



## **FEDERATION OF FREE WORKERS**

FFW Bldg., 1943 Taft Avenue, Malate 1004, Manila  
Tel: (63 2) 521.94.35 • 521.94.64 Telefax: (63 2) 400.66.56



### **Organizing Community-Based Domestic Workers for Decent Work**

### **Research and Profiling Survey Report**

*in cooperation with and support from*



**International Labor Organization  
DOMWORK Project**

# Table of Contents

*Foreword*  
*Preface*

## **I. The Research Profiling Survey: Introduction**

### **A. Objectives**

### **B. Methodology**

### **C. Community Profile of the *Dagatdagatan* Resettlement Area**

## **II. Research Findings**

### **A. Profile of Respondents**

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Civil Status
4. Family/Sibling Size
5. Languages Spoken
6. Educational Attainment
7. Age of Arrival in Manila
8. Region/Province of Origin

### **B. Profile as a *Kasambahay* or Domestic Worker**

1. Length of Service as a *Kasambahay*
2. Age of commencement as a *Kasambahay*
3. Work Arrangements
4. Skills as a *Kasambahay*
5. Skills in operating Household Equipment/Appliances
6. Other Errands, Tasks that can be performed
7. Preferred skills training for additional income

### **C. Socio-Economic Issues**

1. The Choice to be a *Kasambahay*
2. Becoming a *Kasambahay*
3. Dreams and Ambitions before becoming a *Kasambahay*
4. Most-liked aspects as a *Kasambahay*

**D. Working Conditions and Benefits**

1. Salaries, Bonuses and 13<sup>th</sup> Month pay
2. SSS, Philhealth, Pag-ibig Coverage
3. Days Off
4. Other Benefits

**E. Rights as a *Kasambahay***

1. Basic Social Protection
2. Views on the Employment Contract
3. Experience of Abuse
4. Recourse in the Incidence of Abuse

**F. Establishing an Organization of *Kasambahays***

1. Experiences as a Member and Willingness to join
2. Reasons for Joining
3. Preferred Day and Time for Meetings
4. Preferred Amount and Payment of Monthly Dues

**III. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Appendix**

*Research Survey Questionnaire*

## *Foreword*

Even if saying it in a foreword may not be appropriate, this is truly an action research: a research undertaking that itself became a process of organizing the respondents into a community-based workers' association of domestic workers, now affiliated with the Federation of Free Workers.

The project hit three targets with one arrow, if we may be allowed to paraphrase a cliché: it came out with a profile of domestic workers; the research process resulted into a workers' association of domestic workers; and, upon which jumping board, it began applying the precepts of decent work in this particular group of workers.

And more. This action research is one among the several efforts of the FFW to transform itself into a trade union-social movement – or a social movement union – of all types of workers: a union no longer confined to unionizing only the rank and file wage earners of the formal sector but one which embraces into its fold the workers in the formal and informal economy, in urban and rural areas alike, in whichever economic sector the workers may be classified into, wherever they may work or reside.

Thanks to the [ILO Sub-Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific](#) - based in Manila - and its DOMWORK Project, for making this possible.

Yet, there still is an interesting twist to this project. Our project coordinator, Pastor Ephraim Guerrero decided to leave his employment as a staff of the FFW to pursue more fully his pastoral work in the same community where the domestic workers reside. Even more: he now guides the bigger organization of informal sector workers not only in his pastoral community but also heads the FFW's National Employment and Entrepreneurship Development Association (FFW-NEEDA) as well.

ATTY. ALLAN S. MONTAÑO  
National President, Federation of Free Workers  
October, 2006

# Chapter 1

## The Research Profiling Survey: Introduction

In March 2006, the Federation of Free Workers in partnership with the International Labor Organization **Sub-Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific**, embarked on a project called ***Organizing Community-Based Domestic Workers for Decent Work***. One of the components of the project is the conduct of research and profiling of Domestic Workers (DWs) in the *Dagatdagatan* Resettlement Area, especially the DWs who will be involved in the project.

### A. Objectives

The objective of this research is to establish a profile of Domestic Workers (DWs) who live in the target community and find out the possibilities of initiating income-generating activities that would augment their income and support for the family. More specifically, the survey aims to:

1. establish a Socio-Demographic profile of DWs, including age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, and areas of origin;
2. identify a socio-economic pattern that characterizes the process of becoming DWs, like reasons, expectations, and personal dreams and ambitions;
3. identify experiences of DWs with regards to working arrangements and conditions, benefits, abuses and responses; and
4. assess their appreciation of their rights that may indicate the possibility of being organized into a union of DWs.

### B. Methodology

Domestic Workers residing in the target area were identified and recruited to participate in the project and to act as respondents to this survey. The participants were then oriented about the organizing project in general and the research activity in particular.

With the help of a consultant, a questionnaire was formulated based on the research objectives. Four volunteers were appointed as enumerators. The prototype questionnaire was then pre-tested on ten selected domestic workers residing in the community. The questionnaire was finalized, incorporating improvements that surfaced from the pre-testing.

The pre-tested questionnaires were then administered through interviews to one hundred fourteen (114) survey respondents, after which the responses were tallied and summarized.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Other published materials on Domestic Workers were consulted, notably the work of Nicole J. Sayres, “An Analysis of the Situation of Filipino Domestic Workers”, ILO, 2005.

### **C. Community Profile of the *Dagatdagatan* Resettlement Area**

The target community for the profiling survey is the *Dagatdagatan* Resettlement Area, presently known as *Kaunlaran* Village. It is located northwest of Metro Manila, straddling the cities of Kalookan and Malabon and the municipality of Navotas.

Because the area is located at the north end of the pier area, it is strategically located, where people from the Visayas and Mindanao disembark and proceed to stay with their relatives in the *Dagatdagatan* area. They use the area as a staging point in looking for work in Metro Manila.

The *Dagatdagatan* Resettlement Area was established in 1974 when the government embarked on infrastructure development in what was then known as the Tondo Foreshore Reclamation Project. It became the relocation area for squatters (informal settlers) from various parts of the metropolis. It covers 300 hectares of reclaimed land, a factor that explains its vulnerability to flooding during high tide and rainy season.

Presently, the area has a population of 300,000, with a large part of its residents working as dock and market porters, street vendors, construction workers, factory workers, drivers, and domestic workers.

The unemployment rate, moreover, is very high. Because of economic difficulties, many children and youth are out of school and become susceptible to other social problems and vices, such as drug addition, gambling, teen-age pregnancies, and crimes. Delivery of health and other social services by the government is wanting and can hardly cope with the demand for such services.

## Chapter 2

### The Research Findings

#### A. Profile of Respondents

##### 1. Age

Thirty-five respondents (31%) are within the ages of 26-35, followed by 32 respondents (28%) in the 36-45 age group. There are eighteen respondents (16%) aged 15-25, 17 respondents (15%) aged 46-55, and 12 respondents (11%) in the 56 years and above age category.

About half of the respondents are well within the legally acceptable age for work as domestic workers, although those below 18 years old within the 15-25 age category are considered as child laborers.

##### 2. Gender

Almost all of the respondents are female: 108 (95%) out of 114 respondents. Only six respondents (5%) are male.

This finding is in consonance with the research findings of Nicole J. Sayres, cited earlier, which indicated that based on the 1995 Labor Force Survey, women domestic workers comprised 86%, while in 2002, they made up 92%.

##### 3. Civil Status

Of the 114 respondents, 76 (67%) are married while 21 (18%) are either widowed or separated from their spouses. There are 17 unmarried respondents (15%).

Sayre notes that there is a tendency for “young domestic workers to withdraw from their employment upon marriage or child bearing”. This survey reveals that DWs who have withdrawn from their active employment because of marriage or child bearing/rearing and those who have been separated from spouses by death or other reasons, would like to be employed again because of the growing needs of the family, that is, they either want to help their spouses and increase the family income or they themselves have become the breadwinners for their families.

##### 4. Size of their Family of Origin and of their Own Families

A little more than half of the respondents (58 or 51%) indicated that their family of origin had more than seven children, while 29 respondents (25%) had five to six children. Twenty-four respondents (21%) said their family of origin had three to four children.

In contrast, when asked about the number children in their own family, 49 respondents (43%) reported having one to two children, with 26 respondents

(23%) indicated having five to six children and 20 respondents (18%) said they have three to four children.

Although inconclusive, the survey data may suggest that the difference in family size between the respondents' family of origin and their own family may possibly be due to an awareness of the difficulties of having big families. This may indicate a choice for fewer children. However, it must also be pointed out that the small difference in the family size in the range of five to six family members for the categories family of origin and their own family might suggest the need for intervention programs, such as Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health programs, to help curb a trend toward larger family size.

## **5. Languages spoken**

A very large number of respondents (108 out of 114 or 95%) can speak Pilipino, the national language; at the same time they can speak other local languages. The second predominant local language is Visayan, spoken by 43 respondents (38%).

Besides the local languages spoken, 47 respondents (41%) can speak English while four respondents (4%), specifically those who had overseas work experience, can speak other foreign languages, notably Arabic and Mandarin.

## **6. Highest Educational Attainment**

Out of the 114 respondents, 69 (61%) reached high school. Of this number, 38 respondents (54%) were able to graduate while 31 (46%) did not.

Twenty-nine respondents (25%) reached the elementary level and out of this number, 16 respondents (56%) graduated while 13 (44%) did not.

Nine respondents (8%) finished vocational courses.

Seven respondents (6%) reached college although only one graduated.

The large number of school drop-outs can indicate a need to provide opportunities for accelerated learning, such as equivalency testing and other educational interventions to fast-track literacy and the acquisition of employable qualifications as well, and to increase the likelihood that respondents will be able to pursue further studies, if they so decide.

## **7. Age of Arrival in Manila**

When asked at what age they arrived in Manila, 40 respondents (35%) answered that they arrived when they were 15-19 years old. Twenty-nine respondents (25%) said they were between five to nine years old.

Fifteen respondents (13%) said they were between 20-24 years old when they came to Manila, 13 (11%) were between the ages of 10-14, 10 (9%) were 30 years old and above, and five respondents (4%) were 25-30 years old. Two respondents (2%) did not remember at what age they came to Manila.

The data show that 42 respondents (36%) arrived in Manila as children aged five to 14 years old, a little more than those at ages 15-19 (35%). The survey was not able to identify or clarify the circumstances of their arrival in Manila, whether they were brought by their parents when they migrated for work to Manila, or as victims of trafficking for child labor.

## 8. Region/Province of Origin

The profiling survey indicates that the respondents come from the following regions:

<b>FFW-Dagatdagatan Survey</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>ILO-Sayres Report (2005)</b>
1. Bicol	26	23%	1. Eastern Visayas
2. Eastern Visayas	22	19%	2. Bicol
3. Central Visayas	16	14%	3. Western Visayas
4. Western Visayas	13	11%	4. Central Visayas
5. Northern Mindanao	9	8%	5. Southern Tagalog
6. Central Luzon	7	6%	6. Northern Mindanao
7. Southern Tagalog	5	4%	
8. Western Mindanao	2	2%	
Did not mention Region	14	12%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Note: Percentage does not tally due to rounding-off.

All of the regions mentioned by the Sayres report are also in this profiling survey, except for the exclusion of Central Luzon, the inclusion of Southern Tagalog in the top six regions, and negligible differences in the rank order. It must be noted, however, that 14 respondents (12%) of this profiling survey, did not mention their region of origin.

## B. Experiences as *Kasambahay* or Domestic Worker

### 1. Length of Service as *Kasambahay*

Is being a *kasambahay* contemplated to be employment or profession? Or is it seen as a temporary income-generating activity to meet an immediate financial need until such time that a better opportunity presents itself, and if so, what could that better opportunity be?

When the respondents were asked how long they have served or are serving as *kasambahay*, 85 respondents (75%) answered that they have served or are serving for less than five years, 16 (14%) for 11 years and above, while 13 (11%) from five to ten years.

### 2. Age when started as *Kasambahay*

Ninety-six respondents (84%) are within the age range of 26 years and above, which means that the respondents are predominantly adults. Only 18 respondents (16%) are 25 years old and below.

When the respondents were asked at what age they started work as *kasambahay*, 58 respondents (51%) replied that they started young at the age range of 15-20 years. If this figure is combined with the next lowest age group at 15 years old and below which accounts for 21 respondents (18%), the total of 79

respondents (69%) means that this many respondents started to work as *kasambahays* as children and youth.

Late starters, ages 21 and above, account for 35 respondents (31%) with the oldest group starting work as *kasambahay* at age 40 and above.

Indeed, as Sayre points out in her report, domestic workers start young.

FFW-ILO <i>Dagatdagatan</i> Survey		ILO-Sayres 1999 Labor Force Survey	
Below 15	18%	10-14	4%
15-25	74%	15-24	59%
15-20	51%	15-19	36%
21-25	5%	20-24	23%
26-35	13%	25-34	16%

The *Dagatdagatan* survey further reveals that 62 respondents (54%) started working when they were below 18 years old, which points to past incidence of child domestic workers among the respondents.

### 3. Work Arrangements

When asked about arrangements under which they worked when they were employed, the respondents gave the following replies: 72 (63%) said they worked on a “stay-in” basis, i.e., the *kasambahay* lives and stays in the house of the employer while 38 (33%) were on a “stay-out” basis, i.e. the *kasambahay* returns to his/her home after work. Four (4%) said they have worked overseas.

The data suggest that the stay-out arrangement appears to be a viable alternative to the stay-in arrangement which will allow the *kasambahay* to work and at the same time not be pulled out from his/her family or to stay in the employer’s household for a long duration of time.

### 4. Skills as *Kasambahay*

While there are skills one can specialize in, *kasambahays* can be considered as multi-skilled in terms of doing household chores. The respondents were asked to name as many household tasks that they can perform. Following are their multiple responses:

Skills	No. of Responses	%
1. Baby sitting	84	74%
2. Washing/Ironing	80	70%
3. House Cleaning	78	68%
4. All Around	68	60%
5. Cooking	61	54%
6. Others: Gardening, Driving, Adult Caring, Pets Care,	21	18%
7. Overseas <i>Kasambahay</i>	6	5%

## 5. Household Equipment they can operate

Respondents were also asked to list as many household equipment/appliances they can operate. The following is a listing according to the number of times mentioned:

<b>Equipment/ Appliance</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Television	106	93%
2. Washing machine	98	86%
3. Refrigerator	97	85%
4. VCD player	81	71%
5. Oven toaster	76	65%
6. Air conditioner	43	38%
7. Microwave oven	40	35%
8. Floor polisher/ Vacuum cleaner	37	32%
9. Hi-Pressure carwash	12	11%
10. Fax machine	7	6%

## 6. Other skills, errands that they can perform

The DWs were asked to list other tasks or errands they can perform indicating other skills they are not normally expected to do, with the following results:

<b>Skills, Tasks, Errands</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Marketing, Grocery	108	95%
2. Waiting for household guests	99	87%
3. Enroll children in school	94	82%
4. Pay Bills	82	72%
5. Receive telephone messages	80	70%
6. Banking, use of ATM	59	52%
7. Manual car wash	41	36%
8. Driving	7	6%

## 7. Preferred Skills to be acquired, training for additional Income

The respondents were asked: If they are to be given skills training to generate additional income, what skills would they want to acquire? Seventy-one respondents (62%) preferred to train for beauty salon-related skills, like manicure, pedicure and hair cutting. Fifty-six respondents (49%) wanted entrepreneurial skills while 55 (48%) indicated dressmaking as a preferred skill to be learned.

<b>Preferred Skills for Training to increase income</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Manicure/pedicure/hair cutting	71	62%
2. Entrepreneurial skills	56	49%
3. Dressmaking	55	48%
4. Typing, computer	28	25%
5. Food processing	25	22%
6. Carpentry and simple electrical repairs	15	13%
7. Others: Driving, etc	9	8%

## 8. Preferred Education and Training to Pursue

Asked what courses DWs would take if given chances or opportunities for further studies, they responded thus:

<b>Preferred Education and Training</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Education, Mass Communication	35	31%
2. Vocational: Dress making, Cosmetology, HRM/Cooking,	18	16%
3. Health Care Associate: Nursing, Care-giving	17	15%
4. Professional: Medicine, Law, Accounting, Engineering, Architecture, Criminology	16	14%
5. Computer Science/Secretarial	13	11%
6. Business Management, Entrepreneurship	10	9%
7. Others	3	3%
8. No Answer	2	2%
Total	114	100%

## C. Socio-Economic Issues

### 1. The Choice to be a Domestic Worker

When the respondents were asked whether it was their choice to work as a *kasambahay* (domestic worker), 98 respondents (86%) said yes while only 16 (14%) answered no. Thus, it may seem that being a DW is a “freely chosen” employment.

Following are reasons given for choosing domestic work:

<b>Reasons Cited</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
1. I want to earn money for family and self	66	58%
2. I cannot get other work or employment	52	46%
3. Life in our place is so difficult, poor	47	41%
4. This is the only work I can do, I know	34	30%

5. I like to go to the city where there are other opportunities	12	11%
6. I was enticed by the stories of my friends/relatives	11	10%
7. I want to get away from my family/spouse	5	4%
8. Others	12	11%

Because DWs were allowed to choose as many answers that would be applicable to them, it appears that the reasons for their decision to work as a DW was brought about by a combination of these factors.

For example, the top two reasons cited, “to earn money for the family and self” and “no other employment or work is available” is a combination of the respondents’ desire to earn and the belief that there is no other employment opportunity available except that of being a *kasambahay*.

Sayres cites poverty as a primary push factor for the migration of DWs from the Visayas and Mindanao provinces. World Bank and ADB studies also show that on these two island groupings are found among the most impoverished regions in the country.

The reasons given by the respondents for choosing to work as DWs do not appear to be in consonance with “freely chosen work” as a standard of decent work. Since poverty pushes people to migrate for work, it may be suggested that respondents may also have been “pushed” to make such a decision. This poses a big challenge to make domestic work fulfill the decent work standard of “freely chosen work.”

## 2. **Becoming a *Kasambahay***

The respondents were asked how they became *kasambahays*. Eighty-six (75%) of the respondents said that they were referred by relatives and friends. Since the *Dagatdagatan* area is located in the northern end of the North Harbor, the main berthing area for ships coming from the Visayas and Mindanao, relatives from the provinces who come to Manila to look for work often stay with their relatives in the area who later on refer them to jobs that they know are available.

Thirteen respondents (11%) applied directly with recruitment agencies while 9 (8%) applied directly with employers. It is noticeable that only six (5%) respondents said that they were recruited from the provinces by private placement agencies.

## 3. **Dreams and Ambitions**

The respondents were also asked what they would like to become if the opportunity presented itself **before** they became DWs.

<b>Dreams and Ambitions</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Teacher	30	26%
2. Entrepreneur, Dressmaker	17	15%
3. Secretary, Office Worker, Finish Studies	14	12%
4. Health care: Nurse, Midwife, Physical Therapist	14	12%
5. Work Overseas	12	11%
6. Profession: Lawyer, Accountant, Engineer, Architect	9	8%
7. Police Work, Criminology	6	5%
8. Singer, Actress	2	2%
9. Others	8	7%
10. Did not Answer	2	2%
Total	114	100%

It is interesting to note that the dreams and ambitions of the respondents are mostly in the area of white-collar jobs or professions, followed by wanting to become entrepreneur. Even “dressmaker” is noted in the context of entrepreneurship. There is also a sizeable minority who wants to work overseas, although it is not indicated on what job or profession overseas they would prefer.

#### 4. Most-liked Aspects of Domestic Work

Is domestic work a viable source of income as an employment, and if it is going to be professionalized, what would the DWs themselves consider as plus factor in the profession? What is in domestic work that they would consider as something they will like? The following table shows some the (multiple) responses:

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
1. I had a good, kind employer	94	82%
2. I was able to help with the needs of my family	77	68%
3. I was able to send my children and some relatives to school	27	24%
4. I was able to reach other place	24	21%
5. I was able to reach other countries	5	4%
6. Other reasons	8	7%

Having a good employer is perceived to be very important to most of the respondents. As well, this perception may include the other reasons, since they may also be considered as consequences of having a “good, kind employer.”

## **D. Working Conditions and Benefits**

### **1. Salaries, Bonuses and 13<sup>th</sup> Month pay**

Forty eight respondents (42%) said that they received a monthly salary of below P1,000. Twenty-five (22%) respondents received P1,001 to P2,000 while 22 (19%) received P2,001 to P3,000.

Twelve respondents (11%) said they received P4,001 and above. This category includes those working as family drivers who were males, and those who have experienced working overseas.

Some seven (6%) respondents did not indicate an answer.

The payment of the 13<sup>th</sup> month salary, and to some extent bonuses, is provided for in the Labor Code of the Philippines. Yet, only seven respondents indicated that they received bonuses and only six said they received 13<sup>th</sup> month pay. Again, these respondents are the drivers and those who had experiences of working overseas.

### **2. SSS, Philhealth, Pag-ibig coverage**

Only seven respondents (6%) had SSS benefits/coverage, five (4%) had Philhealth insurance, and only four (3%) are enrolled in the Pag-ibig program.

This shows how the respondents are denied and deprived of their social protection benefits as workers as mandated in Section 143 of Chapter 3 Title 3 of the Labor Code which provides that “house helpers who are receiving at least P1,000 should be covered by the Social Security System and be entitled to all the benefits provided thereunder.”

### **3. Days off**

Despite the bleak picture as far as salaries and social protection coverage is concerned, a big majority, 92 respondents (81%) are given days off and only 19 (17%) said they were not. Three (2%) said they didn't know they were entitled or they did not like being given days off. Their reason is that days off are deducted from their wages, or that days off entails spending when they go out. They would rather save this expense and add it to what they send to their family (“*gastos lang, idagdag na lang sa padala sa pamilya*”).

Of those who were given days off, a majority of 66 respondents (58%) were given four days off a month, 17 (15%) were given one day off a month, and ten (9%) were given two days off a month.

### **4. Other Benefits**

A few respondents mentioned the following as other benefits which are based on the generosity of their employers: Birthday, Christmas gifts - 8 respondents (7%), Day off allowance - 2 (2%), Insurance – 1 (1%), Overtime pay – 1 (1%), Monthly grocery - 1 (1%), Educational Assistance - 1 (1%), and Free Clothing – 1 (1%).

## **D. Rights as a *Kasambahay***

### **1. Basic Social Protection**

When asked what the kasambahays thought what benefits they should receive, the multiple answers showed that coverage of SSS and Philhealth were considered as basic. SSS coverage was ranked first by 78 respondents (68%), followed by Philhealth at 43 respondents (38%). Thirteen respondents (11%) ranked bonus third and nine (8%) ranked 13<sup>th</sup> month pay as fourth. Respondents ranked Pag-ibig along with insurance, fifth.

### **2. Employment Contract**

The respondents were asked whether they had contracts in their previous employment. Only 10 respondents (9%) answered yes. These were DWs who have experienced working overseas and with employment agencies. The greater majority of respondents, 104 (91%), said they had no contracts.

When asked whether having a contract is better, 39 respondents (34%) answered yes while 75 (66%) said it would not be better.

It will be good to explore further the perception of the respondents as to what makes having an employment contract a better arrangement than not having one.

### **3. Experience of Abuse**

Seventy-eight respondents (68%) reported experiencing abuse in different forms. The following were the forms of abuse experienced:

<b>Forms of Abuse</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Physical and verbal abuse by the employer and relatives	16	21%
2. Working beyond 10 hours	12	15%
3. Delay in salary payments	12	15%
4. Performing non-DW task, lent to work in household of relatives	10	13%
5. Irregular meal schedule	8	10%
6. Salary is lower than what was agreed	7	9%
7. Locked up, no communication with relatives	6	8%
8. Sexual abuse	2	3%
9. Others: Uncomfortable quarters, etc	5	6%
Total	78	100%

#### 4. Recourse in the incidence of abuse

The respondents were asked what they will do in case they experience instances of abuse. Forty respondents (35%) gave responses, while 74 (65%) did not. Those who responded to the question indicated the following recourse in case of abuse:

Recourse	Number of Responses	%
1. To talk/dialogue with the employer	14	35%
2. Just keep to oneself, cry it out	9	22%
3. Report abuse to barangay, DOLE, DWSD	7	18%
4. Report abuse to priest/pastor/NGO	4	10%
5. Share to relatives or fellow <i>kasambahay</i>	2	5%
6. Runaway from abusive employer	2	5%
7. Kill abusive employer	2	5%
8. Report to the police	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

A plurality of those who responded still preferred dialogue with the employer as a means to settle disputes that would arise in instances of abuse. While keeping to oneself - a passive stance indicated by a sizeable minority of those who responded - was ranked second, more aggressive actions such as reporting to some other person or body, and even more radical responses, like killing the abusive employer, were also indicated by comparatively less respondents. Reporting to the police was also presented as a recourse but none of the respondents said that they will do this. The reasons for the bulk of passive responses are worth exploring further to establish why such attitudes prevail, which may give insights on how to better organize the domestic workers.

#### E. Establishing an Organization of *Kasambahays*

##### 1. Experience as a Member and Willingness to Join

One of the objectives of the research was to look into the possibility of forming an organization of Community-Based Domestic Workers in the *Dagatdagatan* Area.

The data indicate that out of the 114 respondents, only 8 (7%) had the experience of being members of an organization of *kasambahays* and these are DWs who had overseas work experience and those who work for employers in villages where the homeowners have established a *kasambahay* organization. The rest, 106 respondents (93%), had no experience of belonging to an organization of *kasambahays*.

When they were asked whether they were willing to join such an organization, there was a 100% agreement.

##### 2. Reasons for joining the organization

If such an organization will be established, what would be their reason to join? The respondents cited the following as expectations from the organization and from themselves:

<b>Reasons for joining</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
1. The organization can help them have additional income	28	25%
2. The organization can help them upgrade education and enhance their skills	26	23%
3. To be of help to the organization as it helps its members, and achieve noble objectives	23	20%
4. To know their rights, defend them, and they will not be fooled by employers	23	20%
5. For mutual assistance and enjoy the fellowship and membership in an organization	14	12%

The first four reasons are about evenly spread while the fifth can be considered a function of the first four. Any organization to be established should thus have for its objectives these reasons for joining as indicated by the respondents.

### 3. Preferred Day and Time for Meetings

The respondents were also asked as to the day and time preferred for meetings. In a multiple answer, all respondent ranked Sunday as the most preferred day, and most ranked afternoon as the preferred time, as follows:

<b>Day/Time</b>		<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Day	Sunday	114	100%
	Saturday	80	70%
	Other Days	34	29%
Time	Afternoon	87	76%
	Morning	22	19%
	Amenable to any decision of the group	5	4%

### 4. Payment of Monthly Dues

The respondents were also asked about how much monthly dues they can afford to contribute to the organization if such is indeed formed.

<b>Amount</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
P 10.00	74	65%
P 20.00	24	21%
P 25.00	2	2%
P 35.00	8	7%
Amenable to any decision	6	5%
Total	114	100%

## Chapter III

### Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This survey was designed to establish a profile of community-based domestic workers in the *Dagatdagatan* Resettlement Area in consideration of the possibility of organizing the DWs there. The findings would also help to design activities leading to the achievement of decent work standards in their context.

However, the research did not only produce a socio-demographic profile but also provided a deeper glimpse into the work experiences of DWs, issues that should be resolved, and the possibilities of how their work can be improved. Moreover, the research process eased the establishment of an association among the respondents.

The following summarizes the findings of the research.

#### Respondents' Profile

**Age** - Community-based or “stay-out” DWs are older than those who are working in the houses of employers or “stay-ins”. Many of these “older” DWs have started working in their youth and even as child domestic workers. Even in their adulthood, they continued to work as domestic workers while at the same time taking care of their own families and households.

**Gender** - Ninety-five percent of respondents are female, a finding consistent with the 2002 Labor Force Survey which found that 92% of DWs were female.

**Civil Status** – A preponderant majority of respondents are married. While Nicole Sayre’s found that “young domestic workers (to) withdraw from their employment upon marriage or child bearing,” soon enough they, including those who are widowed or separated from their spouses, would likely go back to becoming domestic workers in order to earn to support their families. Not having acquired better qualifications for better employment may be a factor pushing this decision.

**Size of Family of Origin and Own Families** – There is generally a slight drop in the family size between family of origin and those having their own; but families having five to six members are much the same for family of origin and own families. Although very inconclusive, this may indicate that the drop may be due to a greater awareness of the consequences of large families; however, the similar sizes of families at the range of five to six family members between the two types of families may indicate a need to orient them on reproductive health and responsible parenthood in order to encourage the general trend of decreasing family size or to curb the incidence of big family size.

**Language(s) spoken** - Almost all of the respondents can speak Pilipino, the national language. The second local language spoken is Visayan. A majority can speak English. Some of them, especially those who had experienced working as Overseas DWs, can speak another foreign language.

Highest Educational Attainment – Majority reached high school, with more than half the number able to graduate. A fourth of the respondents reached elementary level. Seven respondents reached college but only one graduated. The survey shows a high rate of drop-outs: 46% in high school; 44% in elementary and 85% in college. These statistics indicate the need to accelerate educational achievements of DWs through alternative learning systems including equivalency testing, recognition of prior learning and similar educational interventions in order to upgrade their educational level, fast track the acquisition of better qualifications for employment, and for them to continue and finish their studies in higher education, if they so desire. Higher qualifications are expected to provide better employment opportunities and bigger incomes.

Age of Arrival in Manila – From their provincial origins, a little less than two thirds (71%) of them arrived in Manila when very young, between the ages of 5 and 19. It can be assumed, however, that at that early age, the respondents were migrating for work, given the survey results about quite high incidence of child labor experience among even the adult respondents.

Region/Province of Origin - The five top origins are Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Central Visayas, Western Visayas, and Northern Mindanao. The study confirmed that the DWs came from the regions of the country considered as most impoverished, and it may therefore be said that poverty is the strongest “push” factor that makes young people especially women from the provinces go to the cities to work as DWs and to take on other menial jobs. This would have to be further verified, however.

### **Experiences as *Kasambahay*; some issues**

Length of Service as *Kasambahay* – Three out of four respondents worked as DW for less than five years. Does this mean that working as a DW was seen as a temporary income generating activity to meet an immediate financial need for the DW and his/her family? What factors would cause the DW to stop (temporarily or permanently) working as DW? Is it when a better opportunity presents itself, i.e., a better job is found, or the DW’s status changes, i.e. getting married and having his/her own family?

Does this trend also indicate that the DWs themselves do not intend to stay/work forever as DWs? If this is so, what would happen to the efforts to professionalize this work?

On the other hand, respondents, now being adults and having worked as DWs, and not possessing higher-value skills intend to return or continue working as DWs to meet the growing needs of their families, and therefore to look at domestic work as a viable income generating activity, just like before.

Age when started as *Kasambahay* – Seventy-four percent started between the ages of 15-25. Of that, 54% started working as DWs when they were less than 18 years old and thus were once considered as child domestic workers. This is related to the discussion on the proposed *Kasambahay* Bill as there are those who seek a total ban for child domestic workers on one hand, and those who want to allow child domestic work under special conditions on the other. Where a family is in dire poverty and even children needs to work in order for the family to eat and survive, can there be a reasonable middle ground between these two contending position? To eliminate

child domestic working may necessitate providing adequate employment for adult member of the family.

Work Arrangements – Sixty-three percent indicated having worked as “stay-in” DW while 33% indicated that they also worked under a “stay out” or “on call” arrangement. Does this significant number of “stay out” indicate a trend as well as an acceptance of this working arrangement by both the DWs and employers? If so, how can this be regulated and what standards can apply so that the DWs’ rights and benefits can be better protected?

Skills as *Kasambahay* - The study reveals that the DW respondents have varied skills directly or indirectly related to domestic working and, thus, they can perform various tasks. However, their skills need to be upgraded (e.g. in using modern implements/equipment) such that they can operate modern household appliances and equipment. For example, telephones have become common as a household appliance but now some are equipped with fax machines that DWs are expected to operate as well. Moreover, they are expected to perform other jobs requiring skills they do not normally have. If they are often expected to possess so many skills and to use these at work all at the same time, shouldn’t domestic working be elevated and recognized as a worthwhile qualification and, thus, shouldn’t they be paid more and treated better?

Preferred Skills, Education and Training to pursue –Manicure/pedicure/hair cutting, entrepreneurial skills and dressmaking ranked top three in preferred skills for acquisition. For further higher studies, education and mass communication topped the list, followed by vocational education and health care. Like any other worker with a recognized qualification, should not domestic workers also be given a chance to change careers midway or anytime? If so, how will this affect efforts to raise domestic working into a recognized qualification like any other?

### **Socio-Economic Issues**

The Choice to be a *Kasambahay* - Forced to earn money whichever way for family and self, lack of better-paying employment opportunities elsewhere, and poverty in general, drove most DWs to work as such. These reasons are not among the determinants of “freely chosen work” since they have been forced to go into domestic working because of poverty rather than freely choosing it. How then does one apply concretely the decent work construct under these situations?

Becoming a *Kasambahay* – Eighty-six percent of respondents landed in DW through referrals of friends and relatives while 11% applied directly to recruitment agencies. In a further research, it may be useful to determine the relative or comparative advantages of both modes of recruitment, from the point of view of assisting and protecting domestic workers.

Dreams and Ambitions – Domestic workers have their own dreams and ambitions and working as a domestic worker is not part of it. Many of them wanted to be teachers, health care associates like nurses, and office workers. To work overseas and establish enterprises were also seen as something to aspire for since these have become popular. There are also those who wish to land in the list of high end

professions like lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers and architects. Such ambitions are normal for all types of workers; however, the lowly social and economic recognition afforded to domestic workers or to domestic working and the absence of education pathways or progression routes in the education and training system make for unrealistic and unsustainable ambitions and, conversely, heightens frustrations. This can indicate a need to elevate domestic working into a recognized qualification and to make this qualification become the basis for the payment of compensation for domestic workers at the same time that educational pathways are created to provide opportunities for better qualifications and higher education.

Most-liked aspects of *Kasambahay* work - Top of the list is having good and kind employers. This good relationship and the acceptable benefits given to them, enabled them to achieve their goal of helping meet family needs and sending children and relatives to school. Reaching other places in the country, or other countries as in the case of DWs with overseas experience, can be considered as add on. This can be no different from achieving mutually productive and beneficial relations, or harmonious labor-management relations, in the formal sector.

### **Working Conditions and Benefits -**

Salaries, Bonuses, 13<sup>th</sup> month pay - The study reveals that working conditions of the respondent DWs are far from the desired or legal. Four (4) out of ten (10) received salaries of less than P1,000 while two (2) out of ten (10) received salaries in the range of P1001 to P2,000. This is a far cry from the minimum wage prescribed for the formal sector workers at P8,000-P10,000 and the P15,750 to P19,500 required family income for decent life for a family of six.

The DW salaries should not be looked upon as an “augmentation income” but a real income for real work performed that can be used to meet real needs of the DW and his/her family. But increasing salaries to higher levels may boomerang against them in terms of less employment opportunities for domestic working as households may then find them increasingly unaffordable. This is where alternative work in alternative occupations, as well as entrepreneurial activities become equally important.

Days off - Despite the bleak picture in salaries, benefits and social protection, 81% of the respondents indicated being given days off and out of this; 58% were given four (4) days a month as days off, most of them on Sundays. A large proportion is thus not enjoying the equivalent of one day rest day every seven days of work in other types of wage employment.

SSS, Philhealth and Pag-ibig coverage - This is practically nil for DWs. The study showed that those who reported to be covered by SSS, Philhealth and *Pag-ibig* were those with overseas work experience where this is mandated by law. Social protection should be considered as an urgent benefit for DWs.

### **Rights as a *Kasambahay***

Social protection - The DWs themselves believe that they should be given the mandated social protection benefits such as SSS and Philhealth coverage and other mandated wages and benefits such as the 13<sup>th</sup> month salary and bonuses.

Employment Contract - Having an employment contract is a new idea for the respondents. Only those with overseas work experience reported to have had contracts with employers. That 90% had no contract and that 66% says a contract is no better than none, is a response and perception worth exploring in another research.

Experience of Abuse - Sixty-eight percent indicated having experienced some form of abuse from their employers, the most common of which was being physically and verbally abused by the employer or relatives of the employer. This was followed by working for more than 10 hours and delays in the payment of salaries.

The worst forms of abuse reported were: uncomfortable living quarters, being locked up and forbidden to communicate with friends and relatives, and sexual abuse.

Recourse in the incidence of abuse - Despite the employers being the perpetrators of the abuse, DWs still prefer to talk it out with their employers. There are those who would rather keep the abuse to themselves. The study indicates that DWs are reluctant to report these abuses to government agencies like the barangay, DOLE and DWSD, and even to priests/pastors and NGOs. The police was included in the list of possible agencies where the DWs can report abuses but nobody among the respondents considered this as a recourse. Yet, there also is a negligible number which considered more radical ways of handling the abuse: run away from or kill the abusive employer. Perhaps other research work could delve into analyzing the reasons or basis for these kinds of attitude or perception among domestic workers.

Establishing an Organization of *Kasambahays* - The data reveal that the DWs who had experiences of being part of an organization of DWs were those who worked overseas or in villages that have homeowners associations who initiated the organizing of DW organizations. However, when the possibility of forming an organization of DWs was put forth, 100% indicated their willingness to join. Their reasons and expectations vary but the top motives indicated were still economic, i.e., increase of productivity with the organization lobbying for increased wages and benefits, professionalization of skills as DWs and training in additional skills to earn better and more income; and socio-political, i.e. awareness and protection of rights as DWs, mutual help and socialization.

The respondent DWs also indicated their willingness to attend meetings and pay monthly union dues.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Organizing *Kasambahays***

- Sustain and expand the organization that has been established by the respondent DWs as a result of this undertaking, around the expectations identified by the research, that will serve as the objectives of the organization; at the same time, to organize or join higher level association of service workers in general and domestic workers in particular in order to broaden and deepen the representativeness of their organizations for the purpose of legislation, negotiation and social dialogue and mutual aid and protection.

- For the Organization to establish linkages with National Government Agencies (NGAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other organizations working on the issue of DWs for the purpose of accessing available services in an organized manner, and for exchange of information and experiences for mutual benefit and common action.
- To establish at Federation level services appropriate for domestic workers including rescue from abusive employers, legal services, education and training programs, and entrepreneurship development activities.
- Document this experience to gain the most lessons from it and to facilitate replication when the need arises.

## **2. Advocacy for Decent Work Standards in Domestic Work**

- Share the results of this study on DWs before the Task Force Research and Policy group to formulate standards for *Kasambahays* who will opt to work on an “on-call” or “stay out” arrangement.
- Advocate for the inclusion of issues about, and services for, domestic workers in the Program of Action of the Federation of Free Workers and in the Decent Work Country Programs of the ILO, particularly the tripartite National Action Plan on Decent Work/Philippines.
- Support the passage of the *Kasambahay* Bill in Congress.
- Promote the use of existing and TESDA-recognized qualification and promulgated training regulation on domestic working by employers, training providers, and organization of domestic workers alike; improve current mandatory pay rates as well as base compensation packages along certified competencies and qualification levels achieved by domestic workers.

## **3. Opportunities for Education and Training**

- For DWs to undergo the orientation seminars in aid to understanding and acting on their rights and responsibilities.
- To set up an education and training program that will network and link with government agencies, private organizations and NGOs to address the educational needs of DWs, i.e., scholarship programs, equivalency programs of DBE, TESDA and CHED, training for work programs or education and training programs to improve the qualifications for employment of workers in general and domestic workers in particular.
- To conduct skills training for domestic workers along lines that they have indicated in the survey either to enhance their employability or to help them migrate to entrepreneurial undertaking if they so desire.

- To provide opportunities for skills assessment and certification, equivalency program, recognition and assessment of prior learning or experiences or other alternative learning schemes especially for a significant number who have not finished primary and secondary education.
- Even as most of the DWs involved are women, to conduct gender sensitivity training not only for women but also for men, much perhaps especially for the married, involving both spouses.
- To provide orientation, training and services related to responsible parenthood and reproductive health.

#### **4. Entitlements and Benefits**

- To facilitate the enrolment of DWs to SSS, Philhealth, and Pag-ibig (with the last as optional).
- To promote the use of employment contracts between DWs and employers that will ensure that the rights of DWs are protected, that they receive their salaries on time, and that they receive their mandatory benefits; and, to lobby for a minimum employment contract model for all domestic workers.

## Appendix

### The Research Profiling Survey Questionnaire