



## **Organizing Domestic Workers through Research:**

### ***The Story of a Participatory Action Research with Women Migrant Domestic Workers, NGOs, and Union members in Lebanon***

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#### **1. Introduction**

The vulnerability of women migrant domestic workers (WMDWs) in Lebanon has been attributed to three main factors: “the sponsorship or “kafala” system, the recruitment process, and the lack of labor protection and legal redress” (Hamill 2011, 5). Perhaps the most significant challenge is the fragmented advocacy efforts of civil society organizations.

The scattered nature of civil society campaigns poses a significant challenge to the effective promotion of a comprehensive and rights-based approach to migration policies. Towards the end of 2012, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published a mapping of programmes and services targeting WMDWs across Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> The mapping examined how the domestic work subfield had progressed since the deliberations of the National Steering Committee on Women Migrant Domestic Workers in 2006 and pointed to four general trends: (i) NGO interventions are largely reactive, uncoordinated, and subsequently low impact; (ii) less than five of the eighteen NGOs surveyed offered capacity building programmes to domestic workers while the rest responded to the more urgent socio-medical, pastoral, psychological, and legal needs of workers; (iii) at the exception of occasional political statements in support of domestic workers, trade unions were preoccupied with the more nationally salient concerns of daily wage workers and public sector workers; and, (iv) none of the NGOs were systematically involved in the global campaign for domestic workers’ rights.

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As a follow-up to the mapping, the ILO implemented a participatory action research (PAR) with WMDWs, NGOs, and the National Federation of Employees' and Workers' Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL).<sup>3</sup> The PAR extended between the months of May 2012 and January 2014 (a total of 20 months).

The objective of this research was three-fold: (i) raising workers' consciousness among WMDWs in Lebanon to encourage their active participation in advocacy campaigns; (ii) encouraging collaboration between WMDWs, unions, and NGOs over priorities and interventions; and (iii) creating synergies with the global domestic workers' movement. The following is a summary of the literature guiding this research, a description of the methodology, and a review of the key findings.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

Promoting a comprehensive and rights-based approach to immigration policies requires the active participation of migrant workers in decision making (Gordon 2001; Hayashi 2010), collaboration between NGOs and trade unions around shared objectives (Taran and Demaret 2006), and the engagement by WMDWs, NGOs, and trade unions in transregional and transnational advocacy efforts (Piper 2005).

*2.1. Active participation of migrant workers:* Attending to the immediate needs of MDWs, through service provision or referrals, does not incapacitate the social and economic structures (racism, poverty, and gender related vulnerabilities) that are enabling these needs to emerge in the first place. Legal services, for example, have privileged the individual controversies of domestic workers over collective struggles (Hayashi 2010, 503) as well as developed a dependence on the professional expertise of lawyers (Hayashi 2010, 504). WMDWs must be proactive in advancing their political and economic interests through worker literacy and a sustainable network of strong allies (Gordon 2001, 98).

*2.2. Collaboration between NGOs and trade unions:* Because of their work with communities at the grassroots level, NGOs and migrant associations offer perspectives and evidence-based research that can encourage as well as inform immigration policy debates. In the absence of union support, however, NGO-generated reform processes hold little sway in producing the desired legislative reforms. Across the world, labor

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<sup>3</sup> The research was conceptualized and implemented by Ms. Marie-José Tayah in collaboration with FENASOL (Mr. Castro Abdallah; Ms. Inaam Abdallah; Ms. Farah Abdallah); Kafa (Ms. Rola Abi Mourched; Ms. Sarah Chreif; Ms. Ghada Jabbour); Insan Association (Ms. Samantha Hutt; Ms. Lala Arabian; Ms. Mariela Acuña); Nasawiya (Ms. Farah Salkha, Ms. Farah Kobeissi, Ms. Rana Boukarim); Frontiers Ruwad (Ms. Bernadette Habib; Ms. Marine de Haas); and the leaders of the different communities of migrant workers in Lebanon (Ms. Gemma Justo; Ms. Pendaline Pinero; Ms. Theresa Pontillas; Ms. Malani Kanda Arachige; Ms. Ainee; Ms. Anna Fernandez; Ms. Rahel Zegeye; Ms. Aimee Razanajay; Ms. Sujana Rana).

policies are increasingly determined by means of social dialogue (Compston 2002, 1). Under this form of governance, employment and social protection policies are codetermined by representative organizations of employers, workers, and relevant authorities (Compston 2002, 1). Union endorsement of domestic workers' priorities can set the concerns of the latter on the agenda of social dialogue consultations in the labor migration subsystem, generating the desired policy impact.

*2.3. Engagement in transregional and transnational efforts:* Structural adjustment programs and the resultant decline in the standards of living caused many countries of origin to adopt labor-export policies (Gupta 2003, 80; Zarembka 2002). Concurrently, the rise of anti-welfarist regimes delegated care work to the province of the family (Yeoh and Annadurai 2008, 548), making wealthier families in countries of origin and destination increasingly dependent on the services of domestic workers and caregivers. These codependent developments activated the "global care chain" where "an older daughter from a poor family cares for her siblings while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrating nanny who, in turn, cares for the child of a family in a rich country" (Hochschild 2000, 131). It is therefore important for local experiences to feed into transnational advocacy networks "that interact with formal regimes concerned in industrial relations at national and regional levels" (Piper 2005, 99). Domestic workers' priorities must be framed "in terms of global, transnational, and human rights" (Constable 2009, 143).

### **3. Methodology**

PAR methodologies were used to join the three streams proposed in the literature. PAR methodologies are often used to identify the needs of immigrant populations and to promote action and problem-solving within immigrant and host communities (Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte, and Suarez-Balcazar 2009, 114). Through PAR processes, Hispanic community residents in the United States designed solutions to address their health needs and concerns (Suarez-Balcazar, Martinez, and Byots 2005), Filipina domestic workers produced an action plan for domestic workers' organizations in two Canadian cities and policy recommendations for the Canadian and Philippine governments (Grande, Nona, and Joanna-Kerr 1998), young undocumented students in Utah produced and presented a play as a means to elicit and voice their concerns to their host community (Cahill 2010), researchers documented the impact of deportation policy on Central American immigrant families living in the northeastern United States (Lyke, Herchberg, and Brabeck 2011), and medical social workers collaborated with the Sudanese refugee community in Omaha to initiate family education about domestic violence, community advocacy by and for refugees, and relationship building with a metropolitan police department (Gustafson, Traverse, and Iluebbey 2013).

A PAR is "undertaken collaboratively with and for the individuals, groups or communities who are its subject" (Pain 2004, 652). Researchers include relevant community partners in the earliest stages of setting research priorities and designing

intervention strategies (Selener, 1997). Community partners are invited to engage in joint reflection on the needs of the community and to use the outcome of this thought process to support social change (Suarez-Balcazar, Martinez, and Byots 2005, 147).

### 3.1. PAR Team

The research team was comprised of four local NGOs, a national federation of unions, community leaders, and ILO staff. The research was conceptualized and coordinated by ILO's research coordinator. The following is an introduction to the team members, beginning with the Lebanese NGOs. The selection of local NGOs was based on the extent to which their theories of change (see Tayah 2012, fig. 2) and activities are aligned with the principles of the PAR process.

Nasawiya's Anti-Racism Movement (ARM): ARM is a grassroots movement of individuals and organizations working to eliminate all forms of racism in Lebanon. ARM has 40 permanent member activists, 3,000 frequent online blog followers, and 6,000-7,000 occasional blog readers. In 2011, ARM established the Migrant Community Center (MCC) in one of Beirut's poorest suburbs, *Nabaa*, where the majority of migrant workers in Lebanon reside (since, the MCC has moved to *Gemmayze*). The idea behind the establishment of MCC was to provide a meeting space for migrant workers, outside the church context, where they can receive language and computer skills. The MCC now operates as an "unofficial union" with legitimate representatives who coordinate sit-ins and advocacy campaigns. ARM is a subdivision of Nasawiya (Arabic for feminist), a feminist collective.<sup>4</sup> Two members from Nasawiya's ARM, Nasawiya's coordinator and a Nasawiya volunteer, joined the research team.

Insan Association (Insan): The Insan School Project (ISP) was established in 2004 to integrate the unschooled children of migrant workers, refugees and stateless persons into the Lebanese public or private school system by intervening at three distinct levels: academic, psycho-social, and legal. More than 350 migrant children have so far been integrated into the public or private school system, and 95 per cent have passed their classes. No dropouts have been registered. Two students have gone on to pursue higher education in Lebanon and more than 20 students have enrolled in technical schools. Complementary to Insan's ISP are Insan's evening adult educational programme and legal support programme.<sup>5</sup> Insan's research and advocacy advisor joined the research team.

Kafa (Enough Violence & Exploitation): KAFA's mission is to work towards eradicating all forms of gender-based violence and exploitation of women and children in Lebanon. Kafa produces research, offers legal and psychosocial support through its Listening and

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Ali Fakhry, former coordinator of ARM, 02/09/2012.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Lala Arabian, Executive Manager at Insan Association, 02/10/ 2012.

Counseling Center, and disseminates newsletters for domestic workers in Tagalog, Sinhala, Tamil, and Nepalese. Kafa has more recently established a self-help group of Nepalese women domestic workers in Lebanon (NARI) in collaboration with the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions and Anti-Slavery International.<sup>6</sup> Kafa's domestic workers' focal point and community developer joined the research team.

Frontiers Ruwad Association (FR): FR's mandate is to defend and advocate on behalf of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. FR is developing a professional quality legal counseling and advocacy programs. Its staff and partners are trained and advised by experts with experience in international human rights and refugee law and legal aid development, and includes counselors with backgrounds in law and social sciences. FR's legal expert joined the research team.

Community Leaders: Over the years, women from the various communities of domestic workers have emerged as leaders on account of the links that they have established with NGOs, embassies, and other domestic workers. These women are also known for their ability to link "freelancing" domestic workers with employment and housing opportunities. Eleven community leaders have joined the research team.

The National Federation of Trade Unions and Employees (FENASOL): Established in 1966, the National Federation of Trade Unions and Employees (FENASOL) is the oldest federation of unions in the country. FENASOL has a long history of organizing migrant workers in the tiling factories of Beirut's southern suburbs where its offices are located.<sup>7</sup> In spite of the unusual challenges associated with organizing migrant workers in private households, FENASOL has volunteered several of its members to coordinate, participate, and host the PAR. FENASOL has been very involved in the preparation of this research process and has become a regular participant in ILO's activities and meetings

### 3.2. Venue

The PAR was convened at FENASOL headquarters in Beirut. The Lebanese law offers union offices immunity against police raids, thus ensuring the security of undocumented migrant workers who will congregate in FENASOL for the PAR. By convening the PAR in FENASOL, we hoped for migrant domestic workers and NGOs to develop the habit of referring complaints to FENASOL members who will treat these referrals on a case-by-case basis without neglecting the collective nature of these problems. Finally, FENASOL offices are open to workers from various sectors, including the telecommunication, transportation, education, electricity, construction,

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Rola Abi Mourched, former Domestic Workers' Project Coordinator at Kafa, 06/13/2012.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Inaam Abdallah, Chair of the Women Workers' Committee in FENASOL, 01/10/2013.

and tiling sectors. Regular contact between migrant domestic workers and workers in other occupations reinforces the view that migrant domestic workers are also workers.<sup>8</sup>

### *3.3. Data collection*

**Homogenous focus groups:** The ILO convened seven focus groups over the course of ten Sundays. Six of the focus groups were organized around nationality (i.e., Sri Lankan, Nepalese, Philippine, Ethiopian, Madagascan, and Cameroonian), and one focus group involved participants from various nationalities. The intention behind forming nationally homogenous groups is to produce “free-flowing conversations” (Morgan 1997, 35-36) among participants who share similar experiences.

**Domestic workers as facilitators:** Community leaders were invited to facilitate the focus groups. Unlike other members of the PAR team, community leaders are able to tap into the cognitive shortcuts of the group because they share the experiences of the participants. In preparation for the PAR, the ILO convened eight orientation sessions during which the community leaders were exposed to the ethics of research, the techniques of facilitating focus groups, and guiding questions. NGO and trade union volunteers were assigned as note takers to each of the focus groups with a view to reinforcing their role as learners in, rather than drivers of this process. Trainings in focus group techniques were convened with community leaders and union members in anticipation of the PAR.

**Guiding questions:** Pre-specified, yet loosely asked, questions were used to enable systematic comparison across the focus groups. The guiding questions are an adaptation of a longer instrument designed by Dr. Azfar Khan, Senior ILO Migration Specialist to examine the living and working conditions of migrant workers.

**Logistics:** A total of 78 domestic workers participated in this research. For logistical convenience, Nepalese, Sri Lankan, Ethiopian, and Filipina participants met in FENASOL during May-July 2013, while Madagascan, Cameroonian, and the mixed nationality group met in FENASOL during December 2013-January 2014. The two processes were identical in structure and content and their findings will be reported jointly.

## **4. Findings**

The PAR process consisted of 4 distinct stages: (i) setting priorities; (ii) voicing priorities; (iii) realizing the economic value of WMDWs; and, (iv) developing a joint plan of action.

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<sup>8</sup> Minutes of meeting between ILO and FENASOL, 01/10/2013.

#### 4.1. Setting priorities

During the first session, participants discussed (in focus groups) the working and living conditions of domestic workers in Lebanon. Each group identified several priority areas. Note takers (NGO and union volunteers) reported these priorities to all the participants in a plenary session. The facilitator built on these briefings to generate a comprehensive list of concerns (see list of concerns in annex 1).

#### 4.2. Voicing priorities

During the second session, participants were invited to verbalize the priorities that had been raised during the previous session in the form of targeted demands. Workers organized these solutions in the form of a joint statement which was subsequently shared with different media outlets.

#### Box 1. Joint statement by PAR participants

##### Women migrant domestic workers demand changes on International Domestic Workers' Day.

*Women migrant domestic workers in Lebanon celebrated International Domestic Workers' Day with the Federation Nationale des Syndicats des Ouvriers et des Employés au Liban (FENASOL) and local nongovernmental organizations.*

Beirut (16/06/2013) – On 16 June 2011, the International Labour Conference of the International adopted the Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers which is also referred to as **the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)**. The Convention recognizes that domestic work is work and that domestic workers are, like other workers, entitled to decent work. Women migrant domestic workers from various nationalities, and nongovernmental organizations convened in FENASOL on June 16, 2013 to celebrate the International Domestic Workers' Day which commemorates the adoption of this groundbreaking Convention. On this occasion, participating women migrant domestic workers produced the following demands:

##### **We the migrant domestic workers in Lebanon demand our respective governments to:**

- Offer pre-departure trainings that: Expose us to the methods of cleaning and cooking in Lebanon and to ways for operating complicated home appliances; Introduce us to basic words and expressions in the Lebanese dialect; and Raise our awareness to the working conditions in Lebanon
- Establish a committee in embassies and consulates to receive and process our complaints irrespective of our immigration status
- Lift deployment bans in order to increase our chances of finding employment abroad, especially in the light of our limited skills
- Conclude agreements with Lebanon to limit recruitment to certified private employment agencies, and to establish end-of-service indemnity

**We the migrant domestic workers in Lebanon demand the Lebanese Government to:**

- Revert from leaving us in detention indeterminately without trial and treat us humanely while there
- Monitor how we are being treated by hospitals given the basic insurance coverage that does not extend to us adequate treatment for major injuries or illnesses
- Encourage its relevant agencies to inspect our workplaces and implement the laws and regulations that protect our rights
- Prosecute those who physically and sexually assault us, demand compensation from them, and shame them in the various media outlets in order to deter others from abusing us
- Ensure the right to free education and medical treatment to our children in Lebanon
- Refrain from holding our children responsible for our immigration status
- Condemn all forms of racial discrimination, by enforcing the decision of the Ministry of Tourism to give us equal access to all touristic sites in Lebanon, including beach resorts and restaurants

**We the migrant domestic workers in Lebanon demand Lebanese Employers to:**

- Respect our right to proper medical treatment, beyond the standard analgesic pill
- Refrain from asking us to perform dangerous tasks, like cleaning the outside of windows in buildings and lifting heavy carpets
- Restrict our working time to eight hours
- Respect our right to a day off outside the house

**We the migrant domestic workers in Lebanon demand private employment agencies to:**

- Offer translation services in order to facilitate communication between us and the employment agencies and refrain from employing individuals who specialize in beating and terrorizing us
- Refrain from withholding or earning any of our wages

**We the migrant domestic workers in Lebanon commit to:**

- Learning the basics of the Arabic language before travelling to Lebanon
- Claiming higher wages that are commensurate with the work demanded from us
- Recognizing and rejecting violence in all its forms (verbal, physical, sexual, and psychological)



#### 4.3. Realizing the economic value of WMDWs

During the third week, domestic workers were invited to reflect on their contributions to the economy of the country of origin (in terms of remittances), to recruitment agencies and smugglers, and their indirect contributions to the care economy and to women employment in Lebanon. The purpose of this exercise was to sensitize domestic workers to their status as workers in an income-producing enterprise, while identifying the extent to which various actors across the chain are benefiting from this industry.

#### Box 2. Interesting facts

- Of the WMDWs who participated in this research, 50 per cent reported having a female employer who worked.
- On average, participating WMDWs earned 356 USD per month and remitted 58 per cent of their monthly income.
- On average, participating WMDWs earned a monthly bonus of 34 USD.
- Participating WMDWs reported spending 18 percent of their working day on cooking-related chores, 42 percent on cleaning related tasks, and 40 percent caring for children.
- Participating WMDWs are employed in households that average 4 inhabitants.
- Participating WMDWs Domestic workers paid an average of 564 USD to PEAs, and 800 USD to smugglers. On arrival, domestic workers paid the recruitment agency in Lebanon an average of 496 USD (in the form of withheld wages).

#### 4.4. Developing an Action Plan

The research team convened a two-hour plenary during which participants identified the top priorities that needed immediate action, and formulated the first draft of a plan of action to progress on these areas. The action plan identified the role of NGOs, WMDWs, and FENASOL in fulfilling these priorities:

1. Improving pre-departure trainings: The NGO Kafa collaborated with the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) in 2012 to develop pre-departure information sessions (i.e., videos, witness accounts, information sheets for trainers, information about NGO services in Lebanon, and questions for PEAs) for Nepalese domestic workers seeking employment in Lebanon. Kafa recommended adapting these information sessions for dissemination in other countries of origin. MDWs emphasized the centrality of their experiences to adapting the pre-departure information sessions and suggested convening nationally homogenous focus groups to discuss them. FENASOL offered to partner with corresponding trade unions in the countries of origin to implement this initiative.

2. Establishing committees in embassies and consulates to follow up on the complaints of MDWs, irrespective of their migration status: migrant workers agreed to draft a letter petitioning their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs to establish a committee in embassies and consulates. This committee will respond to their complaints and grievances. Every three month, these committees will check on the situation of their nationals across Lebanon. When employers are not collaborative and MDWs unreachable, the committee will request a court order to inspect the household or workplace. This same committee can provide legal assistance to MDWs in detention centers.

3. Encouraging recruitment through certified PEAs in countries of origin and Lebanon: FENASOL committed to requesting, through its counterparts in the countries of origin, an official list of certified PEAs there. In addition, FENASOL offered to approach the Ministry of Labour for an official list of certified agencies in Lebanon. Updated lists of certified PEAs in Lebanon and in the countries of origin can be published on FENASOL's website. In addition, MDWs recommended documenting their experiences with PEAs in the countries of origin with a view to identifying protection gaps.

4. Ensuring humane treatment of MDWs in detention centers: participants emphasized the need for alternatives to the detention of undocumented MDWs. The majority of detention cases are the result of four chain events: (1) the employer withholds the wages of MDWs; (2) MDWs leave their employers' home; (3) employers accuse MDWs of theft and report them to the General Security; (4) General Security issues warrants for the arrest of MDWs. FENASOL recommended addressing this growing pattern by building an operationalizable typology (e.g., criminal, immigration, civil, labor...) of the various violations which can be leveled against domestic workers during their stay in Lebanon to then identify corresponding remedies and responsible government bodies. Participants agreed that cooperation with the Syndicate of Lawyers is important for this mapping exercise.

5. Ensuring humane treatment of MDWs in hospitals: FENASOL offered to facilitate a working group comprised of Lebanon's Ministry of Health and trade unions in the countries of origin with a view to identifying and repatriating the bodies of unidentified migrant domestic workers. FENASOL emphasized the importance of "lobbying" the Ministry of Health with respect to three of the health-related concerns which were raised by PAR participants: (i) the insurance cards of MDWs are often withheld by their employers and, as a consequence, they are denied emergency care in hospitals; (ii) insurance policies for MDWs guarantee very basic health coverage, excluding many of the more frequent and serious occupational hazards like burns, muscle strain injuries and exposure to poisonous chemicals; (iii) the medical care provided to MDWs in public hospitals is lacking relative to that provided to Lebanese nationals.

6. Household Inspections: Because Lebanon's Ministry of Labour counts very few labour inspectors and random household inspections are considered a breach of household privacy, FENASOL recommended a combination of the following inspection mechanisms: (i) making pre-employment household inspections a requirement to prevent household conditions that are propitious for labour violations (e.g., absence of private room, single male employer, large families, strained financial situation); (ii) carrying out random household inspections every three years, at the time of contract renewal; and, (iii) requiring employers to arrange mandatory and private interviews between MDWs and social workers at the Ministry of Labour on a quarterly basis.

## **5. Evaluation**

Given its organic nature, the PAR has set several activities in motion, and in doing so has progressed on the PAR's three stated objectives.

### *5.1. Raising workers' consciousness among WMDWs in Lebanon to encourage their active participation in advocacy campaigns:*

The establishment of the FCUDWs: The 79 participating domestic workers provided the critical mass/membership required for the establishment of FENASOL's Founding Committee for a Union of Domestic Workers (FCUDWs). FENASOL drafted the internal statute of the FCUDWs. It is currently under review by FENASOL's internal leadership. Members of the committee include Lebanese and migrant women who perform cleaning functions in/for offices and households in Lebanon. Committee members meet weekly in FENASOL to discuss issues of relevance to their community and/or to the broader community of domestic workers.

WMDWs voicing their demands in public: The joint statement generated mixed reactions among members of the press. WMDWs were invited to participate in radio shows to elaborate further on the demands expressed in the communiqué. Community leaders and PAR participants were also invited to speak to officials of the Ministry of Labour and the General Directorate of General Security during the conference "Beyond the Kafala System" organized by Insan Association. PAR participants were also invited to speak in the conference organized by Kafa and the Anti-Salavery International in December of 2013.

Action plan guiding NGO projects: the action plan produced in the context of the PAR was used by Insan Association to guide the drafting of a project proposal.

### *5.2. Encouraging collaboration between WMDWs, unions, and NGOs over priorities and interventions*

In the course of developing the action plan, WMDWs requested NGOs and FENASOL to organize additional sessions on the topics of (1) detention; (2) gender-based violence; and, (3) the children of MDWs in Lebanon. With ILO support, Ruwad Frontiers convened two sessions on the topic of detention in FENASOL. The first session was designed to learn from the workers about their experience with the detention process. The second offered practical tips to domestic workers to mitigate the risks associated with the detention process (e.g., the importance of claiming one's right to due process, circumventing abusive practices by law enforcement officers, discerning and avoiding individuals posing as officers of the law).

Also in FENASOL, and with ILO support, Kafa convened a session around the concept of gender-based violence. Participants concluded that gender-based violence starts at home, and that solutions to gender-based violence need to address the abusive structures at home and in Lebanon. A week later, Kafa convened another session with the same participants to discuss the impact of gender-based violence on individual workers. The workers exteriorized individual experiences of gender-based violence through writing. Kafa has published a compilation of these stories in "If not for the system...Migrant domestic workers in Lebanon tell their stories."

To raise the attention of policymakers to the growing community of children of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, PAR participants organized a drawing competition for the children of WMDWs. The competition was attended by several embassy officials and journalists.

### *5.3. Creating synergies with the global domestic workers' movement*

Involving the International Domestic Workers Federation: Ms. Myrle Witbooi, Secretary General of South Africa's Domestic Workers' Union (SADSAWU) and Chair of the International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF), was invited to launch the PAR. Via Skype, she spoke to community leaders, union members and NGO representative about her experience in organizing domestic workers in South Africa during Apartheid and subsequently establishing an international network of domestic workers' organization. The research coordinator kept Ms. Witbooi informed of the activities and findings of the PAR. Ms. Witbooi was instrumental in extending the invitation to Ms. Justo, PAR participant from the Philippines, to participate in IDWF's founding congress in Montevideo in October 2013.

Study tours to the countries of origin: The ILO supported study tours to Nepal for two PAR team members. Ms. Jana Nakhal (FENASOL) and Ms. Ousmat Faour (Marsad NGO) met with Nepalese NGOs and Unions. Ms. Nakhal's recommendations have

informed FENASOL's budding collaboration strategy with GEFONT and its affiliates in Lebanon.

FCUDW participation in international fora: PAR participant Ana Fernandez, a domestic worker from Sri Lanka, accompanied FENASOL's President to the ILO/SARTUC workshop on promoting trade union cooperation on labour migration in origin and destination countries in Kathmandu, 16-18 September 2013. Anna had the opportunity to speak to government and union representatives from countries of origin in Asia (Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka...) about the problems facing domestic workers in Lebanon. FENASOL and Ms. Gemma Rubio, PAR participant from the Philippines, were invited to participate in the first founding congress of the International Domestic Workers Network in Montevideo, Uruguay on 24-28 October 2013. There, Gemma was invited to speak to academics and the International Domestic Workers' Federation about her experience in organizing DWs in Lebanon. In addition, Gemma participated in two workshops (1) campaigning for C. 189; and, (2) organizing domestic workers.

## **6. Conclusion**

The achievements of this research are not negligible. Women migrants have sought employment as domestic workers in Lebanon since the 1980s. Faith-based organizations and later non-governmental organizations have taken the lead in providing services to these workers. Only through the PAR have unions become effectively involved in the migrant domestic work subfield, even extending the scope of their agenda to national domestic workers and cleaners in private businesses and offices. Again for the first time have migrant domestic workers from various nationalities come together around joint priorities and subsequently engaged policymakers in national and international policy fora over issues of relevance to them.

Will the FCDWU transcend into a larger domestic workers' movement, spanning regions and nationalities of domestic workers? Has the PAR succeeded in building real solidarity between Lebanese and migrant domestic workers? Will NGO and Union members continue their collaboration after the conclusion of the PAR? Will the FCDWU overcome legal hurdles and the exclusion of domestic workers from the labour code to become a legally sanctioned Domestic Workers' Union?

Many challenges lay ahead and overcoming them depends on the good will, initiative and energy of domestic workers, trade unions, and NGOs.

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**Annex 1: Comprehensive list of concerns voiced by Migrant Domestic Workers during the PAR**

	Ethiopia	Madagascar	Cameroun	Sri Lanka	Philippines	Nepal	Mixed
<b>Pre-departure</b>							
Deployment bans increase the vulnerability of WMDWs to human trafficking and forced labour	X				X	X	
WMDWs have no knowledge of contractual terms		X		X		X	
WMDWs are exposed to deceptive recruitment practices			X	X			X
WMDWs do not receive training/orientation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>In Lebanon</b>							
WMDWs have no knowledge of contractual terms because the contracts are written in Arabic	X		X			X	X
Language barriers prevent WMDWs from complaining to employers about their working conditions during the first three years of their employment	X					X	
Employers do not provide WMDWs with adequate medical treatment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Private Employment Agencies withhold the first three months of a worker's wages	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Employers withhold the personal documents of live-in WMDWs	X		X	X			
Employers openly use race arguments to justify abuse	X	X	X				X



Employers sexually harass domestic workers		X	X	X			
Employers prevent WMDWs from contacting or visiting family members in Lebanon	X	X	X				X
WMDWs are overworked					X		X
WMDWs are forced to work long hours	X				X		
The children of WMDWs do not have access to appropriate social, educational, and medical services.				X			X
WMDWs suffer dislocation from family members in the homeland			X	X			X
The children of employers abuse WMDWs							X
Private Employment Agencies coerce WMDWs into returning to the homes of abusive employers		X		X			X
Embassies are not responsive to the concerns of WMDWs				X			
Employers force live-in WMDWs to work in multiple homes		X					X