

Basic Facts on Filipino Domestic Workers

- ❖ **Definition:** The Labor Code of the Philippines defines "domestic or household service" as "service in the employer's home which is usually necessary or desirable for the maintenance and enjoyment thereof and includes ministering to the personal comfort and convenience of the members of the employer's household, including services of family drivers." Maids, cooks, yayas (nannies), drivers, and all-around helpers are the primary categories of domestic helpers.
- ❖ **Duties:** Most domestic helpers perform more than one role within a household, with duties that may include cleaning, laundry, ironing, grocery shopping, cooking, taking care of the children, and driving the members of the household.
- ❖ **Terms of employment:** The current monthly minimum wage for domestic helpers in the Philippines is 800 pesos in Metro Manila and highly urbanized cities, 650 pesos in other chartered cities and first-class municipalities, and 500 pesos for those in other municipalities. Under the Labor Code, live-in domestic helpers are also entitled to lodging, food, and medical assistance. Helpers earning over 1,000 pesos per month must be enrolled in the social security system.
- ❖ **Magnitudes:** Estimates of the number of domestic workers in the Philippines range from roughly 600,000 to 2.5 million. There are also between 230,000 and 1 million child domestic workers in the country. In 2002, over 63,000 Filipinos went overseas as newly-hired domestic workers.
- ❖ **Gender:** The vast majority of local and overseas domestic workers are female. Drivers are the only group of domestic workers that are mostly male.
- ❖ **Place of employment:** Most domestic workers are employed in the National Capital Region, Southern Tagalog, Western Visayas, Davao, Central Visayas, Northern Mindanao, and Central Luzon. The top three countries of destination for overseas Filipino domestic helpers are Hong Kong, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ **Place of origin:** In the Philippines, domestic workers are likely to be from the Visayas regions, Bicol, Southern Tagalog, and Northern Mindanao. Filipino domestic workers overseas tend to come from the National Capital Region, Southern Tagalog, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Soccsksargen, and Western Visayas.
- ❖ **Recruitment:** Domestic helpers are recruited through a mix of formal and informal channels, with local domestic helpers recruited primarily through informal recruitment.
- ❖ **Violations and abuses:** Common problems faced by local and overseas Filipino domestic workers include long working hours with no time off, non-payment of wages, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse, and a lack of sufficient accommodation. Child and adult domestic helpers also lack opportunities to complete their educations. Domestic helpers are also vulnerable to illegal recruitment, forced labor including debt bondage, and trafficking.