

# RESEARCH NETWORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKER RIGHTS



## DEAR COLLEAGUES,

You are reading the 14th newsletter of the Research Network for Domestic Worker Rights, including information on the implementation process of the ILO Convention, campaigns, and news from the world of research. We have added a section on research questions, aiming at connecting the research conducted by members of the network more closely. You are welcome to contributing to the section by submitting your research questions and ideas for the next newsletter as well as answering to the questions posed in this edition.

### 1. UPDATES ON THE CONVENTION AND CAMPAIGN NEWS

#### Gulf countries

90 groups, among them human rights organizations and unions, signed a joint statement calling on Gulf countries to better protect domestic workers' rights. recommending:

- Establish and enforce comprehensive labor law protections for migrant workers;
- Reform the kafala visa system to ensure that workers can change employers without being required to first obtain their consent;
- Remove the "exit permit" requirement in Saudi Arabia and Qatar;
- Strengthen regulation and monitoring of labor recruitment agencies, including eliminating recruitment fees for workers;
- Ensure that migrants have access to justice and support services;
- Expand the Abu Dhabi Dialogue to include labor-origin countries from Africa, such as Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya, and participation by nongovernmental groups.

Further information: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/11/23/gulf-countries-increase-migrant-worker-protection>.

**Pic:** The Argentine government runs a campaign that advertises the registration of domestic workers. Photo: Helen Schwenken, Buenos Aires, 2014

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THE NEWSLETTER INCLUDES CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MANUEL ABRANTES, LAETITIA CARRERAS, ROSIE COX, KATERINA DEDEROVÁ, MARINA DE REGT, HADELZEIN M. ELFATIH, SIMEL ESIM, HILDEGARD HAGEMANN, CLAIRE HOBDEN, MARIANNE NOH, KARRIN PAPE, ALEXANDRA RICARD-GUAY, MARY ROMERO, STEFAN ROTHER, HELEN SCHWENKEN, ELIZABETH TANG, VARGHESE THEKANATH, NISHA VARIA, CHRISTINA VEGA, STEFANIE VISEL, MYRTLE WITBOOI.

## Chile

Chile approved Convention 189 and the Bill of Rights for Domestic Workers in September.

## World Social Forum on Migration

At the World Social Forum on Migration in Johannesburg, on December 7th, 2014, the workshop "Migration – a road to a good living?" took place. The workshop was organized by Bread for the World, Global Migration Associates, and Justitia et Pax. Speakers included Eunice Dhadhla of the South African Domestic Services and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU), Hildegard Hageman (Justitia et Pax), Nicola Piper (Global Migration Associates), Christal O. Spel (University of Helsinki), and Sophia Wirsching (Bread for the World).

## IDWF

IDWF received the Jaap Kruithof award to empower and unite domestic workers (see picture on this page. of Myrtle Witbooi). Pia Stalparet, president of the ACV-CSC Service Union in Belgium said, "The presentation of the Jaap Kruithof award is a huge sign of appreciation and recognition for all the organizations that have banded together in the IDWF."



## India – News from the National Platform for Domestic Workers

Women domestic workers on Nov. 11, 2014 testified at a Public Hearing before a jury headed by the Chairperson of the National Women's Commission, Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam. The Public Hearing was organized by the National Platform for Domestic Workers (NPDW) which is composed of trade unions and organizations of domestic workers from around the country. The cases presented by domestic workers reflected the various issues that the workers face: rough and rude treatment, withholding of wages, arbitrary dismissal from work, overwork with no overtime wages, false allegations of stealing, and even cases of rape and murder.

The National Platform demands comprehensive legislation for domestic workers as well as ratification of the ILO Convention 189. The National Platform demands that a law is enacted to cover the entire range of issues affecting domestic workers. The law should regulate employment and conditions of work, fix wages and hours of work, regulate placement agencies and provide a mechanism for resolution of disputes and protection of employment. Social protection provisions should include social security, health, education and child care facilities, housing, skill training and pensions.

## Germany

Prof. Kirsten Scheiwe, University of Hildesheim, Eva Welskop-Deffaa from Ver.di, the service worker union in Germany, and Dr. Karin Jurczyk, Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V., München, wrote an open letter, calling for decent work for domestic workers and improvements in the domestic work sector in

connection with the implementation of Convention 189 in Germany. Link: [http://www.uni-hildesheim.de/media/presse/2014\\_Aufruf\\_Menschenwuerdige\\_Arbeit\\_f%C3%BCr\\_Hausangestellte\\_ILO\\_Uni\\_Hildesheim.pdf](http://www.uni-hildesheim.de/media/presse/2014_Aufruf_Menschenwuerdige_Arbeit_f%C3%BCr_Hausangestellte_ILO_Uni_Hildesheim.pdf). (in German). Different actors from civil society supported the open letter (e.g. labour unions, churches, NGOs) as did many researchers. The media in Germany covered the topic.

## ILO Domestic Work Resources

The ILO sends out information on ILO resources on domestic work via a mailing list. For subscription go to <http://ilo.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe/post?u=5134ae699cf8943ebbbe07611&id=dc16397cbc>

## 2. SARAH VAN WALSUM RN-DWR remembering Sarah van Walsum

In early November 2014, our friend and colleague Sarah van Walsum passed away at the age of 59. Over the last years, Sarah dedicated her best efforts to several activist and academic initiatives on the rights of migrants. She was relentless in her support to grassroots organizations and younger scholars, besides teaching and conducting research on the subjects of migration law and transnational families at the VU University Amsterdam. We will always remember Sarah for her commitment to defending the rights of migrant domestic workers, her attentive listening to everyone's point of view and her cheerful encouragement to all of those pushing for greater civic awareness and social justice. Let us strive to keep her legacy alive.

## **IDWF remembering Sarah van Walsum**

Sarah Katherine van Walsum

\* 18 February 1955

† 9 November 2014

We in IDWF were very sorry to hear that the activist researcher Sarah van Walsum had passed away far too early.

Sarah van Walsum has been with us from the very beginning, namely the Amsterdam Conference in 2006, when domestic workers organizations around the globe met for the first time.

She was a respected researcher, with a special emphasis on the rights of migrants. She never forgot that the aim of research is not just “to know” but also “to change,” to involve the people concerned and to give them the tools to change their living and working conditions for the better.

We lost a friend and we are deeply saddened. We hope that the spirit of her work will inspire others to continue in the same way.

Myrtle Witbooi (President IDWF)

Elizabeth Tang (General Secretary IDWF)

## **3. RESEARCH**

### **3.1 RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

#### **Domestic Work in Sudan**

Hadelzein M. Elfatih's PhD research is entitled “Decent Work for Domestic Workers. Local measures for Sudan” and would be interested on information regarding the following issues:

1. Practice of domestic work and domestic work relationships in Sudan.
2. Local measures for policy implications and interventions for decent work for domestic workers in Sudan.

Please send information to Hadelzein M. Elfatih (hadotaa@gmail.com).

## **Domestic Work and Collective Bargaining**

Domestic workers have notoriously limited capacity to bargain collectively. However, envisioning a world in which domestic workers have real rights, that they have the capacity to enforce themselves, would imply a certain level of organization and ability to set working conditions standards among themselves. It may even be envisageable that they convey those standards or negotiate them with an employers' organization, employment agencies, or the government. What models exist either in the domestic work sector or outside of it that could help create these structures? What is the source of power of domestic workers that would enable them to negotiate and set standards in this way?

Please send information to Lisa-Marie Heimeshoff (coordinator@research-decent-work.org)

## **3.2 RESEARCH NEWS**

### **RN-DWR: New Coordinator and New Regional Focal Point**

Raffaella Maioni of Acli Colf (Italy) joins the coordinators of the RN-DWR in order to represent workers interests within the group. Contact: coordinator@domestic-work-research.org  
Sonal Sharma, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, India will function as a Regional Focal Point for South Asia. Contact: southasia@domestic-work-research.org

### **Domestic Workers in India**

A study by the Montfort Social Institute and the Domestic Workers Forum India finds that almost 90 per cent of domestic workers work below minimum wage and do not have a weekly day off. More

information: <http://www.ucanindia.in/news/domestic-workers-get-no-minimum-wage:-study/26665/daily>

### **New research project – Human trafficking in Domestic Work (2014-2016)**

A new research project on ‘Human trafficking in Domestic Work’ has recently started at the Robert Schuman Center of Advanced Studies of the European University Institute (Coord.: Anna Triandafyllidou and Alexandra Ricard-Guay). This study is part of the project DemandAT (EC/ FP7), coordinated by the ICMPD, which analyzes the demand-side of anti-trafficking efforts and policies.

Based on case law review and interviews with key stakeholders in seven different countries (Belgium, UK, France, Greece, Italy, Cyprus and the Netherlands), this research will examine the types of situations in domestic work that may involve extreme forms of exploitation and abuse, the motivations and factors driving the demand as well as the gaps in legislations and policies. This study will also explore the intertwined notions of trafficking for labour exploitation, forced labour, and domestic servitude. One of this study's outcomes will be to propose a set of measures for national and international policy-makers, with a view to stepping up actions to combat trafficking in human beings for exploitation in domestic work and other severe forms of exploitation of domestic workers.

For more information: <http://globalgovernanceprogramme.eui.eu/demandat/> (<http://www.demandat.eu/>)

Contact: [alexandra.ricard-guay@eui.eu](mailto:alexandra.ricard-guay@eui.eu)

## Introducing the Centre for Global Social Policy

The Centre for Global Social Policy serves as a platform for people involved in social policy-related research. CGSP connects researchers, students, policy makers, and other key actors from around the world, including members of the RN – DWR. Gender, Migration, and the Work of Care, the current project at CGSP, is a partnership of 8 multi-national research projects examining gender inequalities, social developments, and global governances as they are related to the (re-)organizing of care. They broadly question: How is care socially, culturally, and politically constructed? How do social, economic, and political conditions affect demands for care? What are the living and working conditions of migrant care workers? For more information and to connect with people visit <http://www.cgsp.ca>.

## 4. CONFERENCES AND CALLS

The international workshop **“Employment relationships in migrant domestic work: a transnational perspective”** takes place in Brussels, Belgium, **15-16 January 2015** at Université libre de Bruxelles.

The workshop will feature keynote lectures, followed by workshops open to early career researchers (PhD student-level and up).

### The Fourth Conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network

Organized by the International Labour Office (ILO) will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, **8-10 July 2015**.

The pre-crisis socio-economic model has failed. Unemployment - particularly youth unemployment - is

destructively high, precarious work is expanding, growing numbers of workers are found among the working poor, and an evolving awareness of inequality has galvanised policy debates across the globe. Yet the reforms in policies and institutions that would counteract these trends have yet to materialise.

This policy failure has triggered a broader unease about the future of work. To design policies that could transform this future, however, demands further investigation of complex and intersecting issues that include the role of labour regulation in development strategies; the disproportionate presence of vulnerable workers (e.g. youth, women, minorities, migrant workers) in unacceptable forms of work (UFW); the most effective strategies for protecting workers in fragmented labour markets, curbing income inequality and reducing informality; and the long-run impact of austerity policies. The 4th RDW Conference will investigate key dimensions of the future of work. Papers are invited that focus on four thematic issues: (I) Worker protection: wages, hours, and the employment relationship; (II) Income security in the era of widening inequality – labour income, social protection, and well-being; (III) Labour market regulation and development – political economy of policy reforms and their outcomes; and (IV) Reaching out to vulnerable workers: voice, actions, and the role of collective labour relations.

More information: [www.rdw2015.org](http://www.rdw2015.org)

Call: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/meeting-document/wcms\\_314027.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/meeting-document/wcms_314027.pdf)

Deadline for submissions (including request for scholarship): 31 December

2015

Deadline for submissions without financing: 31 January 2015

Please note: The RN\_DWR considers holding a network meeting at the conference. Please contact Lisa-Marie Heimeshoff, [coordinator@domestic-work-research.org](mailto:coordinator@domestic-work-research.org) to stay informed.

### The Conference **“Domestic Workers in the Countries of Central Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union: Post-socialist Migrations and Inequalities”**

supported by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation will take place **24-26 April 2015**, in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The collapse of socialist regimes in 1990s triggered intensification of international migrations. In this period of time labour markets of developed countries were actively segmented with formation of niches occupied predominantly by migrants, including those from the former socialist states. The domestic service domain became one of such niches in the global division of labour. Female migrants who are occupied in the private sphere take care of children and elderly, carry out domestic work, and therefore serve the demands of the middle class in developed countries and provide access to more prestigious jobs and careers to its representatives, especially women.

Abstracts (200-250 words) and brief biographical notes (max. 100 words) should be sent to Anna Isakovaisakova, [anna.info@gmail.com](mailto:anna.info@gmail.com) and copied to Olga Tkach [tkach@cisr.ru](mailto:tkach@cisr.ru) by 16 January 2015. Information: <http://cisr.ru/en/news/konferentsiya-domashnie-rabotnitsy-v-stranah-vostochnoy-evropy-i-byvshego-sssr-postsotsialisticheskie-migratsii-i-neravenstva/>

## 5. PUBLICATIONS

Carreras, Laetitia (2014). *Travailleurs domestiques sans autorisation de séjour. Invisibilités multiples et stratégies de résistance*. Information: <https://www.editions-ue.com/catalog/details/store/fr/book/978-3-8417-3842-4/travailleurs-domestiques-sans-autorisation-de-s%C3%A9jour?search=laetitia%20carreras> (in French).

Cox, Rosie (2014). *Au Pairs' Lives in Global Context. Sisters or Servants?* Palgrave Macmillan. Content: <http://www.palgrave.com/page/detail/au-pairs-lives-in-global-context-rosie-cox/?K=9781137377470>

Au pairing is now a global phenomenon and au pairs are just as likely to come from Asia and Latin America as from Sweden or France. They are an increasingly important form of very low waged, often unregulated, childcare and domestic labour. Au pairs are not recognized as workers and are often excluded from even the most basic protections, such as a minimum wage. As young migrants living inside their employers' homes they are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Ezzedine, Petra et al. (2014). *Migrantky a nájemná práce v domácnosti v České republice*. Online: <http://www.pracovnicevdomacnosti.cz/stahnout-soubor?id=216> (in Czech).

The publication introduces the issue of female migrants performing paid domestic work in Czech households. It presents selected topics related to legal, economic and social situation of female migrants in this seemingly marginal labour market segment. This publication is part of the project titled „Equal Opportunities on the Threshold of Czech

Homes“ by the Association for Integration and Migration together with three partners – People in Need organisation, National Economy Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and media agency Ogilvy&Mather. Based on female migrants' experience we tried to put together Ten Commandments of a Fair Employer, appealing to respect the rights and ensure protection of domestic workers, and together with the Czech translation of the Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers it is part of this publication.

Fernandez, Bina & de Regt, Marina (eds., 2014). *Migrant Domestic Workers in the Middle East: The Home and the World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

For over half a century, the Middle East—and the Arabian Peninsula in particular—has been major migration corridor for domestic workers from Asia and Africa. Migrant domestic workers comprise a significant proportion of the migrant labour force in these countries—in some cases, nearly fifty per cent. This volume goes beyond a discussion of the working conditions of migrant domestic workers to show the multidimensionality of their lives in the Middle East. The chapters illustrate the multiple ways in which they are able to exert agency, despite the constrained choices they are often forced to make. Contributors show how the spaces these women occupy disrupt and challenge given notions of the public-private divide, re-working them as spaces of encounter and of relationships of belonging, spiritual connection, friendship, conviviality, and sociality.

Francisco, Valerie (2014). *Ang Ating lising Kuwento – Unsere gemeinsame*

*Geschichte: Philippinische migrantische Arbeiter\_innen und partizipatorische Aktionsforschung in New York City*. In: Heimeshoff, L.; Hess, S.; Kirchhoff, M.; Schwenken, H., Trecziak, (eds.). *Grenzregime II. Migration – Kontrolle – Wissen. Transnationale Perspektiven*. Assoziation A.

Human Rights Watch (2014). *“I Already Bought You.” Abuse and Exploitation of Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the United Arab Emirates*. Online: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2014/10/22/i-already-bought-you>

This 79-page report documents how the UAE's visa sponsorship system, known as kafala, and the lack of labor law protections leave migrant domestic workers exposed to abuse. Domestic workers, most from Asia and Africa, cannot move to a new job before their contracts end without the employer's consent, trapping many in abusive conditions. Labor-sending countries don't fully protect the workers against deceptive recruitment practices or provide adequate assistance to abused nationals abroad.

Human Rights Watch has also publishes several commentaries on domestic work issues, available at <http://www.hrw.org/by-issue/commentaries/732>

ILO (2014). *Cooperating out of isolation: Domestic workers' cooperatives*. In: *Cooperatives and the World of Work*, No.2. Online: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms\\_307218.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms_307218.pdf)

ILO (2014). *Working around the*

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clock? A manual for trainers to help live-in domestic workers count their working time. Online: [http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/domestic-workers/WCMS\\_308825/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/domestic-workers/WCMS_308825/lang--en/index.htm)

This manual presents and explains how to use a working time tool that was designed for live-in domestic workers to record and calculate their working time and rest periods. The working time tool was originally designed as a response to the concern that live-in domestic workers work extremely long hours, while their employers often feel that domestic workers are rarely really working, but are rather on standby.

Krawietz, Johanna/Visel, Stefanie (eds.) (2014). Prekarisierung transnationaler Care-Arbeit: Ambivalente Anerkennung. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot. Information: <http://www.dampfboot-verlag.de/shop/artikel/prekarisierung-transnationaler-carearbeit-ambivalente-erkennung> (in German).

OSCE (2014). OSCE Handbook on

preventing domestic servitude and protecting domestic workers. Online: <http://www.osce.org/handbook/domestic-servitude>

Piper, Nicola; Rother, Stefan (2014). More than Remittances: Resisting the Dominant Discourse and Policy Prescriptions of the Global 'Migration-Development-Mantra'. *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik/Journal for Development Policy*, 30(1), 44–66.

Romero, M. (2014). When Care Work Goes Global. *Locating the Social Relations of Domestic Work*. Ashgate. Information: <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409439240>

Women who migrate into domestic labour and care work are the single largest female occupational group migrating globally at present. We know that migration systems link the women who migrate and the households and organizations that employ domestic and care workers, but how do these migration systems work, and more importantly, what are their impacts on

the sending as well as the receiving societies? How do sending and receiving societies regulate women's migration for care work and how do these labour market exchanges take place? How is reproductive labour changed in the receiving society when it is done by women who are subject to multifaceted othering/racializing processes?

Scheiwe, Kirsten/Krawietz, Johanna (eds.) (2014): (K)Eine Arbeit wie jede andere? Die Regulierung von Arbeit im Privathaushalt. Reihe Juristische Zeitgeschichte. Berlin: De Gruyter. Content: [http://www.degruyter.com/view/supplement/9783110358964\\_Inhaltsverzeichnis.pdf](http://www.degruyter.com/view/supplement/9783110358964_Inhaltsverzeichnis.pdf) (in German).

Vega, Christina & Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Encarnación (2014). Nuevas aproximaciones a la organización social del cuidado. *Debates latinoamericanos Presentación del Dossier*. Online: <http://www.flacsoandes.edu.ec/iconos/index.php/iconos-50> (in Spanish).

## CONTACTS: RESEARCH NETWORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKER RIGHTS

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