

# Decent Work for Domestic Workers in the Philippines



International  
Labour  
Organization

## The Challenge



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Domestic work is one of the most important occupations for millions of workers, mostly women in the country and around the world. In the Philippines, there around 1.9 million are in domestic service, while Filipino migrant domestic workers comprise an increasing share of deployed overseas workers reaching 15 per cent in 2008 and 22 per cent in 2009. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates the number of domestic workers globally as reaching up to 53 million with ages between 15 years old and above. This number does not account child domestic workers since surveys do not cover young workers below 15 years old.

Despite their significant contribution to economy and society, domestic workers are exposed to extreme vulnerabilities based on the very nature of their occupation. They are employed in

private households, living with employers family, isolated from their own family and network and hidden from public scrutiny. Numerous laws and legislations for workers had been passed in several countries but they all excluded domestic workers since for domestic work was always perceived as not a real form of employment. Due to this global notion, domestic workers are not protected with labour standards.

In June 2012, ILO member states adopted the ILO Convention 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers at the International Labour Conference (ILC), which meant to provide a global, minimum labour protection for domestic workers. Despite these efforts, ILO and other social partners believe that there's still a lot of work ahead in realizing decent work for all domestic workers. The Philippine government has enacted Republic Act 10361 otherwise known as the Domestic Workers law (*Batas Kasambahay*) to institute policies for protection and welfare of domestic workers working in the country.

## The Response

The ILO launched efforts to uphold the rights of domestic workers through the “Domestic Workers Empowerment Programme” (DWEPP) project and facilitate formalization of employment and working conditions of domestic workers in the Philippines. These initiatives are implemented in collaboration with the Philippine Technical Working Group on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which consists of ILO’s partners from the government, employers and workers groups, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, the academe, the informal economy workers group and faith-based organizations.

DWEPP and the formalization of employment of domestic workers aims to focus on these key areas of action: support self-facilitation capacity building of domestic workers on rights and basic financial literacy; design and implement strategic capacity building programmes to enable government agencies and service providers mandated to implement *Batas Kasambahay*; organize and capacitate domestic workers and their employers for representation to social dialogue; aiming for services that will lessen cases of domestic workers that are forced into labour, child labour or are trafficked while helping those who were abused.

### Key Statistics

- At least 1.9 million workers, aged 15 years old and above, engage in domestic worker as their primary occupation in 2010.
- In 2010, the average daily pay received by domestic workers was Php132.6 per day across the country; Php176.2 per day in the National Capital Region; and Php158.3 per day in Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon (CALABARZON) Region.

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## Strategies

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As mandated by law, the ratification process of ILO Convention No. 189 is always led by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). With the support of the ILO and the Domestic Work TWG, DOLE and the Domestic Work TWG formulated an action plan with the goal to promote for the effective implementation of *Batas Kasambahay* with the view of formalizing working arrangements and employment of domestic workers, thus improving their lives and working conditions to achieve decent work.

### Relevant ILO Convention and Recommendation

- Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

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## Achievements

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- In June 2013, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW), Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO), domestic workers, informal economy sector and civil society organizations developed a common strategic plan of action in organizing domestic workers into a national union.
- In March 2014, the Philippine Technical Group on Decent Work for Domestic Workers assessed previous initiatives and developed a national plan of action to continue promoting the application of ILO Convention No. 189 and to effectively implement *Batas Kasambahay*.
- The trade unions, domestic workers and other workers groups embarked on organizing local domestic workers, guided by the common organizing plan.
- Workers groups have pilot-tested the Domestic Workers Empowerment Programme guidebook and modules to domestic workers they organize, giving it as entry point of service in reaching out and encouraging the domestic workers to participate in social dialogue and join workers organization.
- Support to convening employers of domestic workers for representation in policy advocacy and social dialogue has also been started by the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP).



### Contact

Ms Ana Liza U. Valencia  
National Project Coordinator  
Email: [valencia@ilo.org](mailto:valencia@ilo.org)

International Labour Organization  
Country Office for the Philippines  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor Yuchengco Tower  
RCBC Plaza 6819 Ayala Avenue  
Makati City 1200 Philippines  
Tel: +632 580 9900  
Website: [www.ilo.org/manila](http://www.ilo.org/manila)

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## Components

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**Donor:** Japan Social Safety Net Fund  
**Partners:** Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW), Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa, Migrants Forum in Asia, Alliance of Workers in the Informal Economy/Sector, Samahan at Ugnayang Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinas and Visayan Forum Foundation, Inc.

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