions, workers' rights, ILO conventions, gender and domestic worker issues and others.
3. **Exploring members' potential:** Are they good leaders, writers, artists, fund raisers or do they have other talents? Talents are needed in a union or DWO and should be explored. These are skills needed to keep an organisation or union running as there needs to be pamphlets, newsletters to be written and illustrated. There needs to be media activities to be carried out and financial aid to be sought to keep the union running.

4. **Training Levels:** District-based training as there is less traveling time and expenses if they need to travel to the head quarters. In these district-based sessions, which are held weekly or monthly, where non-members and members are welcome. These meetings are informal and have promoted the spread of union campaigns and information. In places like Yogyakarta which is a sprawling city each *Operata* or DWO conducts their own training sessions. Whereas state or national trainings would be held annually or biannually. These sessions too allow domestic worker activists to meet their colleagues from other districts and share ideas.
5. **Skills trainings:** Many domestic workers request these skills to improve themselves and possibly find work outside domestic work. Such skills as training in negotiations with the employers, on cooking, cleaning, hair dressing, vocational education, computer, learning another language, make up, handicraft and many others. (See box)

How to have negotiations with employers?

In Hong Kong, many members of the Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union (HKDWGU) complained that they did not know how to answer employers who asked them to do work fast. In Hong Kong domestic workers work for several employers' homes and they are paid on an hourly basis. They have to complete their work as quickly as possible and still maintain a quality satisfying their bosses. For example, they might be asked to clean the bathrooms and kitchen every week in 3 hours! If they were unable to do it, their bosses would be at them and would likely employ someone else. The union then arranged a training session on how to negotiate with the employer. If they were unable to clean the toilets and kitchen in 2 hours they should explain to their bosses the time taken for the various tasks. They were to explain to the boss that cleaning the sink and work top takes x amount of time, then cleaning the kitchen cabinets and everything in it takes y minutes. Of course then, sweeping and washing the kitchen floor takes time. Adding all this time would then probably leave only about 10 minutes to clean the two bathrooms! Of course then the employer says, "You have to clean the kitchen in 1 hour, the 2 bathrooms in 1 hour and I'm paying for it". "Of course" you say! Then you would say, "... but madam you want me to give you quality why don't I come for 2 days. I spend one and half hours for the kitchen and one and half hours for the bathrooms then you would have clean bathrooms and kitchen." The employer comes back with, "I have to pay you for 3 hours ... no, no, no." Then you come back and say, "If you want me to clean for 2 hours I won't clean the insides of the cabinet every week." So the negotiations would then go on.

These sessions were conducted among the workers themselves, there were no experts to come and give them advice. Through the sharing of their own work experiences the domestic workers were able to negotiate for better work conditions and wages.

(Proceedings of the *Domestic Workers Organising Strategy Workshop* held between 25 and 31 March 2007, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

- 6. Non-formal education:** Many domestic workers are illiterate or only had primary level education. Many of them wish to improve themselves. Having packages for these workers such as those based on junior high, senior high school subjects and basic functional learning such as reading, writing on daily activities are beneficial to the overall education of the DW. The non-formal environment affords DW equal status with the trainer and with other students and does away with the traditional hierarchies in the classroom, giving them much freedom of thought and expression.
- 7. Building Grassroots leadership:** Building grassroots leadership means creating leadership from inside the movement (domestic workers) itself. A leader having his/her “roots” from among DW understands their situation because he/she is one of them and can articulate and share what their needs are with the public and concerned authorities. These are examples of methods used by some of the domestic worker groups/unions in the Asian region:
- The workers at the grassroots level are organised through village meetings. The leader from the domestic workers were identified and trained.
 - The meetings are headed by a leader. The appointed animator in the village guides and gives various input regarding organising women in the community.
 - The basic technique of organising and conducting a meeting: discussing local problems faced by workers, handling local issues, reporting it to the animator or other key persons about the issues.
 - Periodical meetings and training programmes for the leaders were organised on topics like communication skill, problem solving skills, etc.
- 8. Building District leadership training:** Village leaders are usually capable of district-level training. Role-playing or other exercises which analyse their problems may be part of the training. District-level organisers or leaders, and other experts may be invited to share experiences.
- The leaders from the villages are called for periodic training at the district level.
 - Various leadership games are conducted to help the worker to understand and analyse their problems and resolve conflicts in effective ways.
 - Experts were invited to give inputs on legal issues, rights, struggle, and experience of various other trade unions.

Organising

Organising is an important tool for any organisation as there is a need for a pool of people who are capable of running the organisation and carrying out its objectives. These people should be the domestic workers themselves who are committed, who understand their situation and are willing to improve their lot.

- 1. Using strategies to gather domestic workers together:** Gathering workers at a certain place is more effective than the door-to-door techniques. Although the door-to-door strategy is necessary during the initial stages. Meetings can be held at parks where some domestic workers take their charges for walks and/or to talk to other domestic workers. In Hong Kong they used the government domestic workers re-training classes to access

domestic workers. In Indonesia, Muslim religious classes were used to attract Domestic Workers, who were all Muslims, to gather at a place like an employer's house. (See box)

Organising through religious classes

In Indonesia, domestic workers used *pengajian* (muslim religious classes) to organize workers in Yogyakarta, Java. The Griya Arga Permai (GAP), a DWO in this housing estate, in Yogyakarta started organizing in this way. In Indonesia, a DWO is known as *Operata*. Employers were willing to give domestic workers leave to attend these meetings and allowed their homes to be meeting places. In the beginning classes were about the Koran as workers came and they started talking of their problems with their employers. When the employers learnt that they were talking of workers' rights and not koranic texts, the employers disallowed the workers to meet at their homes and to attend these sessions. Was this the end of this tactic? No. The union has asked the help of imams (muslim clerics) who are supportive of their causes to give talks to employers. They have arranged sessions with these imams and employers who are against the union. Being creative is the key. Never let failures be a hindrance – there must be a way out of a dungeon!

Some domestic workers' groups still do organize *pengajian* classes and the union hands out pamphlets and provides talks on rights, wages, negotiations and other matters to these groups.

(Proceedings of the *Domestic Workers Organizing Strategy Workshop* held between 25 and 31 March 2007, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

2. Working through DWO known as 'Operata' in Indonesia, is sometimes better as some workers are afraid of unions. (See box)

Why Trade Unions (TUs), Domestic Worker Organisations (DWOs) or Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)?

Trade unions are organizations run by workers to assist workers. Most unions in Asia are male oriented and mostly represent the formal sector such as chemical, garment, leather industries just to name a few. They rarely represent the informal sector which domestic work falls under and which is dominated by women. Depending on the country, unions have to abide by certain legal requirements. Workers in many Asian countries have a fear of unions which is because of the government's control of the media and their support of capitalists in the country. Because of this fear some workers have come up with DWOs. They hold tripartite discussions, carry out training and education programmes on labour issues. Unfortunately, the decisions made at tripartite discussions are not sanctioned by law as in a union. *Operata* as known in Indonesia is an example of DWOs. Many NGOs provide training and support programmes for

DWOs and some unions too support them. NGOs are non-profit organizations run by collective will, whose activities respond to the needs of the members' communities with which the NGO co-operates. Some NGOs who are unaware of union and worker issues, tend to control the DWOs and use them to gain funding. This can be an unpleasant struggle for the NGOs and DWOs. In Indonesia, in the '90s, there was a huge fall out between the NGOs, DWOs and unions. The ripple effect of this fall out is still felt among the unions, NGOs and DWOs.

Whereas in India, many NGOs and unions have a symbiotic relationship. Many NGOs and unions in India are still not willing to speak honestly about any fall out they might have between the unions and NGOs. There is mistrust but the unions and NGOs do not know how to tackle these sensitive issues. These issues need to be discussed at the negotiation table and not allowed to fester into unhappy relationships.

(Information obtained through interviews by the author)

3. Building sisterhood and “buddies”

- In Hong Kong, the union members never call one another Mrs. XX. They directly called their own names or “sisters” in general. These small matters builds towards better solidarity.
- Always encourage sisters to bring their friends to participate in union's activities.
- Involving all members in the union or DWO in campaign work, preparing workshops, cultural programmes and many other aspects of running a union or DWO. In Hong Kong union members work in pairs – a good strategy to have as many of them are older and fear being alone. A lot of knowledge can also be shared between young and older “buddies”.

4. Utilising women's knowledge

- Learning stretching exercises to ease work related muscle strains. Having other sports activities like badminton, table tennis sometimes help to relieve the stress.
 - Sisters organise picnics and share their recipes which gain everyone's appreciation. This too builds self-confidence and solidarity.
 - Using cultural aspects of the women's life such as dance, art, drama in campaigning for domestic workers' rights are part of informal education as well.
 - Indigenous healing: Some women share knowledge on acupuncture, herbal remedies which could be used in local clinics for fund raising purposes or workshops.
5. Making the union or DWO as a place away from home – cosy, friendly, supportive atmosphere. For women this is important.
6. Having a meeting place and facilities: Providing facilities for DWOs such as room space, access to computers, and communications for example website space is helpful.

Providing services

Although the union or DWO should not be organised as a service center, sometimes it is necessary to provide some services. This is because most DW come from poor rural areas and/or do not have sufficient assistance in obtaining legal, medical assistance or finding work or even a place to stay.

1. Legal assistance/counselling

Many domestic workers face abuse, are charged with theft or even murder. Much of the work involves counseling the workers through the legal process. Having links with Legal Aid Centres is important as they provide services which the union or DWO may not be able to handle. This is also helpful in building networks. If there is none, get help of lawyers who are willing to assist.

2. Savings and loan schemes

Most of the domestic workers are poor and are forced to enter this line of work due to poverty. They are in need of money to make ends meet or pay off debts accumulated by their family members. Savings and loan schemes go a long way in assisting the domestic worker. In Indonesia they have a scheme called *arisan* where each person in the group pays a Rp10,000 (US\$1.11) every month. They then elect who would get the money collected from the group, for the month or week depending on the decisions of the group. If someone wishes for a loan, the money is given at 5% interest which is not tabulated yearly. The savings/loan scheme has helped Indonesian DWO in gaining support among the workers.

3. Providing help in finding work for the workers

Having a wide network of contacts enable DWOs and unions to assist in this aspect. It is beneficial to both the members and the union or DWO if the member is always employed because they will have the means to participate in its activities and to pay membership dues.

This could be a fund raising activity for the union or DWO where they can charge a reasonable fee to assist the domestic worker to find reliable employment. The Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union (HKDWGU) finds lucrative work for its union members during the Chinese New Year. (See Box)

Chinese New Year Clean-up Action

Every Chinese New Year, the HKDWGU organizes the Chinese New Year-end Cleaning Co-op Action' because many employers need to find help for cleaning before the Chinese New Year. The Union organizes members for skills training and various promotional work. The wage for this one-time clean-up is HK\$75 per hour. The union has been doing this action for 6 years and has been very successful in finding jobs for members. The union has stood firm on this wage and has been successful in recruiting new members and encouraging members to pay the union dues.

(Proceedings of the *Domestic Workers Organizing Strategy Workshop* held between 25 and 31 March 2007, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

4. **Providing counseling**

DW who were abused, accused of stealing, or going through a court case can seek counseling and support. Having a hotline would be useful. In a study conducted by the Asia Migrants Centre in Hong Kong in 2001 reported that one in four foreign domestic workers suffer from abuse ranging from verbal to physical and sexual abuse. In India the Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union, said that they deal with hundreds of cases of workers accused of stealing or even murder.

Public Advocacy (or Campaigns)

Advocacy means any activity intended to raise consciousness among decision-makers and the general public about an issue or a disadvantaged group, with a view to bringing about changes in policy and improvements in their situation.

(A Handbook on Advocacy, Child domestic workers: Finding a voice, Maggie Black, Anti Slavery International, 2002)

A well planned advocacy programme can be a strong tool in improving conditions at work. Some preparation needed before kicking off the advocacy programme would consist for instance, of data on abuses in the area, various actions taken on the abuses, etc. When undertaking advocacy you must be clear about your objectives, where the target audience is found, key information and other possible messages. Key information means the interest and procedures of the target audience. It also involves knowing the names of key people who are potentially interested in the issue. Study the success factors and the obstacles in the advocacy plan.

Some ways of carrying out advocacy:

1. Work with employer organisations like the residents association of a housing area, or a women's club in the area. These organisations usually have employers of domestic workers. Drawing up a code of employment would be useful when discussing with the employer.
2. Using the media: Constantly highlighting cases of abuses, murder and other cases involving DW can bring about empathy towards domestic workers and possibly support for the improvement of conditions at work. Hold press campaigns on the radio or any other media. (See box)

Getting the message across: the role of radio

Radio is a cheap and useful way of reaching a greater cross-section of society – those in the rural areas, those who can't read, employers, policy makers and many others. Views can be collected from the general public through phone-ins and interviews. This is a good way of stimulating public opinion and attracting policy makers.

In Haiti, an NGO called Foyers Maurice Sixto has a weekly national radio slot to raise

issues of child domestic workers. In Malawi, a radio soap opera has been used to get the message across to employers about the need to change their attitude.

(Source: Obtained from several websites)

Networking

Keeping networks with employer groups, domestic workers in other areas, legal aid centres or lawyers, media, civic groups, government officials and others help build the strength of the union or DWO. Each can be useful in providing direct services, counseling, legal aid, or publicity in DW advocacy.

Fund raising

Many organisers are unskilled, uninterested or ill-equipped to do fund raising but it is an important part of the organising capacity of the organisation. Fundraising strategies need to be planned for any new organisation as funds are needed for trainings, campaigns, workshops and other activities. There are many creative ways of getting funds, these are some strategies used by some organisations:

1. Charging a nominal fee for services: Such as finding employment for the domestic workers or helping to set up a business.
2. Handicraft sales: You could get together to have sales of various purses made from **mengkuang** (a type of weed found in South East Asia), baskets, delicious food items and many others. It creates solidarity too and brings in some useful funds.
3. Writing funding proposals to funders. Many NGOs provide training on how to write a funding proposal to international or local funders.
4. From union dues or voluntary contributions from supporters.
5. Annual Charity Dinners: These are occasions where unions or DWOs can campaign and show off their talents as in their cultural performances and handicraft work. Use these dinners to create awareness on the issues of domestic workers through speeches and video clips. Networking with various groups helps in broadening the reach of invitations. Make sure all groups that have assisted the union or DWO have been invited.
6. Having a celebrity to support some programmes can open up some avenues of public generosity.
7. Television appearances or contributing newspaper articles will not only bring awareness of the issues but can bring in some donations.

Chapter 3 Level 2: Building National Level Solidarity

Some local issues gain national attention, or the DWO or union may decide to make their issue a national campaign. The reason is usually because the problems they face can be solved at the national level, or they might want to share their experience with other groups and create a national movement.

Taking into this level requires some years of experience and know-how of issues, laws in the country and good networking skills. For many groups it means dealing with people they've never worked with before and who have no idea about their issue. Each national level organisation has their challenges. For example the South Africa-Domestic Workers' Labour Union faces triple oppression due to race, class and gender. Other groups try to focus on pressing issues of torture and abuse as does the Bangladesh-Domestic Workers' Association which concentrates on torture faced by domestic workers. The Kalyan in United Kingdom is a service oriented group which provides free, confidential and independent advice to all migrant domestic workers. The way forward depends on the initiatives of domestic worker activists and the strategies they wish to follow. The focus of the DWO would depend on the needs of the national campaign and the local members in the group.

The issues involved are:

- Advocacy at national level
- Networking – working with other unions, organisations
- Media – highlight campaigns nationally
- Capacity Building
- Speaking with various sectors and interest groups

Advocacy at national level

Planning is the key to any advocacy programme. Of course the research collected and the experience acquired over the early years would be useful in pushing for demands or showing the weakness of some government programme. A checklist for preparing an advocacy plan is useful. (See Box) Know who you are dealing with and their usefulness to your goals. Don't be afraid! Anything that starts small will gain momentum in the years to come.

Checklist for preparing an advocacy plan

1. Identify overall objectives and subsidiary objectives
2. Prioritise objectives for short, medium and long-term; set time frames.
3. Work out how advocacy interacts with other programme activities
4. Identify target audiences for advocacy
5. Set measurable goals and work out how to monitor progress
6. Ensure you have adequate information on which to proceed
7. Select advocacy strategies, combining silent and loud techniques, direct and indirect approaches within available skills and resources
8. Approach partners to build an alliance and strengthen advocacy base

9. Develop advocacy messages and begin preparation of materials
10. Finalise advocacy plan, including time-bound targets, with partners; build in review and revision process based on results.

(A Handbook on advocacy, Child Domestic Workers: Finding a Voice, Maggie Black, Anti-Slavery International, 2002)

1. Declaring and establishing a National Domestic Workers' Day

National Domestic Workers' Day is an important action day for workers as it provides the link with other domestic workers in the country. It also broadcasts the achievements and struggles of the domestic workers to the public. The day should have a historical significance to the domestic workers. Many events should be organised and publicised for national and international media. Other trade unions, even international unions and organisations too should be involved in support of this day. Obtaining international support through these campaigns can bring pressure to local governments. (See box)

Indonesia's Domestic Workers' Day

Indonesia established 15 February as Domestic Workers' Day in memory of their colleague who died because of physical abuse she faced from her employer. Sunarsih, a 15 year old, worked in South Surabaya, while suffering physical abuse including starvation. To appease her hunger she went to pluck the rambutan from her employer's garden. When her employer saw this, she was forced to eat 3 rambutans at once. Unfortunately, she choked and died on 15 February, 2001. The female employer was given a four-year prison sentence for ill-treatment resulting in Sunarsih's death. In memory of her, her domestic worker friends have declared the day, as Domestic Workers' Day. During the 15 February week the domestic workers network and many other domestic worker groups get together to campaign by holding rallies, radio programs and many other activities to raise awareness of the issues. They also hold discussions with policy makers on legal reform.

(Proceedings of the *Domestic Workers Organizing Strategy Workshop* held between 25 and 31 March 2007, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

2. Legal advocacy

Much of the protection and recognition demands of domestic workers involve the law in their countries. A lot of studying about the law for workers, for women and on employment must be undertaken to understand which kind of laws apply to a particular situation or problem. Lack of certain laws or policies needed by domestic workers means that DWO or unions must participate in or initiate legal advocacy. This needs much planning, studying and mobilising over a long period of time so patience and perseverance is very important.

- Check out laws or absence of them. Note the laws that are supportive and unsupportive of domestic workers in terms of wages, rights, leave, etc. Amend the unsupportive

laws. India's Tamil Nadu state has a Tripartite Labour Board which has been very useful for domestic workers there (See box). Because of changes in the laws, domestic workers in Argentina have to register with the Ministry of Labour so they are able to benefit from the services provided by the Ministry. (See Box)

Tripartite Labour Board

Under the Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Act, the government constituted labour boards to provide social security and welfare benefits to unorganized workers. These boards include domestic workers; recently a separate welfare board for domestic workers has been constituted. There are many benefits including maternity benefits, including for education, marriage, compensation for natural death, accidents etc. For example, domestic workers can apply to this board to pay for dowries and wedding costs. This is a boon to the workers. These amendments came about through constant campaigning of the Tamil Nadu Workers Union and other informal sector unions.

(Proceedings of the *Domestic Workers Organizing Strategy Workshop* held between 25 and 31 March 2007, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

Types of Legal Advocacy:

- Campaign for minimum wage. Ensure the wages are based on skills and experience.
- Campaign on the labour department to demand that DW unions be represented in the Labour Board to improve the delivery of benefits.
- Campaign to amend or enact new laws to support domestic workers and repeal those that do not.
- Lobby your Members of Parliament or governors – strategise to carry them out simultaneously with campaigns such as on minimum wage or a during a case involving domestic workers such as murder trial, to provide national impact.
- Carry out campaigns during Parliament sessions, during the Domestic Workers' Day or May Day.
- Learn to take a break to evaluate the situation. Advocacy work takes a lot of effort as it involves planning, mobilising people and resources, having a rest helps towards rebuilding the energy. Plan a retreat to re-energise creativity!

Networking

Working with other women's groups, unions and forming network groups to improve working conditions of domestic workers is vital. In Indonesia, Jala PRT (National Network Advocacy of Domestic Workers) is made up of Domestic Worker Organisations, coalitions, NGOs and unions from several parts of Java and Borneo. Formally set up in 2006 the network hopes to formulate a national legislation for domestic workers. In 2004 they had 18 members and in 2006 they expanded to having 24 members. Their mission is to advocate, campaign and

support for proper legislation. Jala PRT has dedicated activists who constantly keep in contact with their network groups. The solidarity building is important in achieving its vision of a better life for the domestic worker.

Media

The media is crucial in building awareness of issues affecting domestic workers among the public. A hot story helps like a murder or severe abuse cases of domestic workers would bring much publicity and empathy from the public. Use the media during crucial points in your campaign to give out press statements and keep the interest going by organising talks on radio and television.

Another useful way of getting press attention is through organised conferences or seminars on issues affecting domestic workers. Prepare press kits for the journalists. (See Box) Having such events during May Day or the Domestic Workers Day or Week would provide a special appeal to the press.

Preparing a Press Kit

A press kit is the marketing tool of the organization or union, which provides information on the DWO, the issue and their demands in a clear and concise manner. For the media and it provides a resource to learn as much as possible about the organisation's background, history and memberships. Most stories get printed or broadcast immediately if the press briefs are good enough. A follow up press brief is given after major events to inform of the latest developments in the issue.

What do you include in the kit?

Generally, it is good to include the following:

1. A background and history of the organization or campaign. For example, short history of the Domestic Workers Day. In Indonesia the story of Sunarsih should be added.
2. A campaign fact sheet, which is a list of relevant, bulleted details. Have a list of spokespersons the journalists can contact, have a brief outline of the event. The press must have a clear idea of what the event is about and what exactly will happen.
3. Include a personality piece on some of the activists who would be able spokesperson for the issue.
4. Have some pictures of previous campaigns or workshops.
5. Write about some interesting aspects such as the achievements of the organization or campaign.

Keep the length, depth and breadth of a press kit for the media minimal and not too bulky.

The most important qualities of a good press kit is that it should be concise and inviting and contain well-written material. A start-up press kit for a first time press conference may be shorter and contain less material such as the essential fact sheet and a brief description of the organization or campaign.

(Source: Obtained from several websites)

Choose the different types of media and the journalists who are supportive of your cause and who would not sensationalise issues but treat them fairly. During these events, rallies, exhibits, or cultural presentations by domestic workers add more material for the press to feature in their news coverage.

When organising such events you need to have press releases and there should be follow up with phone calls and emails to journalists and their editors. Knowing which reporter or correspondent covers what issue, is important in getting events publicised. Keep up the personal contacts with journalists as they can prove useful in the long term. If these are too heavy for your organisation find suitable trainers to train the specific members, build partnerships with organisations which have media liaising capacity, attend training sessions organised by various groups. Get journalist friends to help you.

A message needs to be heard many times therefore plan the media coverage for effective publicity. Use timely and different approaches when doing media work.

Capacity Building

At this level you might be dealing with different levels of understanding which require sharpening skills in different areas. Weaknesses in the skills of the DW activists need to be addressed and improved. It's important to recognise them and to have a willingness to change for the better. The next step is to organise the right people to undertake the training.

Some basic training needs:

1. Negotiation

Most of the demands of DW campaigns involve negotiation with employers, lawmakers, with unions who do not consider DW's concerns. Skills in negotiation are important in building strong activists. The Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union organised special training sessions for its members when dealing with male unionists. These skills are necessary in widening the network of support and the more unions who support you helps towards getting policy makers to listen. Unions do have some clout.

2. Management and planning

Training on management and planning techniques are important towards building a strong organisation. These include training on managing the organisation and its membership, conducting meetings, assessments and planning, financial management, campaign management, troubleshooting, among others Planning these events too, require some research into what actions might be suitable and what are not.

3. Foreign language support and assistance

Most DW leaders do not have knowledge, or capacity to learn a foreign language like English. When undertaking campaigns beyond the national borders, towards regional and international levels, having a competent team and resources to support language translation would be useful. Learning English is a good investment for an organisation as it allows direct communication with regional or international partners, and facilitate faster communication when attending regional or international meetings. It helps towards building information from labour websites which are mostly in English. Getting regional groups to assist in your campaigns and writing to them for assistance requires some knowledge of English too. There are some networks and unions that run English camps for workers. Contact CAW to learn of these networks (see useful addresses and resources).



Chapter 4 Level 3: Building Regional Level Solidarity

Household workers are invisible and we have to use our imagination to help them organise.

- Marcelina Bautista Bautista Secretary General, CONLACTRAHO, Latin America

The Asian Domestic Workers Network (ADWN) is the only regional DW organisation in Asia composed local DW (not migrants and not NGO staff). ADWN is young, formed in 2004, has strived to provide support and develop local domestic worker organisations in the region through exchanges and training workshops. Whereas in Latin American and the Caribbean, twelve trade unions and associations for domestic workers in this area joined together in 1988 to form the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Domestic Workers (CONLACTRAHO). These regions have been organising domestic workers since the 1920s. Due to their active campaigning they were able to make significant changes in their rights as domestic workers. They campaigned for changes in the law, against racial discrimination, and for social benefits and others.

Regional groups do play an important role in improving the lives of domestic workers especially those that have good grassroots links. Through the example of our sisters in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Asian network could strengthen links to make bold steps.

Regional solidarity building involves the following:

- Advocacy at regional level
- Networking - with other regional worker groups
- Media – highlight important decisions in meetings
- Capacity Building

Advocacy at regional level

Advocacy at this level is usually done by regional unions and women's groups. Their support for your local and national campaigns adds to the capacity, reach and support of your DWO. ADWN with the support of CAW and other partners are capable of raising the demand for recognition of domestic workers as workers, as regional and global agenda. (See box)

Asian Domestic Workers Network (ADWN)

The Asian Domestic Workers Network (ADWN) was officially formed in the year 2005 as an outcome of an Exchange workshop of Asia Domestic Workers in Hong Kong in 2004. This exchange was organised by Committee for Asian Women (CAW). It is the first Asian-based network that links up local adult Domestic Workers' organizations and has members from Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong. It supports self-organising efforts of domestic workers in Asia, provides assistance, encourages building of networks, advocates for policies and programs both in the local and regional levels and mobilises support for the cause of domestic workers. Its activities include exchange of local adult domestic workers' groups, sharing on

strategies for legal reform, building domestic workers' organisations and leadership, sharing organising and mobilising strategies with South Asian DW organizations, supporting local DW campaigns and circulating updated information about the situation of DWs in Asia

Networking and regional exchanges

A good network should be built with many regional women's groups, linking with like minded trade unions in the region, other regional and international worker based NGOs. Keep in touch regularly through emails, through alerts, campaigns, inviting them for events or seeking their advice.

Networking can be built through exchanges. Having domestic worker exchanges between countries have proven useful in understanding campaign strategies. ADWN has conducted several successful exchanges in the region and many domestic workers who have undergone this can vouch for its success.

Media

Form links with international and regional news groups like the Interpress News Agency, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC – British based international media) in Hong Kong, Asian News Channel (ANC) in Singapore or even Cable News Network (CNN – USA based international media). These news programmes have special forums - use them to discuss issues of domestic workers. Work with these journalists and assist them to plan such a forum – you gain credibility and they might call you back! Provide them information on links with like minded groups or individuals on these issues. Provide them with videos (if possible) and other materials they would not be able to get elsewhere. If you do not have the time to monitor your news feeds to BBC, ANC or CNN get other NGOs involved in media to assist you.

Capacity Building

Capacity building at the regional level benefits both the local and regional groups. Capacity building activities help regional groups understand the background, contexts, local situation and needs of the local DW movements. Local DW groups learn about operational issues and characteristics of advocacy at the regional level. They get an idea about solidarity beyond their national borders. This could be facilitated through country exchanges or regional forums.

Participating in regional events increase the confidence of local groups to a considerable degree because they learn of similar situations and experiences of other participants. They may lobby authorities together and thus raise a stronger regional voice. Delegates realise that their efforts have joined others' and that their demands are the same. This increases their understanding of the importance of persevering in their campaigns and other actions.

When the house becomes a workplace, the rights of workers must be made clear.

- ILO Conference, 31 May, 2007

International solidarity work involves a highly advanced set of skills and capacity. International campaigns involve months of planning, long meetings, continuous dialogue and different time zones. The DW activist must be aware of the international groups working on DW issues, how long they have been working on them and the broadness of their reach. One worldwide network recently set up- *Respect and Rights for Domestic Workers* - took many months of continuous planning and feedback among domestic workers in many countries.

The international network currently leads an international campaign to have an ILO Convention for Domestic Workers. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the sole international body composed of governments, employers and workers, which set up and monitor international labour standards for workers. In 2011 it is set to adopt the first Convention on Domestic Workers. The campaign engages the ILO and national labour centres of ILO member countries, towards considering the demands of domestic workers worldwide.

Advocacy at international level

International Networks

IRENE (International Restructuring Education Network Europe) was one of the early international groups that raised the profile of informal workers and domestic workers worldwide. Groups like IRENE played an important role in assisting national and regional networks in their research, development of services and advocacy programmes. Several unions have also initiated support for DW. Some of these global unions were International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Union Network International (UNI) and the IUF (International Union Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations). UNI is a global federation of workers in skills and services. IUF was keen to represent the domestic workers and took the lead to develop an international programme for domestic workers rights, towards the establishment of the international network (Respect).

On 23 January, 2007 a meeting was held in ILO, Geneva, Switzerland between IUF, ITUC, IRENE and several departments of ILO (Gender, Migration, ACTRAV-Bureau for Worker's activities in ILO, IPEC-Child Labour, and Declaration and Norms. The meeting resulted in following resolutions:

- ACTRAV and ITUC can lead in preparing a new Convention.
- Making a report to the ILO Governing Body and raising awareness at the International Labour Conference held annually in June.
- Through 'expert meetings' the inputs of various ILO departments could be fostered.
- Plan of action for first year of the group – fund raising, publication of report, a website, communication with various domestic worker groups throughout the world.

The following events were organized and participated in by DW activists and DWO:

- ITUC, international conference on migration, Brussels, December 2006.
- IUF international women's conference, Geneva, March 2007 (See: <http://www.iuf.org/women/>) where the project of the international network 'Respect and Rights for Domestic Workers' was presented.
- ILO-ILC International Labour Conference, Geneva, June 2007.
- *Global Community Forum On Migration, Development And Human Rights* a parallel meeting next to the Global Forum on Migration and Development', June 2007 Brussels. Human Rights Watch organised workshops on domestic work.

International Strategies

In doing international advocacy it is important to understand the roles and the capabilities of the various groups. Each participating organisation in an international campaign have specific contributions to it. Note some of the contributions of the participants in an ILO Conference on domestic/household workers in 2007:

- A film clip by ACTRAV had its premiere for the workers delegation. The film can be seen on this website only in French (English translation will follow in the near future): <http://www.pourlemploi.com/video/domestiques/./domestiques.html>
- ACTRAV will devote its next issue of their quarterly periodical, 'Labour Education' on domestic workers.
- A member from TUC, UK suggested that a specific instrument (a convention) is needed for domestic workers (This could be an issue national groups can take up).
- The head of the ILO Gender desk suggested that a mapping report on domestic work be done. This is because various departments of ILO have done good studies on domestic work and the mapping report would provide domestic worker groups to identify these reports more easily.
- ITUC and ACTRAV proposed that 2008's March 8 celebration be focused on domestic workers' issues.
- A power point presentation on the international network 'Respect and Rights for Domestic Workers' which Global Union IUF was responsible in putting together: http://www.irene-network.nl/workers_is/domestic.htm

In many international inter-governmental meetings dialogues with civil society have been initiated. These direct engagements have precise procedures and protocol which can be learned from partnership with international civil society networks.

Parallel events to official meetings were also held to raise peoples' issues which they demand world leaders should discuss. These parallel events are also used to meet interested groups and build and strengthen networks.

The support of international groups in a network, provides solidarity to the local struggles and helps endorse them to the international arena. They also open doors to influential figures, key governmental officials and additional sources of funds.

International Labour Organisation

The ILO is the focus of the global campaign towards a Convention on Domestic Work. The Workers' Group in ILO's Governing Body is very influential. This Group has 14 seats equal to the Employers' Group, governments have 28 seats. About 30 national union federations sit on the ILO Governing Body. It is important to identify these unions and get their support at the national, regional and international levels.⁴

The trade union plays a key role in the development of a new convention. The ILO held regional workshops on domestic work with trade unions in the Caribbean in 1997, in Asia in 1999 and in South America in 2005. In Asia, a two-year programme '*Mobilising Action for the Protection of Domestic Workers from Forced Labour and Trafficking*' specifically addressed domestic workers in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Having an ILO Convention on Domestic Work provides much needed legal basis for domestic workers to push their governments to comply with the international labour standard.

CEDAW

Another form of international lobbying, particularly for women workers is under the UN Human Rights System. There is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which can be used in countries that have ratified it. Claims can be made on any violation of the convention. The Committee on CEDAW has mechanisms for monitoring compliance to the Convention and pursuing recommendations to governments. For more details see 'Useful Addresses and Resources', UNIFEM.

Capacity Building

Conducting training programmes on international solidarity work, or attending related programmes conducted by ILO, UNIFEM and other international/regional groups builds the capacity of DWO.

In order to effectively conduct international advocacy, it is important to have knowledge of issues, meetings, conventions like ILO's (see box). Build your resources by surfing the net to gather information on these issues or write directly to these organisations. Having resources or capacity for English, Spanish or French translation into the local language is a basic requirement of international advocacy-- there's a lot to talk to, about issues, strategies and approaches, with various people of different backgrounds and work culture. DW representatives need to keep a good diary to record meetings and events. Keep contacts in your mobile or computer file for future reference. Communicate regularly with these contacts and arrange to give presentations on domestic worker situations in your country at every available opportunity.

ILO Conventions and Domestic Workers

It is important to re-state that all fundamental ILO Conventions - on freedom of association and collective bargaining, freedom from forced labour, the worst forms of

⁴ ibid.

child labour, and from discrimination, and the right to equal remuneration, etc. - apply to domestic workers, irrespective of their migration status.

Also applying to domestic workers:

ILO Conventions on migrant labour:

- Migration for Employment (Revised) Convention No.97 (1949)
- Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention No.118 (1962)
- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention No.143 (1975)
- Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention No.157 (1982)
- Private Employment Agencies Convention No.181 (1997) for those employed through agencies

ILO Conventions on occupational safety and health, equality, conditions of work, etc:

- Forty-Hour Week Convention No.47 (1935)
- Protection of Wages Convention No.95 (1949)
- Employment Injury Benefits Convention No.121 (1964)
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention No.155 (1981)
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention No.156 (1981)
- Termination of Employment Convention No.158 (1982)
- Night Work Convention No.171 (1990)
- Part-Time Work Convention No.175 (1994)
- Maternity Protection Convention No.183 (2000)

Exclusions

Some of these Conventions (Nos. 171, 181 and 183) allow certain categories of workers to be excluded where a government can argue there are “special problems of a substantial nature”.

Also, the Protection of Wages Convention No.95 (1949) allows the explicit exclusion of domestic workers. Such exclusions can only be done, however, after consultation with workers’ and employers’ organisations, and the government has to justify the exclusion in its reports to the ILO.

So, trade unions have an important role to play in trying to ensure that domestic workers are not excluded from the protection of these Conventions.

Source: Out of the Shadows, Organising and protecting, domestic workers in Europe: the role of trade unions. (This report is based on the proceedings of a conference organised by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), in collaboration with the International Restructuring Education Network Europe (IRENE) and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

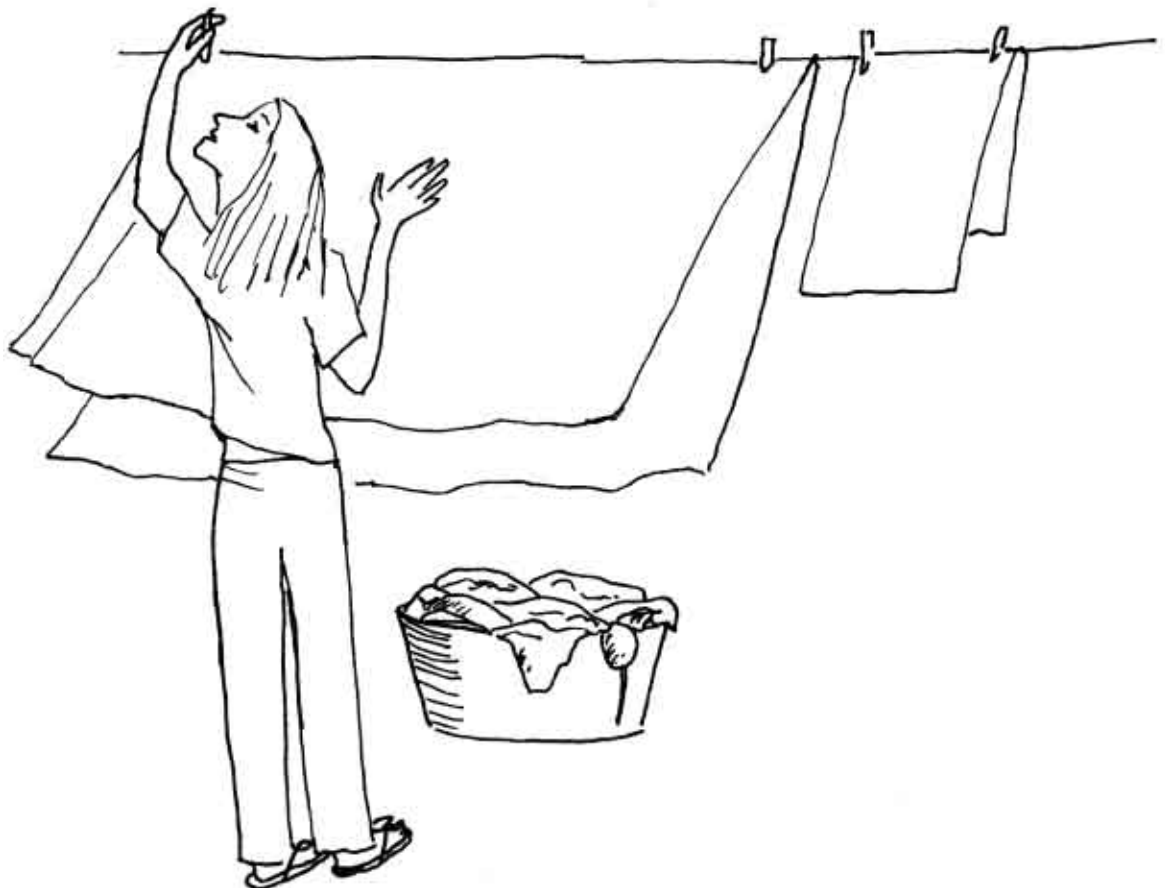
Networking

Every international event has networking opportunities. Because the DW campaign is being waged internationally, networking likewise goes global. It never stops. Keep building on the networks to get domestic workers issues tabled at the various inter-governmental, inter-parliamentarian or inter-agency policy making bodies' agenda.

Media

International level meetings are very rarely published in the media. Parallel events such as the World Social Forums, Global March for Women, Peoples' Global Action for Migrants' Rights, are conducted to raise media interest in these meetings and project the demands of domestic workers. Get the domestic workers issues on the international news desks through your networks at regional level and international unions, women's networks and other groups.

Try to obtain special interviews with media representatives from your countries, publish related stories or features or create and disseminate a website or blog about your parallel events and related campaigns.



In reviewing campaign strategies, getting maximum result while using minimum effort or cost is the best technique. So if the issue facing domestic workers is easy to resolve without resorting to public action (which require more cost, time and effort), it only needs quiet advocacy techniques. But for bigger issues which may need responses from others such as parliament to enact or repeal a law, issues which need public support or awareness such as working hours, some actions need to be done externally involving wider audiences. These are called loud techniques.

A. Quiet Technique

- Interpersonal
- Dramas
- Networking – getting together of the like-minded

Interpersonal

Direct interaction with the key actors - employers and domestic workers - play as important a role as interacting with the others such as the community, priests, village elders, NGOs, government servants, unionists, journalists and many others.

The first task is how to contact the target group. The next is plan what message you want to put across. What do you want your target to do as a result of the interaction? The message must not be a lecture or sound like harassment to them. It should be respectful of their role and something that could appeal to their interests. The third step is to allow for dialogue.

Negotiation

Intervention by a sympathetic employer, public official or community leader in a low-key and private capacity.

Dramas

Dramas depicting the problems of domestic workers and performed in women's groups meetings or a community can be useful in awareness-building efforts. The Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union (HKDWGU) used the Chinese Opera format to depict the problems of domestic workers. It was used in many of their campaigns. Even the Domestic Workers Union, Tunas Mulia in Yogyakarta performed a dance drama, using Javanese dance forms, on the streets for the Domestic Workers Day campaign in 2007. The dancers had their feet and hands tied with utensils and used the utensils for the music.

Getting together of the like-minded

Networking is an important tool in building an organisation and it's important at the different levels you are working at. Talking with individuals who are like-minded is the first step to organising higher forms of action – training workshops, media events, dramas and louder advocacy programmes.

When planning a get-together with potential partners, have clear objectives in mind- whether it's setting up a research project or planning for a workshop. Also, by networking there's more leverage on public policy for domestic workers – as you talk to more people about the issues and generate more sympathy, there would be lesser obstacles to your goals. Know whether

your potential partners are good researchers, or good spokespersons for your cause – find out and keep notes.

B. Loud Technique

- Media and press campaigns
- Lobbying and political pressure
- Operating as advocate

Media and press campaigns

The media is important in getting publicity of any campaign as they create public awareness. It is important to understand how the media works from radio to newspapers and magazines.

However there are laws governing media practice which is useful to know- for instance stories involving child domestic workers especially sexual abuse must never reveal the victim's real name, face or address in any media.

Stories like the murder of a domestic worker are top press material- these types of stories provide opportunities to disseminate your campaign's demands for domestic workers' rights. When journalists interview the employer, friends and relatives of the victim, explore the possibilities of raising your group's opinion on the case.

Lobbying and political pressure

The intention of lobbying is to exert pressure on politicians and other policy makers. Lobbying can be done loudly with maximum publicity designed to shame policy-makers into action. This type of lobbying must be planned carefully. Quiet lobbying or dialogue can be carried out with sympathetic officials while more political pressure can be applied with less sympathetic ones.

Parliamentary hearings, testimonials, consultations are also part of lobbying especially when conducted by public officials. The kind of political pressure added to lobbying should be determined by the kind of resistance the group expects towards its demands.

Where there are gross abuses to domestic workers these should always be brought out through public condemnations.

Operating as advocate

Advocates are change agents and watch dogs for the public that influence public policies to benefit society. An important rule to remember being a change agent is that people would be much more easily persuaded to a new point of view by people of the same background, education and social status. This is why it is important to get the support and sympathy of other sectors of society to the cause of domestic workers. Media personalities, parliamentarians, public officials who command some respect in the community are strong allies. Getting as many middle class and diplomatic actors to support the cause of domestic workers and act as DW advocates, can provide a powerful push for DW demands.

Louder advocacy requires well planned strategies and good, confident speakers. But to be a good advocate one must be able to internalise the life of the DW in order to be sensitive to their needs and contexts. Encourage those who have the inclination to speak about DW cause in the various forms of media or to policy makers.

The position of domestic workers is, economically and socially, hardly valued and it is important to have a determined organisation to improve the livelihood and status of workers. The two key tasks in building and maintaining a strong organisation are developing a democratic process and regularly and systematically training workers. The organisation too needs to support the members to be active in the organisation. Building good relations among workers especially among the activist and member is necessary. Assisting them in answering to their needs such as training, providing proper housing, medical care, improves solidarity.

Criteria for a strong organisation

a. Strong Solidarity and Democracy

When workers first join the organisation or union, they are just interested in how the organisation can fulfill their needs. Through awareness, workers would realise that their needs can only be fulfilled through working together. Providing a democratic space for women means that women feel safe in taking part in the decision processes of the organisation. The democratic space empowers the woman worker, if she's able to say, "They are listening to me."

b. Committed members with strong leadership skills

Domestic workers learn their skills from their mothers but to empower them there is a need to put a political and gender perspective of their work. Strong leaders develop through gender and political awareness. Hands-on training such as taking part in campaigns and interacting with other workers too builds comradeship and commitment. Always keep workers informed of the growth of the group. Transparency in the running of the union or organisation brings about trust in the leadership.

c. Broad awareness of issues with clear vision and mission

Along with strong leaders the organisation must have a clear vision and mission. In order to achieve this they need to have a broad awareness of the issues, the opportunities they can explore and failures they might encounter.

d. Independent

It is by being independent that the organisation is able to make independent decisions to achieve their vision. This is especially difficult, as many domestic worker organisations have to depend on NGOs or foreign funders to fund their projects. This has not always been a good marriage. Nevertheless, many domestic worker organisations by sheer determination have pulled through with their own resources.

The Strategies in Building a Strong Organisation

a. Building women's leadership through solidarity

Holding monthly programmes such as games, cultural activities, singing sessions allows domestic workers to socialise and builds team strength. These events too allow workers

to talk of their problems in an informal setting. Promoting and strengthening informal sessions will benefit the organisation in terms of increasing membership.

The informal sessions should be used to pick out potential leaders. These leaders should be trained so they are aware of the gender issues, labour laws and other issues. The objective is to build democratic, communicative, wise and honest women leaders.

Providing counseling sessions on problems with the employers and family helps workers feel empowered. Many domestic workers are not confident to negotiate with their employers in the face of overwork, poor wages and even non-payment of wages among others. Supporting them by providing them training in negotiation skills or even meeting their employers would certainly boost their confidence.

In preparing for a demonstration or rally, workers should hold sessions to create an awareness of the organisation and why it is undertaking the demonstration.

Pressuring government officials through campaigns and rallies: When government officials refuse to take action on any of the domestic worker demands such as welfare benefits, legal compensation, rallies and campaigns should be carried out in the community.

Relating success stories of the organisation and assessment of weaknesses at informal and formal sessions are empowering. Participating in the activities of the organisation from decision making to implementation enhances the strength of the organisation.

b. Networking

Having friends and colleagues in other areas such as in government, labour unions and even parliament strengthens the organisation. Networking too expands the ability of the group to achieve its vision. By networking with government officials, the group assists workers in the various employment problems. Of course, by working with parliamentarians it hopes for adequate laws to protect domestic workers.

Forming liaisons with the members of other trade unions both in local and national levels can prove to be very useful as it legitimises the position of domestic workers. Domestic work is seen as informal sector and thus in many countries it is not accounted for in the economy. It can be an uphill task when working with trade unionists, who are mostly males. They have not shown the interest to organise nor work with the informal sector but this seems to be changing in Nepal, India and Hong Kong. Getting trade unionists from these countries to hold seminars or dialogue sessions with unionists in Indonesia can help boost the Indonesian domestic workers' groups. Another strategy is to invite the trade unions in the organisation's various campaigns and advocacy programmes. Invite these unionists to speak at the rallies and campaigns.

Networking with other women based unions or groups, has its advantages as in the case in India. Cooperation with the unorganised workers like construction workers, who are mostly young women, has been fruitful for Indian domestic worker unions. They have supported the Indian domestic worker unions and provided the numbers, in their rallies for minimum wage demands and in other campaigns. In India, many of the older construction workers become domestic workers.

Domestic workers are in dire need of protective laws. The groups in Asia are fighting hard, some for more than 10 years, to get legislation for domestic workers. Working with and lobbying the members of parliament and other related institutions, goes a long way in pushing for legal reform.

Conducting regular meetings with the government officers and top officials who govern the labour affairs can influence the many cases of abuse, theft, etc that flood domestic worker groups. Meetings with the local authorities to share the problems and cases can prove to be effective. These meetings can help towards bringing awareness of issues affecting domestic workers thus more sympathetic officers. This is an uphill task as many of the Asian domestic worker groups confess, that these officers are corrupt. Also the social status of domestic workers is not highly regarded and thus the officers' usual apathy. Meeting them as an organised force provides a stronger voice representing domestic workers.

c. Capacity building

It is only through capacity building that leaders are made and organisations strengthened. A clear training programme geared towards achieving the vision of the group should be done.

Planning training programmes at various levels from district, national and state is an effective means of reaching domestic workers at various awareness levels. The district trainings conducted monthly should cater to the needs of members. The state level programmes can be done tri-monthly or biannually and it provides the means for the district leaders to meet and exchange ideas in developing further programmes. The national level programmes done annually should include training programmes that are being prioritised.

As women workers feel more at ease in informal discussions, trainings can be held in such environment. Trained activists can facilitate these group discussions which can be later brought at formal training sessions or meetings. Many hands-on training sessions are done in this way. In India, leaders are sent with trained members to take up cases at police stations. In training subjects such as labour rights, health and safety, leadership, management of projects, law, gender issues, social analyses are essential. Labour issues such as work contract, job liabilities, rest days, work contract, compensation for abused domestic workers, social welfare benefits, bargaining for better wages, wage rates for different skills and many others.

Training materials developed especially for domestic workers would be very useful for the future leaders of the organisation. It is also an important resource for the organisation.

Training builds critical awareness among members and there is an urgency of the organisation to achieve its vision.

d. Raising awareness about the benefit of the organisation

Newsletters, pamphlets and other publications are useful publications by domestic workers organisations in creating awareness among the membership and the public.

Participating in policy making decision and making demands to provinces through rallies and campaigns.

Providing advocacy services to unfairly fired domestic workers and taking legal action against employers. This too can raise awareness among domestic workers about the legal system. In Tamil Nadu, India two cases of murder of domestic workers was won and for both cases there was a compensation of Rp1.5 million (US\$3000).

Providing insurance for work related accidents at work and a pension is a safety net for domestic workers. The Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union is advocating changes in the law on social labour so that a pension fund is set up for domestic workers. They are also seeking for work insurance.

Using the media to support domestic workers movement, when handled carefully will win support from the public. Campaigns on seeking legal reform can bring much publicity (See box on Tripartite Board, Chapter 3). Because of healthy publicity government officials and society start to recognise the work of domestic worker organisations. Television can be a useful tool in allowing the public to see the work of the organisation and the plight of the domestic worker.

Understanding Strategies

Formulating strategies is an important tool in organising workers and strengthening an organisation. What happens when government officials refuse to take action on providing welfare benefits to some workers? Will rallies and campaigns be a useful way of pressurising the government? Sister Clara of Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union, found out that it was possible.

When planning a strategy, the orientation of your organisation, its strengths, weaknesses and the human and financial resources come into play. Some advocacy strategies are people-intensive, some cost-intensive. For example the preparation of materials tends to be expensive whereas having meetings with journalists or policy makers requires time and effort but little expenditure.

Training is important in building the skills required for many advocacy programmes. It is best to spend time to build the organisation's capacity before planning an advocacy programme with senior policy makers. Where publicity is concerned its better to start locally.

Specific strategies for key audiences

The selection of audience depends on what objectives are being highlighted as there can be no fool-proof strategic plan. In every case it is important to have certain information available about the audience, so as to work out how to reach them physically and attitudinally. Once this is defined the messages will be developed to be used with the audience to persuade them to change their thinking or behaviour to realise the objective.

The message

Choosing the right message is crucial for your target audience. Messages should be simple, easily understood, concise, relevant and persuasive. The Visayan Forum Foundation, Philippines

found that to improve the working conditions of child domestic workers through legislative reform they had to downplay that all employers were bad. They chose to promote the message of improving the employer-employee relationship which helped to reduce some of the problems faced by the two parties. If they chose to put employers in a bad light they would have faced public backlash.

Sometimes the persons carrying the message is vital. For example in Bolivia, an association of domestic workers found that university graduates who acted as negotiators between the employer and child domestic workers were more successful than indigenous women. This was because the employers perceived the graduates of higher status and were prepared to listen to them.

It would be valuable to brain-storm the planning process and discuss the value of reaching different approaches.



In organising, planning a publicity campaign or even a rally takes much effort and resources. There are also many challenges to face. Fear is one of them – fear that it would not turn out right or fear that there would be too many criticisms. Having good leadership and having discussions of these fears help to dissolve these fears.

Many domestic worker organisers have been chased out of housing areas by employers who throw rocks at them or abuse them. Because of their faith and strength of commitment of these organisers yet they strived on. They chose creative strategies to work out these mishaps. Some of the challenges they faced are as follows:

Entrenched traditions and cultural attitudes

What are the entrenched traditions and cultural attitudes? Entrenched traditional thinking such as: “women are the ones who do the housework and since its ‘simple’ work there is no need to ask for higher pay”. Also in a patriarchal society women are told to listen to men, their husbands, the male employers, the male religious leaders, etc. Hence, when women leaders persuade domestic workers to assert themselves, it is a struggle. Women tend not to believe women leaders and it is an uphill task persuading them to change their cultural and religious beliefs on how women should behave. Most domestic workers come from poor families and patriarchal tendencies tend to be entrenched here. Many women from these families forego education in favour of their brothers or uncles.

It takes a very long and difficult process to overcome these beliefs in some societies, even after attaining many victories for the DW, this perception of society keeps them vulnerable and prone to continued discrimination and abuse. These entrenched beliefs and cultural attitudes are not going to change in a day, but through constant awareness programmes that empower DW and give them the confidence to have control over their own lives.

Lack of political interest at local level

What is meant by political interest? The demands of domestic workers for better working conditions, labour rights, rest days and fair wages are largely economic in nature and therefore of economic interest in the state policy. What are needed to bring about these demands or changes are political actions, and political will to implement them. Therefore domestic workers’ campaigns are of a political interest to policy makers.

How do domestic workers generate this political interest? Domestic workers need to be aware of the nature of their work and that they are workers; that united workers can decide to bring change. In order to increase this awareness, get domestic worker activists who have political awareness to talk to other domestic workers-at cooking sessions, preparation sessions for rallies, gatherings- and let them feel the strength of kinship among the domestic workers. Joint action with a united voice lends strength to the creation of this political force. Foster solidarity by help them in their hour of need. A group of domestic workers in Yogyakarta lost their homes when hit by the earthquake in early 2007. With the help of several NGOs including domestic

worker organisations they were able to rebuild their homes and provide them a decent living. (See box)

Help for Domestic Workers after the quake

Several domestic workers in Berbah lost their homes during the earthquake that hit Yogyakarta in early 2007. Through the DWOs, the union and the Urban Poor Linkage (UPLink) helped to build new houses for them. The domestic workers had lost everything in the quake – the clothes, utensils, savings, jewelry, beds and many other things. Uplink is an advocacy group that works with the urban poor (street vendors, displaced communities) and domestic workers.

(Proceedings of the *Domestic Workers Organizing Strategy Workshop* held between 25 and 31 March 2007, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

Lack of NGO capacity and resources

In 1999 Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a NGO, Rumpun Tjoet Nyak Dien (TND – named after an Achenese woman who fought against the colonialists), formulated a draft without involving domestic workers. When they started to organise domestic workers, the domestic workers themselves sat together and reformulated the draft. They then discussed about general problems the workers faced. The draft is being used to convince policy makers to enact laws to provide better living conditions for domestic workers.

Lack of resources or capacity may cause a DWO to be dependent on funding partners or political personalities and patrons, and lose their independence. Many DWOs, unions or networks of domestic workers struggle to do work as volunteers. Creative ways of raising resources must be an important part of discussions in the DWO

Lack of good information and analysis

Good information and analysis is done through sharing and analysing through the experiences - yours and the others in your organisation. The internet too provides some useful information. Some sites are listed in the useful address list below.

Violence and crimes against domestic workers

Violence against domestic workers is a serious issue and it probably covers at least 70% of the case loads that many of the DWOs and unions receive. Many of them face abuses which range from sexual, physical to mental. The other 30% of the case load consist of accusations of criminal offences such as theft, murder, neglect and others.

Sister Clara, Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union says, “Every year there are 50,000 cases of domestic workers accused of stealing.”

These cases sometimes never get publicity because the domestic workers are embarrassed by the incidents and they know the employer is able to bribe the police and the lawyers. Sister Clara, adviser to the Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union said, “In some of these cases the employers are able to bribe the journalists. It’s extremely hard for a domestic worker who has been accused of theft even though she is innocent to be freed. She is judged guilty even before it goes to court. Most of them are very poor and don’t have the resources to go through the tedious expensive court procedures”.

Tensions between domestic worker unions and domestic worker organisations

Most of the domestic worker unions started as non-governmental organisations in which middle class women in the organisation gave the workers training in various areas such as understanding their rights, advocacy, preparing meetings, etc. When these workers understood their positions many started to break away from the NGOs and this created tensions between the middle class women in these NGOs and the workers. This was clearly seen in the Indonesian case (see Chapter 2 the box titled ‘Why trade unions, or democratic worker organisations or non-governmental organisations?’).

Tensions were seen during the ‘Domestic workers organising strategy workshop’ held in Yogyakarta between 25 and 31 March, 2007, where some of the workers of the union refuse to enter the office of the NGO they were previously part of. These tensions should be resolved by a higher understanding of their common vision and goals for the rights and welfare of domestic workers. By continuing to struggle to work together tensions give way to accommodation and tolerance. If harnessed effectively, the solidarity between upper and lower classes of society could prove more useful in broadening the reach of the DW campaign.



The industry of hiring domestic workers is fed by a system of discrimination. It is this system that is entrenched in the DWs own culture and societies. Many domestic workers who initiate action against the employer give up because they do not receive the support from family members or from the community, who usually advise them to “know their place”-“their place” as usually determined by their race, religion, sex, caste and economic status. If the system of discrimination is to be addressed, DW must be considered legitimate workers in society, equally entitled to all benefits and rights of any other labourer in any other industry.

The general attitude of the public towards domestic workers must change to that of respect. Respect in terms of the domestic worker's contribution in taking away the main load of domestic chores away from the employers so that they can contribute to the nation's economy. The domestic worker provides a clean and peaceful home when the employer returns from work. Unfortunately, DW contribution to the economy is not taken into account by most societies.

Discrimination and neglect are the reasons why it is an uphill task to obtain minimum wage, welfare benefits, proper working hours, insurance benefits, and other benefits from the government, welfare boards and other authorities. DWOs have to campaign and rally for years before some effect is seen. Before any changes happen there is first a need for strong domestic worker organisations to challenge society's attitudes and traditional beliefs toward them.

Therefore the need to involve other equally discriminated sectors of society such as workers in general. There are very few unions taking up the cause of domestic workers except if the DW members are formerly employed in the formal sector. There is still very little organising work among the informal workers, especially domestic workers. The larger civil society working for women and children's rights and protection, legal protection for the underprivileged and social justice need to be tapped constantly to broaden support and encouragement for domestic workers' struggles.

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<http://www.wiego.org/>
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<http://www.domesticworkerrights.org/sites/default/files/ENGtextRaR.pdf>

Useful Addresses and Resources

International Groups

United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

Set up to be an aid to and advocate for women of the developing world - it seeks to give them voice and visibility.

www.unifem.org.in/

'Claim and Celebrate Women Migrants' Human Rights through CEDAW'

A briefing paper on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and how to use it, giving examples such as the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union (IMWU) in Hong Kong.

By Jean D'Cunha UNIFEM, 2005 - ISBN 1-932827-21-8

www.unifem.org/resources/item_detail.php?ProductID=72

www.unifem-eseasia.org/projects/migrant/mig_pub.htm

Text of convention: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

'Progress of the World's Women 2005'

Women, Work and Poverty

UNIFEM, 2005

www.unifem.org/attachments/products/PoWW2005_eng.pdf

Fair Labour Association (FLA)

A non-profit organisation dedicated to ending sweatshop conditions in factories worldwide and building innovative and sustainable solutions to abusive labour conditions.

www.fairlabor.org

International Centre for Trade Union Rights (ICTUR)

Established in 1987 to defend and extend the rights of trade unions and trade unionists and to increase awareness of trade union rights and their violations.

UCATT House, 177 Abbeville Road

London SW4 9RL, UK

www.ictur.labournet.org

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

Set up in 1949, 40% of its membership are women, campaigns for workers' rights including women and child worker.

Boulevard Emile Jacqmain 155 B1, B-1210

Brussels, Belgium

www.icftu.org

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the tripartite UN agency that brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states in common action to promote

decent work throughout the world.
4 Route des Mourillons,
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland
www.ilo.org

All ILO Conventions, their text and list of which countries have ratified them, can be found at the ILOLEX database: www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/index.htm

Third World Network (TWN)

Generates activism and knowledge on international trade policies and global economics.
228 Macalister Road, 10400 Penang, Malaysia
www.twinside.org

All Women Count

Known in 10 countries with different names, the organisation's website is useful in obtaining information on the economic value of housework.
www.allwomenscount.net

Women Working Worldwide

Focuses on supporting the rights of women working in international production chains which supply the UK and other European countries with consumer goods such as food and clothing.

Angela Hale, Room 4, 121, Dept of Sociology, Manton Building, Rosamund Street West, Manchester M15 6LL, UK
www.poptel.org.uk/women-ww

Focus on the Global South

Combines policy research, advocacy, activism and grassroots capacity building on issues on international monetary policies.
www.focusweb.org/

International Restructuring Education Network Europe (IRENE)

Stimulates and facilitates the exchange of labour information to build workers solidarity.
<http://www.irene-network.nl/oncoming.htm>

Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO)

A global research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy.
www.wiego.org/

European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC)

Speaks with a single voice for European workers through the European social dialogue.
<http://www.etuc.org/>

Out of the Shadows: Organising and protecting domestic workers in Europe: the role of trade unions, ETUC conference report, November 2005

www.etuc.org/a/2809

IUF -The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations

Global union representing workers along the food chain and has been on the frontline putting the domestic workers' issue on the ILO agenda.

Switzerland

barbro.budin@iuf.org

www.iuf.org

Asian Groups

Asian Domestic Workers Network (ADWN)

Supports self-organising efforts of domestic workers in Asia, encourages networks and advocates for policies and programmes both in the local and regional levels.

Contact thru Committee for Asian Women: cawinfo@cawinfo.org

Committee for Asian Women (CAW)

Asian advocacy group that seeks to improve women workers' status both at the formal and informal sectors.

www.cawinfo.org

Visayan Forum Foundation, Inc, Philippines

Provides a range of crisis intervention programmes, para-legal and medical assistance and counseling.

www.visayanforum.org

National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM), India

Based in Bombay, it is the coordinating office and national movement working with adult and child domestic workers.

teresamsmhc@yahoo.com

Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union

Organises local domestic workers and campaigns for them at national, regional and international levels

hkdomestic@yahoo.com.hk

www.hkctu.org.hk

Rumpun Tjoet Njak Dien

Based in Yogyakarta, its activities include advocacy, organising and campaigns.

rumpun@indosat.net.id

Tunas Mulia Indonesian Domestic Workers Union

Based in Yogyakarta it is mostly involved in organising work.

rumpun@indosat.net.id

http://tunasmulia.blogspot.com

Jala PRT (National Network of Domestic Workers)

Based in Yogyakarta, it supports, campaigns and advocates for domestic workers rights.

jala_prt@yahoo.com

National House Managers Cooperative

Job placements and organising.
Seoul, South Korea
kanghara11@hanmail.net
www.kwwnet.org

Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union

Runs campaigns, organising work on wage and living conditions of domestic workers.
91/72 Thomas Colong, SS Colong Post, Madurai 625010, Tamil Nadu, India
Tel: 94436018780 - 9443608980
clarapitchai@yahoo.co.in

Women Workers Organisation (Penn Thozhilargal Sangam)

The group registered as a union and works with informal workers including domestic workers runs campaigns and provides support services.
8/2, Dharmaraja Koil Street
Kilpauk, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
Tel: 26478386; 9840466126
womenworkers@gmail.com

Domestic Worker groups in other countries

CONLACTRAHO - Confederación Latinoamericana y el Caribe de Trabajadoras del Hogar - Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Household Workers, Mexico
Began in 1988 they have member organisations from 13 countries, works with trade unions and have successfully campaigned in Bolivia and Peru for laws to protect domestic workers.
conlactraho2506@yahoo.com.mx

Asociacion Grupo de Trabajo Redes, Peru

Provides a range of centre-based and other services for domestic workers.
www.gruporedes.org

SADSAWU - South African Domestic Services and Allied Workers' Union

South Africa
Organises, runs campaigns and support services for domestic workers. They were successful in getting Unemployment Insurance Fund for domestic workers.
Hester.cosatu@webmail.co.za

Domestic Workers United, USA

Conducts trainings, campaigns and provides support services. They came up with a New York State-wide Bill of Rights for Domestic Workers.
domesticworkersunited@gmail.com
www.domesticworkersunited.org

Domestic workers must be recognised as workers that are integral to the economic activity of society because of the nature of their domestic work, which allows for household owners to take up employment outside their homes. However their vulnerability lies in their invisibility and alienation from other workers. Without formal unions to represent them, abuse and exploitation in the workplace in terms of work hours, wages and rest periods are considerably higher than workers in other formal sectors. Most domestic workers are women as household work is traditionally attributed as women's work. Existing cultural, religious and sexual discrimination against women makes these domestic workers more vulnerable to cruel punishment and violence.

This manual aims to assist the leaders of domestic worker groups to come out of a powerless situation by embracing the strength of the domestic worker organisation (DWO) or union. It is an empowering process to be involved in the union's or organisation's struggle for recognition of her contribution to the economy. The situation of domestic workers can be improved by building solidarity and strengthening the organisation's or union's capabilities.



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This manual would be available in Chinese, Bahasa Indonesia and Tamil.