



# 'They respect their animals more'

## Voices of child domestic workers

Jonathan Blagbrough  
Anti-Slavery International 2008

# *They respect their animals more*<sup>1</sup> **Voices of child domestic workers**

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#### **Information about the author**

Jonathan Blagbrough began working on child labour issues in 1989, and co-ordinated Anti-Slavery International's child labour programme from 1995-2005, and the organisation's domestic work programme from 2006-2007. During this time he has worked closely with grass roots organisations in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. He has specialised particularly on the situation of child domestic workers - developing and undertaking research, lobbying governments and international institutions, authoring and editing a number of publications for Anti-Slavery International and others. He has also advised ILO-IPEC, UNICEF and Save the Children UK on child labour issues. In 2007 Jonathan undertook a period of research sabbatical at the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE), University of Hull, where he is a Senior Visiting Research Associate. Jonathan has a Masters degree in International, European and Comparative Law. He is currently working as an independent consultant on child exploitation issues.

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Front cover picture by Anna depicting her life as a child domestic worker, (Mwanza, Tanzania).

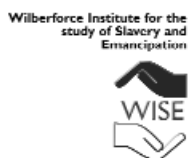
<sup>1</sup> This was the phrase used by a male participant in Tanzania to describe his experience as a former child domestic worker. It encapsulates the experiences of many (but not all) of the participants who were consulted in a number of countries during the course of this research.

# Acknowledgements

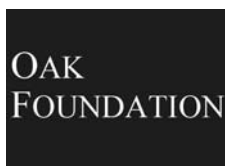
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## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of child domestic workers themselves and do not in all cases reflect the policies of Anti-Slavery International, nor of the partner agencies which contributed to this report.

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## A note on terminology:

For the sake of clarity and simplicity the children and young persons under 18 years who are the subject of this report are referred to as **'child domestic workers'** and the work they do as **'child domestic labour'** (or occasionally as **'domestic service'**).

The term **'child domestic worker(s)'** is used in this report to describe those under 18 years who undertake child domestic labour (see below). **'Child domestic worker' is preferred** to 'child domestic labourer' primarily because it affords greater dignity to the children concerned. In the text, the term **child domestic worker(s) is sometimes shortened to CDW(s)**.

**'Child domestic labour'** (CDL) is used to describe the work done by child domestic workers. This is a 'catch-all' term to describe the range of work situations encountered by children working in households other than their own - from relatively benign situations to highly exploitative conditions.

**'Live-in' child domestic workers** refers to children who are living with, as well as working for, their employers. **'Live-out' child domestic workers** refers to children who come to their employers' house to work, but who live separately from them.

**The word 'her' in this paper is shorthand for 'his and her'** and is specifically used because the large majority of child domestic workers are female.



## Executive Summary

Child domestic labour is one of the most widespread and exploitative forms of child work in the world today, and is also one of the most difficult to tackle. Child domestic workers are hard to reach not only because they work behind the closed doors of their employers' homes, but also because society sees the practice as normal and - in relation to girls - important training for later life.

From May to October 2004 Anti-Slavery International and its local partners undertook consultations with more than 400 current and former child domestic workers in over 20 locations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the many individual interviews and group discussions which took place, child domestic workers provided an unparalleled insight into their situations, as well as presenting their views about the kinds of help and support they need most - and what interventions protect them best from abuse and exploitation.

Consultations took place in Benin, Costa Rica, India, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania and Togo. The majority of participants were female, reflecting the fact that an estimated 90 per cent of child domestic workers in the world are girls.

Results have confirmed that children as young as seven years old are routinely pressed into domestic service. Despite some children entering domestic labour in the hope of continuing their schooling, most are deprived of opportunities for education and many are working in worst forms of child labour situations - with conditions for some which are so exploitative that they can be considered slavery. Many child domestic workers can be said to have been trafficked, although the term often belies the complex ways in which children end up in domestic service, and the different roles and motivations of recruiters in the process. The majority of children - particularly the youngest - live as well as work with their employers, and child domestic workers typically are isolated from their families and from opportunities to make friends. This means that child domestic workers are under the total control of employers whose primary concern is often not in their best interests as children.

According to the International Labour Organization, more girls under 16 years are in domestic service than in any other category of child labour - yet they remain invisible and marginalized both economically and socially because of the myths still surrounding their employment. While it is conventional to regard domestic work as a 'safe' form of employment, in reality a wide range of abuses - including physical, verbal and sexual violence - routinely accompanies this type of work.

### How do children become domestic workers?

In the consultations children spoke of the many ways in which they were pushed and pulled into domestic service. The underlying need to sustain themselves and their families due to poverty was common to all. In India, a number of children were working to repay loans. In Peru and the Philippines older children spoke of their decision to seek work in the city in order to pursue their education. A quarter of participants in Tanzania recounted that they were forced into domestic work as family members had died due to HIV/AIDS and they had no reliable relatives to take care of them.

**"I started to work at 12 years old. Since then, I never saw my family. Homesickness is my greatest enemy. My mother only saw me when my employer finally told her where I was working in Manila. They did not allow anybody to see me because they always beat me. I always wanted to tell my parents how difficult my life was, but there was no chance..."**  
(Female CDW, Philippines).

**"I wake up at 5am, prepare the children and escort them to school. Returning home I do the housework. Later, I pick the children up from school. Usually I sleep at 9pm."**  
(Female CDW, Tanzania).

**“Treatment is so, so. I have to make sure I am in my place [...] In their eyes I am a domestic worker serving them.”**

(Female CDW, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“I came with my mum, she left me at my aunt’s house, she told me I was going to stay there because it was better for me, because at home we didn’t have so many things.”**

(Female CDW, Peru).

Below: child domestic worker, Peru.



Photo: Asociación Grupo de Trabajo Redes

Often it was family problems which were the catalyst for children to begin work. Family break-ups and physical and sexual abuse in their own families were common causes, as were issues such as alcoholism. In India, several children cited alcoholic fathers as the reason they had left home to work in domestic service.

In Benin and Togo, significant numbers of young children described being trafficked across borders into domestic work. In Costa Rica, many domestic workers were adolescents from Nicaragua. While they usually lived separately from their employers, many spoke of exploitation and discrimination because of their undocumented status.

Children were also pulled into domestic service by siblings and friends already working as domestics, and because of employers’ demands for younger workers. In Nepal children said that it was hard to continue working as a domestic worker above the legal minimum working age of 14 years as employers had told them that older children are more trouble and are able to bargain for higher salaries and other rights.

## What do they need? Child domestic workers speak out...

Several issues have emerged which impact on the work of individuals, organisations and institutions which are providing direct assistance to child domestic workers, or who are thinking of doing so.

Results of the consultations indicate that the interventions which are having the most positive impact for child domestic workers are those which seek to: maintain or re-establish contact between the child and her/his close relatives; intervene directly with their employers in a non-confrontational way; establish and support groups of domestic workers to help themselves; encourage child domestic workers back to education and to retain them in education by catering to their specific needs.

Participants spoke of the need for service providers and adult-decision makers to recognise the competence and agency of child domestic workers, and to develop responses which build the capacities of CDWs to help themselves. This is particularly important since there are still far too few service providers in existence to be able to reach the huge numbers of child domestic workers around the world.

Cutting across cultural and language divides, the child domestic workers who were consulted had some clear messages about the best kinds of assistance to protect them from the daily abuse and exploitation that many of them endure. Their common appeal for those who seek to help them are:

- To provide opportunities for education and training which allow them to move out of domestic work;
- To assist child domestic workers in times of crisis - particularly to rescue and remove them from abusive employers; and to help CDWs seek redress from abusive and/or exploitative employers;
- Not to alienate employers, since this often serves to further isolate CDWs. In some cases employers may become part of the solution;

- To provide more services which cater specifically to the needs of child domestic workers, since their needs are often quite different from those of other child workers;
- To develop interventions which reduce the isolation of CDWs and which improve their treatment by employers. In particular, CDWs want to see an end to their discrimination in their employers' households;
- To develop longer-term interventions, i.e. not to develop services for them and then pull-out after just one or two years;
- To develop interventions which take into consideration some of the issues which most affect child domestic workers, for example, early pregnancy and the effects of HIV/AIDS and trafficking;
- To undertake more awareness raising about their situation, and to ensure that this awareness raising goes hand-in-hand with concrete services for child domestic workers;
- To assist them in accessing government and state infrastructure that can help them; for example, in obtaining birth certificates, enrolling in school, in accessing health care, in locating families and returning home.

One of the strongest messages to emerge from the consultations was the importance of those providing assistance to talk to the children themselves about what they need. The work of Anti-Slavery International and its partners in this area has shown that the most effective interventions are those which systematically involve child domestic workers themselves in the planning and implementation of their projects and programmes.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Who are child domestic workers?

Child domestic workers are persons under 18 years who work in households other than their own, doing domestic chores, caring for children, tending the garden, running errands and helping their employers run their small businesses, amongst other tasks. This includes children who 'live in' and those who live separately from their employers, as well as those who are paid for their work, those who are not paid, and those who receive 'in-kind' benefits, such as food and shelter.

A child domestic worker is as likely to be working for a relative as for a stranger - blurring the lines as regards her relationship with the employing family. In these situations the child works, but is not considered a worker. She lives as part of the family, but is not treated like a family member. Although it is recognised that many children carry significant domestic workloads in their own homes and face similar issues to child domestic workers, their situation is not considered in this report.

**“The best time in my life was when my employers agreed to send me to school.”**

(Female CDW, Nepal).



Pete Williamson



Child domestic labour is one of the most widespread and exploitative forms of child work in the world today, and is also one of the most difficult to tackle. Child domestic workers are hard to reach not only because they work behind the closed doors of their employers' homes, but also because society sees the practice as normal and - in relation to girls - important training for later life.

Children as young as seven years old are routinely pressed into domestic service. Child domestic workers are isolated from their families and from opportunities to make friends - and are under the total control of employers whose primary concern is often not in their best interests as children. Despite some children entering domestic labour in the hope of continuing their schooling, most are deprived of opportunities for education and are working in conditions that can be considered amongst the worst forms of child labour. Worldwide, many have been trafficked, or are in situations of servitude.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that more girls under 16 are in domestic service than in any other type of work. Recent statistics from a number of countries show the numbers to be in the many millions worldwide.<sup>2</sup> Significant numbers of pre-pubescent and older boys are also engaged as domestic workers in many countries, but domestic service remains heavily gender-biased - about 90 per cent of all child domestic workers are girls.

However, although large in numbers, child domestic workers remain invisible and marginalized both economically and socially because of the myths still surrounding their employment. While it is conventional to regard domestic work as a 'safe' form of employment, in reality a wide range of abuses - including physical, verbal and sexual violence - routinely accompanies this type of work.

For more information about the general child domestic labour situation and the context surrounding it, see Chapter 4.

## 1.2. The purpose of this report

It is an internationally acknowledged legal principle that all children (under 18 years) have the right to freely express their views on matters which affect them (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12). Despite this, and while attention to the situation of child domestic workers has grown considerably in the last 15 years, the views of the child domestic workers themselves remain relatively unheard. In order to remedy this, Anti-Slavery International and its partners set out to consult with child domestic workers as part of a wider project to identify what interventions are most useful to child domestic workers and which offer them the best protection from abuse and exploitation.

The report provides a global snapshot of the present condition, preoccupations and demands of a cross-section of child domestic workers, offering an insight into the key issues and concerns affecting the wider population of CDWs across the world.

This report is also intended to inform local and international programme developers and policy makers about the situation and needs of child domestic workers - as expressed by the children themselves - in order to better target programmes and policies on the issue. Its aim is also to encourage thinking about child domestic workers not simply as subjects of concern, but as social actors able to articulate their needs and capable of transforming their own lives, and the lives of others. Finally, it is intended that this report be useful as a tool for advocacy - in particular by raising public awareness about the child domestic labour issue.

## 1.3. About the consultations

In total, more than 20 consultations took place from May to October 2004, involving more than 400 current and former child domestic workers from urban and rural areas in Benin, Costa Rica, India, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania and Togo. Consultations were undertaken by research personnel from NGOs specialising in providing services for child domestic workers, under general guidance from Anti-Slavery International.

### Notes for Consultations table on facing page:

- The adjacent figures provide a breakdown of consultation participants only. The figures are not necessarily indicative of the numbers of child domestic workers in the countries/locations concerned, nor of their ages or of the ratio of female/male CDWs;
- Some participants did not know their ages and so estimates were made by local research teams.

<sup>2</sup> *Helping Hands or Shackled Lives: Understanding child domestic labour and responses to it* (ILO, Geneva, 2004).

**Consultations: Who was consulted and where**

Country	Location of consultation	Nos. of CDWs and former CDWs consulted (under 18)	Numbers of former CDWs consulted (18 years and over)	Numbers of females/males
Benin	<b>Cotonou:</b> capital city	31	1	30 female & 2 male
	<b>Dogbo:</b> village in rural area	26	4	25 female & 5 male
Costa Rica	<b>San José:</b> capital city & three smaller urban areas (Monteverde; Cartago & Turrialba)	35	0	31 female & 4 male
India	<b>Chennai:</b> capital of Tamil Nadu state	26	0	All female
Nepal	<b>Lalitpur:</b> district of Kathmandu Valley	30	0	13 female & 17 male
Peru	<b>Cajamarca:</b> urban area in mountainous region	40	8	23 female & 25 male
	<b>Lima:</b> capital city	40	10	25 female & 25 male
	<b>Pucallpa:</b> urban area in forest region	43	11	29 female & 25 male
Philippines	<b>Manila:</b> capital city; (involving CDWs working in Manila, Batangas, Bacolod & Davao)	13	7	All female
Tanzania	<b>Dar es Salaam:</b> capital city (Sinza ward)	15	8	21 female & 2 male
	<b>Mwanza:</b> city in north (Nyakoto + Ilemela wards)	23	14	29 female & 8 male
Togo	<b>Atakpame:</b> rural area	20	12	All female
	<b>Lomé:</b> capital city	22	7	All female
<b>Totals</b>		<b>364</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>446 (total number consulted)</b>

A colouring book prepared by AGTR which raises awareness of child domestic labour in Peru.



The results of these consultations have been circulated in the countries where they took place, and have been used to influence local policy and practice in a number of ways.

In Peru, a national report documenting the consultation findings entitled *We Are Not Invisible* (*No somos invisibles*) has been widely circulated to politicians, policy makers and the media and has helped to generate a national debate on the issue. The widespread publicity has also resulted in increasing numbers of volunteers in Peru wanting to work on the issue. As a result of the consultations, several fledgling mutual support networks have been initiated by participants. A version of the results titled *Oye* was also produced for children. In the form of a colouring book, *Oye* targets child domestic workers as well as school children, and has been designed to raise understanding of CDWs' situation, views and rights.

In Togo consultation results were presented to Togo's national commission on child rights which has since begun drafting a new law to protect children, based on the children's reflections and demands.

In the Philippines, the consultation findings were instrumental in drafting strategies for the national time-bound programme which targets child domestic labour as a worst form of child labour. Selected children's stories were also documented in-depth and were featured in a publication looking at the nexus between trafficking and domestic work.<sup>3</sup>

In Costa Rica, the results were presented to the National Council of Children and Adolescents and to the National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labour and the Protection of the Adolescent Worker. The results were also disseminated to all political parties during the 2006 presidential elections and were widely reported on by the local media. Internationally, the findings were shared by means of a widely-read electronic newsletter.

In Tanzania, the results were shared with various government institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) locally and nationally - which has helped to keep child domestic labour a high national priority. Collaboration on the issue has increased amongst local government officials (including street leaders), religious leaders, community volunteers, as well as amongst representatives of NGOs, academic institutions, health and legal bodies. As a result of its learning from the consultation process, Mwanza-based NGO Kivulini has adopted a number of new approaches. In particular, it is promoting the use of role-models to prevent child trafficking for domestic service, and has established an Association of Responsible Employers to protect child domestic workers from violence (exploitation and abuse).

Consultation results were also fed into an international practitioners meeting convened by Anti-Slavery International - where 30 NGO practitioners and representatives of six international organisations and networks met to exchange views and discuss good practice regarding child domestic labour interventions.<sup>4</sup> This meeting resulted in *Child Domestic Workers: A handbook on good practice in programme interventions* (Anti-Slavery International, 2005). This report can be downloaded at [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

## 1.4. Ethical issues and dilemmas

Consistent with the good practice developed by Anti-Slavery International and its NGO partners, the choice of research locations was primarily based around the existence of a range of good quality and accessible services for child domestic workers and, in particular, the availability of trained personnel who were able to assist participants to deal sensitively with their recall of distressing experiences.

Participants in the studies were drawn from two sources: those who were accessing services and therefore already known to the research team; and those who were not. In a number of cases it was necessary for members of the research teams to speak to employers and guardians about the purpose of the research and to seek consent from them to allow the children to participate. This process presented an opportunity to identify and reach out to a number of

<sup>3</sup> Pacis, R. et al. *Trafficked into Forced Labor: Selected Case Studies of Domestic Workers in the Philippines*, Visayan Forum Foundation, Inc: Manila, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> International Workshop for Practitioners on Child Domestic Labour: Promoting good practice in interventions, Anti-Slavery International, 22-24 November 2004, Bangkok, Thailand.

children who were subsequently able to use the services provided by the NGO. Several participants reported abuse by their current employers, and service providers were able to take immediate action in consultation with the children concerned.

The consultations involved current and former child domestic workers. This meant that not all participants were under 18 years, and not all were employed as domestic workers at the time of the consultations (see table in section 1.3). Apart from obvious difficulties in age verification, the principal reason for including those no longer working as CDWs was to include the perspectives of individuals who were in a position to put their experience as a child domestic worker in a wider context. In particular, it was considered that these individuals were particularly well placed to analyse what interventions had been of most benefit to them, and which had provided them with the best protection from abuse and exploitation.

All participants were informed beforehand of the purpose of the process and of the intended uses of the information they provided. Participants were able to opt out of some discussions and request that their inputs be kept off the record (and this happened, in a few instances).

Informed consent was sought and given by the current and former child domestic workers for use of the images used in this report, and also for the use of their drawings.

For more detailed information regarding ethical issues and dilemmas raised, readers are encouraged to contact the country research teams (see Annex I for contact details).

## 1.5. Consultation methods

Participants were all current or former child domestic workers (i.e. all had been child domestic workers), and were selected to represent the diverse experiences of child domestic workers more generally, taking into account (amongst other things) their age, gender, religion, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, place of origin, education levels and levels of pay (including those who are unpaid).

In the best interests of the children involved, most of those current or former child domestic workers consulted were already in contact with a service provider, in order to ensure that they were in a position to seek support, if necessary, as a result of any issues raised in the discussions. In cases where individuals were not already linked to a service provider, information was provided to them about where they could go to receive help.

A variety of methods were used to find out about the situation of current and former child domestic workers, and to gather their views.

The basic methods of information capture were individual structured and semi-structured interviews and group discussions. In many cases, the child domestic workers involved (particularly the younger children) expressed themselves through drawings - examples of which can be seen throughout this report.

In addition, some discussions took place with other persons who are significant in the lives of current and former child domestic workers. These included dialogues with employers, guardians, community leaders and others. For example, in Mwanza (Tanzania), local government street leaders were contacted about the research to gain their support, and to help in the identification of households employing child domestic workers, but in Dar es Salaam, working through influential local women to identify where child domestic workers could be found was a more effective method. However, in both cases employers had greater confidence in releasing their child domestic workers for the research because they had been approached by prominent local people.

Chapter 5 provides greater detail on data collection methods and lessons learned from these processes.

## 2. What child domestic workers say about their situation



### 2.1. The age they became child domestic workers

Of the more than 400 current or former child domestic workers who were consulted, most had begun to work by the age of 12, and many of these at a much earlier age in some countries. In Peru and the Philippines, a ‘step-migration’ pattern was evident - with children starting their working lives in places outside the capital (i.e. closer to home), and then progressing towards larger urban areas and capital cities as their ages increased.

#### Age of entry into domestic service

Location	Age at which youngest participant entered domestic service	Average age of entry into domestic service
Benin	7 years	9 years
Costa Rica	10 years	12-13 years
India (Tamil Nadu)	7 years	10 years
Nepal	8 years	9 years
Peru	8 years	11 years
Philippines	7 years	13-14 years
Tanzania	7 years	14 years
Togo	7 years	9 years

## 2.2 How and why did they become domestic workers?

The need to sustain themselves and their families due to poverty, and because of problems within their own families (such as parental break-ups, the death of a parent and violence or abuse within the home) emerge as key reasons why children enter domestic service, although the causes of poverty and the types of family problems differ in different settings. In some countries (particularly in Peru and the Philippines), significant numbers of older children reported that they had made the decision themselves to leave home and seek work in order to be able to continue with their education. In India, a number of children were working to repay family loans, while several others cited alcoholic fathers as the reason they had left home. A quarter of participants in Tanzania recounted that they were forced into domestic work as family members had died due to HIV/AIDS and they had no reliable relatives to take care of them. In Nepal, in-country conflict was a factor in pushing children into domestic work. In Costa Rica many children began working as CDWs to help augment family income.

Children were also pulled into domestic service by siblings and friends already working as domestics, and because of employers' demands for younger workers. In Nepal children said that it was hard to continue working as a domestic worker above the legal minimum working age of 14 years as employers had told them that older children were more trouble and were able to bargain for higher salaries and other rights.



Pete Williamson

**“I started to work because I did not want to stay at home as my father treated me badly..., no, it is not that they treated me badly, it is just that I don’t like to stay at home because he beats me, he tells me off, I can’t even have a rest. He is a carpenter you see and he asks us to do all kinds of things, I have to help him with sanding... I don’t even have the time to do my homework.”**

(Female CDW, 14, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“Because I have no education it is the only job I can perform.”** (Female CDW, Tanzania).

**“My father died when I was three years old and a few months later my mother became mentally ill. As she lost her mind, she could no longer take care of me, so I was sent away as a domestic.”** (Female CDW, Cotonou, Benin).

**“My first job was accompanying my mother to sell pastries. It was a very hard job because we were working from very early in the morning; we made and cooked them and then we were all day out on the streets; after that I found a job with a lady, working all day in her house as domestic.”** (CDW, 15 years, Carpio, Costa Rica).

**“My aunt, you see. One day I couldn’t register in school but she came and said ‘you help me out with the house work and I will give you the money’. But she doesn’t give me much. I add this and that and that’s what I buy my books with...”** (Female CDW, 12, Lima, Peru).

**“I wanted to study but I did not have the money to pay for school expenses. We are a dozen siblings. I am the third eldest. Our parents could not take care of us. My family could not afford to help me buy for school projects.”**

(Female CDW, 16, Davao, Philippines).

**“Because all the members of my family except my old grandma passed away and I had to earn bread for myself and grandma.”** (Female CDW, Nepal).

**“Because we were [HIV/AIDS] orphans, our relatives took everything from us.”** (Female CDW, 18, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

**“I came with my mum, she left me at my aunt’s house, she told me I was going to stay there because it was better for me, because at home we didn’t have so many things.”**  
 (Female CDW, 14, Peru).

**“My mother entrusted me to an employer. She had to work as a domestic abroad. Since then, I only saw her once when she came home for a vacation. She stayed for only one week, then left again.”**  
 (Female former CDW, Mindoro, Philippines [entered domestic work at age 12]).

**“My eldest sister was the first one to come. Once here I managed to talk to her so she could help me to find a house. She told me to come; she said I could stay with her whilst we find something. I spent three weeks with her and her children until I finally found a house where I work by the hour in the Tibas area.”**  
 (Female CDW, 17, La Carpio, Costa Rica).

**“I was taken away from my village in Benin when I was nine years old by a friend of my father, and we went to Cote d’Ivoire to work. There I worked with another girl to sell water and lollipops. For three years, I only ate maize paste.”**  
 (Female CDW, 11, Dogbo, Benin).

**“When I was 16 a friend from the church told me that there was a girl who needed somebody to look after her baby and as I was not studying or working I went to see.”**  
 (Female former CDW, 19, Lima, Peru).

**“My brother and I went to look for work together, he cleans houses and I look after a child... I found out through a notice that they needed a childminder and I said to the lady that I could look after her boy, who was three years old.”** (Female CDW, 10, Cajamarca, Peru).

## The role of intermediaries

Prospective employers may approach the child or her family directly or, more often, use an intermediary to obtain a domestic worker.

A number of participants described having been trafficked across borders into child domestic work. In Benin and Togo, for example, a significant proportion of children described being taken from Côte d’Ivoire to Benin, Benin to Togo or Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana to Benin or Togo to work as child domestics. In all of these cases, a middleman or an ‘auntie’ (who may or may not have been an actual relative) was involved in bringing the children to their employers.

Typically, the way in which many children entered into domestic service could be considered as trafficking - although this term was rarely used during the consultations to describe the in-country movement which took place. Participants often talked of recruiters or other intermediaries facilitating their entry into service, and many spoke of the false promises they and their parents were fed about their working conditions and about what life would be like. In the Philippines, recruiters were increasingly using domestic work as a lure into other - less acceptable - forms of labour. For example, parents and their children were duped into thinking that the child would be working as a domestic, when in fact the intention was to traffic them into prostitution.

In Costa Rica, where many Nicaraguan adolescents can be found working as CDWs, their migration is facilitated by family members and Nicaraguan communities already there, who assist them by providing shelter and assistance in finding a job.

In Peru, as in many other countries, the child’s first job is usually in the house of a relative, and many girls in particular reported that it was their mothers who played a key role in promoting their entry into domestic work. In the Philippines, some mothers are overseas domestic workers themselves, who have to leave their families behind. One option they take is to entrust their children to known households, relatives or neighbours.

In Nepal, other family members such as older sisters and brothers already working are also catalysts in encouraging children into domestic work - by telling them about work opportunities or helping them to get jobs.

What also emerged from the consultations is that, in some contexts, older children

themselves seek out jobs as 'live-in' domestic workers in an attempt to continue their schooling - which would otherwise stop if they stayed at home. This was evident particularly in Peru, Nepal and the Philippines. A number of those consulted also revealed that they had sought jobs as domestic workers in order to get away from their families, or just for the opportunity to earn some money.

In poorer regions of the Philippines, cases emerged of children who were asked by their teachers if they wanted to work in exchange for their schooling. Some teachers were known to have made such an offer when they observed pupils struggling at school and lacking support from their families.

### 2.3. What kinds of work do they do ?

#### What tasks do we do ?



- Sweeping (the house and compound)
- Washing dishes
- Washing the floor
- Ironing
- Looking after the employer's business
- Taking care of young children
- Taking care of elderly people
- Accompanying employers' children to school
- Supervising homework
- Tending the garden
- Washing the car
- Taking care of animals
- Going to the shops/market
- Cooking
- Fetching water

**“My teacher commissioned me as a dishwasher during her daughter’s wedding reception. They asked me to stay a little bit more. I stayed in their provincial home for one month. Then her brother in law needed a domestic worker in Manila, so they took me there.”** (Female CDW, 15, Samar, Philippines).

**“I wake up at six in the morning, I prepare breakfast for the couple and their children, then I wash the dishes, I sweep, I mop, wash clothes, feed the dogs, and I finish cleaning the rest of the house. When the children come back from school I get them lunch or something to eat.”** (Male CDW, 10, Lima, Peru).



Above: Akoko (Lomé) depicts life as a child domestic worker.



**“I work by the hour. I have to arrive at six thirty in the morning and I have to be punctual. I sweep the floor, I dust the house, clean the toilet, do the washing up and iron everyones clothes, I cook lunch, I have to watch the children when they come back from school, I feed them, do the washing up and I leave dinner ready. The lady comes at around five. Then I can go home. I have to take two buses.”**  
(Female CDW, 15, Manuel de Jesus, Cartago, Costa Rica).

**“I clean the house, prepare breakfast, prepare the children and take them to school, then I go to the market, cook, fetch water ...”**  
(Female CDW, 18, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

Below: Rosalie from Atakpame shows her working as a market porter. (Togo)  
- “I want peace”, she says.

je veut la  
Paix



**“I clean the floor many times in a day. When it is not well done, my employer throws the dirty water at my face.”** (Female CDW, Lomé, Togo).

Below: Abadji from Atakpame washes clothes while her employer threatens her with a stick. (Togo)



While some differences in tasks given to child domestic workers and the way these tasks are undertaken do occur between, and even within, countries, their basic day-to-day responsibilities are fundamentally the same.

However, across countries and regions, the tasks undertaken by child domestic workers tend to be divided according to traditional gender roles. This means that girls are usually required to do ‘indoor’ tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing, as well as taking on the ‘caring’ roles, such as looking after young children and the elderly. While it is possible to find boys (particularly those who are pre-pubescent) also undertaking such tasks, they are usually to be found outside - tending gardens, looking after livestock and maintaining vehicles.

Notably, in fulfilling their ‘indoor’ role, female child domestic workers often spend time each day outside of the house, fetching water, going to market and assisting the employer with their business. However, younger child domestic workers are given less opportunities to do this because of the requirement to negotiate, handle money and carry heavy loads - as well as employer concerns about the child’s safety.

In the Philippines, male and female child domestic workers do different kinds of chores. Boys are usually expected to carry heavy or dangerous items, serve as a security guard or car mechanic, whereas girls are expected to wash and iron the clothes, clean the house, cook food and take care of the employer’s children. While male domestic workers are not expected to do the tasks that are associated with girls, female domestic workers are sometimes expected to perform tasks that are associated with boys, such as carrying heavy items. Further, there are some instances when some girls are asked to massage their employers as part of the comfort they are expected to provide.

In addition to their household tasks, child domestic workers in Benin and Togo sold a wide range of goods in the market and on the street, including gari (cassava flour), bread, condiments, oil, petroleum, fish, soap, old clothes, fruits, cooked rice, chill, akpan (maize paste), gao (bean cake) and water. In most cases, the children were also responsible for preparing the goods for sale - for example, by packing water into individual bags and putting them in the refrigerator. Other children had to steam maize paste or deep-fry bean cake or fish in the morning before going out to market - then carry the goods all day on their heads as they walked around the market selling them.

Participants in the Benin and Togo consultations also pointed out that many of the children who could be seen working as porters and selling in markets were child domestic workers working alongside their employers. In Atakpame (Togo), as in a number of locations, some of those consulted did not recognise themselves as child domestic workers - they considered that they were merely living with their relatives. However, many revealed that they did more chores than their relatives' children, and were often mistreated - resulting in the realisation that they were, in fact, child domestic workers.

## 2.4 Working hours and time off

One of the most striking aspects of research into the situation of child domestic workers over the years has been the 24-hour nature of the work and the sheer length of the working day.

The consultations have confirmed these findings. Across Africa and Asia live-in CDWs reported that they worked an average of 15 hours per day. In Peru, a shorter average working day of 9-10 hours was reported, although a work day of more than 12 hours was typical for girls working in Lima. Even in Costa Rica, where the majority of CDWs were not living with their employers, those working full time were working an average of 10 hours per day, and sometimes considerably more, since they must be available when their employers need them. In both live-in and live-out situations the child's working day usually has a set start time but no set finishing time, and hours are dependent on the needs and whims of the employers. Even in situations where there are notional start and finishing times, many child domestic workers described situations which suggest that they are always on-call.



Above: Anthony shows himself struggling with heavy buckets of water (Mwanza, Tanzania).

**“I work from seven in the morning to five in the afternoon without a break, they give me some food but I am not allowed to sit for long. Then when I go home I have to share the money I earned in the house and also I have to help with the cleaning and the cooking of the food for my youngest brothers and sisters.”**

(CDW, 12 years, Terjarcillos, Costa Rica).

**“I wake up at 3am to water the plants, clean the house, go to market, cook, wash the plates, wash the clothes, iron the clothes. I return to the market three times a day. From 5pm to 9pm, they allow me to go to school. When I return, I have to wash the dishes, then I massage both my male and female employer until 1am. I only have two hours to sleep.”**

(Female former CDW, 29, from Buikidnon, Philippines [entered domestic work at nine years old]).

**“I wake up at 5am, prepare the children and escort them to school. Returning home I do the housework. Later, I pick the children up from school. Usually I sleep at 9pm.”**

(Female CDW, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

**“My day always starts with a sermon by my employer. I work until they need me. I work as long as they see me around.”**

(Female former CDW, 23, Mindoro, Philippines [entered domestic work at age 12]).

**“I usually work six to seven hours in from morning till afternoon since my employers allow me to go to school at night. However, I still had to iron clothes every night when I come home.”** (Female CDW, 15, from Leyte, now working in Batangas, Philippines).

*(When was the last time you visited your parents?)*

**“Not since I came here three years ago. They live very far and I can’t go on my own, and they haven’t got the money to come here. (Are you in touch with them?)**

**Sometimes when they go to the village they call me [...] just sometimes.”** (Male CDW, 16, Lima, Peru).

**“I am free on Sunday afternoon. I go out for a walk in Plaza de Armas with my friends. It is great! Sometimes the boys are a nuisance but we don’t take a lot of notice, we just laugh at them.”** (Female CDW, 17, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“My mum comes from time to time to see if I am all right, she asks the lady if I am working well, but she doesn’t come very often, she says the lady will get annoyed.”** (Male CDW, 10, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“I haven’t seen them [my family] but I called on the 20th of October because it was my birthday. The last time I saw them was the 18th of May; that was when I came here.”** (Female CDW, 13, Lima, Peru).

**“My employer has told me not to leave the house until the baby who is two weeks starts walking.”** (Female CDW, 14, Mwanza, Tanzania).

Picture and above quote: When (Veronica) was requested to draw a picture indicating the situation of her work, she showed how she has to perform different tasks with a baby on her back.



Throughout the study, live-in child domestic workers reported that their time off was very limited, if they were given any at all. In Tanzania, almost half of those consulted said they had no time off during the week and were given no annual holiday. For others, a few hours off on Sunday, or for Friday prayers was their only rest time during the week. A number of child domestic workers in Lomé (Togo) complained that they were compelled to go to church with their employers in their ‘free time’ on Sunday.

In Tanzania, only a few participants reported that they received any kind of annual holiday. In Nepal, being unable to return home regularly meant that they could not celebrate their major feasts and festivals - which left them feeling frustrated and upset, and with a sense that they were losing their identity.

In the Philippines, domestic workers see schooling as time off from work. However, the employer still expects them to work at night when they return, making no allowances for the fact that they have less time. Because they go to school, they are not usually allowed to have days off.

## 2.5 Contact with family and friends

While live-out child domestic workers tended to live at home or saw their families regularly, this often was not the case amongst live-in children. In Peru, there was wide variation in the levels of contact child domestic workers had with families and friends. While some CDWs were allowed visitors, there was a tendency amongst employers to discourage people visiting the house. For instance, a number of live-in CDWs in Lima reported that their employers tried to control and isolate them from their families by limiting their opportunities for communication and visits.

In Tanzania, a third of CDWs reported that they were not allowed to have visitors or to visit their parents or relatives - and the numbers were higher amongst CDWs who were working in the capital city Dar es Salaam, who reported being more isolated in terms of social networks than those CDWs working closer to home.

The CDW’s level of contact with family and friends depends on a number of factors,

including the distance she is living from them and the financial resources available to undertake a visit. However, the most decisive factor in whether or not a child keeps in contact with family and friends is in the willingness of the employer to allow it to take place. Through their actions - whether deliberately or unconsciously - employers control the child domestic workers' ability to stay in touch with family and friends, and in many cases effectively isolate them by reducing opportunities for contact and discouraging communication.

## 2.6 Work contracts and payment

Verbal agreements as opposed to written contracts were the norm for child domestic workers in all of the study countries. For adolescent CDWs, agreements regarding pay and conditions were frequently negotiated directly with the employer, but this was often not the case for younger children, who had only the sketchiest knowledge of the agreement made between the employer and her parents. For instance, in Lomé some of the children whose 'placement' had been set by their parents said that they were not even sure whether they were supposed to be paid or not, because the agreement was made between their parents and the employer.

Since most agreements were verbal, domestic workers find it hard to seek redress when abuses occur. For example, in the Philippines several participants recounted difficulties in dealing with such situations - and, in particular, their difficulties with trying to leave their employers.

Low pay or no pay was reported to be the norm in all countries. Despite doing broadly the same work, younger child domestic workers were routinely paid less than their adolescent counterparts - and in many cases were paid only in-kind. In Benin, Tanzania and Togo in particular, participants reported that payment for their work was irregular. In Lomé for instance, out of the 30 child domestic workers consulted, only four of them said that they receive a regular salary. In many locations it was reported that salary deductions were regularly made by employers for broken or lost household items.

**“I started to work at 12 years old. Since then, I never saw my family. Homesickness is my greatest enemy. My mother only saw me when my employer finally told her where I was working in Manila. They did not allow anybody to see me because they always beat me. I always wanted to tell my parents how difficult my life was, but there was no chance until the NGO rescued me.”** (Female CDW, 17, from Leyte, working in Manila, Philippines).

**(Do you get a salary?) “Yes, 20 soles (US\$5.50) every two weeks. I used to go there, her daughter was a friend of mine, and sometimes I went to help, and the lady said ‘you can come every day and I will pay you 20 soles’ she said.”** (Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“They were maltreating me and I was too tired to work anymore, I asked to leave. I told them that besides maltreating me, they also did not pay me any salary. They told me I could not leave because there was no replacement, and I have to look for one. I answered back that I could not endure the beatings any more and they would not even pay me. They accused me of stealing a CD player, threatened me with jail, so I just escaped.”**

(Female former CDW, 20, from Leyte, Philippines who escaped from her employers when she was 17 years old)

**“I don’t have a contract because the lady says that she is helping me, I don’t have holidays either”**

(CDW, 16 years, Cartago, Costa Rica).

**“I have not got a contract with the lady, she just said to my mum she would take me in, and so I went, my mum has not said a thing about payment.”**

(Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“I did household chores very early morning from 4am. After the chores, I baked and sold cake all day in the market. I come back at home around 9pm. With another child domestic worker, we made 20,000CEFA (approx US\$36) each day for our employer. The employer promised to give us money to start our own business, but we were never paid.”**

(Female CDW, 12, Dogbo, Benin).

**“If I break something they take that off my wages. And if something is missing they do the same thing.”**  
 (Male CDW, 17, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“When I collect my salary half of it I send to my grandmother who is very old and taking care of a very big family. The rest of my salary I give to my mother who is staying far away from me so that it will help me later on build a house. My grandmother has given me an ultimatum that I am old enough to take care of myself.”**  
 (Male CDW, 14, Mwanza, Tanzania).

**“I get 50,000 colones per month (USD\$95) and I work 10 hours per day. I don’t know if it is good or bad but I give money to my mum and with the rest I buy my things.”**  
 (CDW, 15 years, Coronado, Costa Rica).

**“I get my pay, and give it to my mum. I give all of it to her; she needs it more than me.”**  
 (Female CDW, 11, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“Because my salary was too small, I ended up asking for money advances from my employer. Over the years, I incurred too huge a debt I could never repay it. So I worked and worked just to be able to get more advances while my debt grew bigger and bigger.”**  
 (Female former CDW, 29, Philippines, who entered domestic work at nine years old)

**“I work as a domestic but used to attend school. Before going to school every morning, I had to take a big pot full of cooked rice to the roadside. One day, the pot fell down and the rice was spoiled. My employer was angry and decided not to pay my school fees. So, I dropped out of school but continued working for her for long time.”**  
 (Female CDW, Atakpame, Togo)

**“I go to school. My mummy worked hard so that we could study. She always told us to do our homework and that if we could read we would get somewhere. I want to carry on studying.”**  
 (Male CDW, 8, Cajamarca, Peru).

A young child domestic worker in Atakpame (Togo) was paid 2,500CEFA (approx USD\$4.50) per month for her work to take care of two children and undertake the household chores. Others reported that they get paid about 5,000-10,000CEFA (USD\$9 - \$18) a month. Some of the girls reported that they had prostituted themselves when the employers sent them to sell goods in the market, in order to earn money to eat.

In the Philippines, those working in Manila were paid between 500 - 1,500 Philippine Pesos (USD\$10 - \$30) a month. However, it was reported that there are still some situations in provincial areas where employers provide a small additional amount as an allowance for the child domestic worker’s transportation to and from school. Other employers were found to refuse payment or deduct amounts from salaries as a form of punishment.

In many cases payment for the work done by the child was passed directly to the child’s parents. While employers argued that this was to ensure the money reached the child’s home, it resulted in the child’s greater dependence on her employer for her material needs, and made it more difficult for the child to leave her employer.

## 2.7 Access to education

While most child domestic workers attached great importance to education and many children we spoke to saw being a domestic worker as a way of continuing their studies, in reality their situation was more often than not a serious obstacle to studying. In many cases this was simply because employers did not allow them to go to school - or renege on an initial agreement to do so. But even when CDWs were given the chance, the long working hours and requirements of their job made it impossible to take it up. In Lima, some CDWs persevered with night schools (from 6-10pm), but reported that they had little time for homework and were often tired at school, which has made it difficult to progress. Similar issues were also reported in other countries. In Nepal, some children saw going to school as an opportunity to take some rest from their domestic chores.

The inflexibility of the formal education system was seen as another obstacle to continuing their education, as was the bad quality of teaching in some schools and the difficulty in affording school books, equipment, uniform and in paying school fees - as reported in

particular in Costa Rica and Nepal. Child domestic workers in the Philippines usually drop out in the middle of the school year because of these problems. Most of these children were discouraged from returning to the educational system even if their employers allowed them to do so.

## 2.8 Treatment in the household

Many of the live-in CDWs reported that they were happy with their **sleeping** arrangements. In Tanzania, for example, most child domestic workers reported sleeping in the same conditions as the employers' children - i.e. in a bed with a mattress, bed sheet and a mosquito net. In Peru, most live-in child workers had their own bed and room, but some reported that they had to sleep in their employer's room, or in store cupboards or on mattresses in the kitchen. However, in Benin and Togo the majority of children reported sleeping in unsatisfactory conditions - often on the floor, on an old mat, in the kitchen or on a chair on the veranda. In the Philippines, some CDWs described having better facilities - such as electric fans and foam mattresses - than they did in their own homes. However, they also described being cramped together with other domestic workers in maids' quarters, or of being denied certain facilities by their employers as a form of punishment.

**“I was going to study this year but my employer said it wasn't possible; we couldn't leave the children alone. Both he and his wife go out to work.”**  
(Male CDW, 16, Lima, Peru).

**“Even if my employer encouraged me to go to school, I decided not to enrol because I wanted to save money that I can send back to my family.”**  
(Female CDW, 16, from Mindanao, Philippines).

**“I had to give up school because my mum couldn't pay for my school stuff and uniform; instead they sent me to work so I didn't stay in the house doing nothing.”**  
(CDW, 12 years, Cartago, Costa Rica).

**“When I was much younger working for a woman as a domestic, I had to sleep on the kitchen floor every night. I really hated sleeping in the kitchen.”**  
(Female CDW, Lomé, Togo).

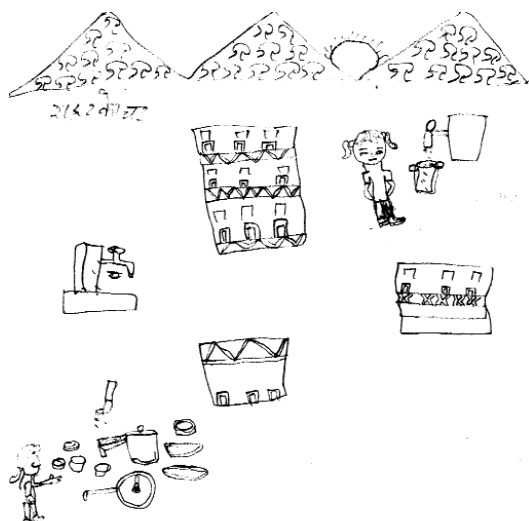
**I had an employer who forced me to sleep outside, using a carton, without any blankets, and I had to eat left-over food.** (Female former CDW, 22, from Bacolod, Philippines, who worked since 9 years old).

**“We ate all together at the table [...] the same food; we were all served the same. Breakfast was a sort of lunch, on big plates; we got a lot, sometimes I couldn't finish it.”**  
(Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).

**We sleep on the floor beside the comfort room, so when my employer comes home drunk, he even pisses on me before reaching the toilet.”**  
(Female CDW, 17, from Mindanao, Philippines).

**“I sleep on the floor in the sitting room.”**  
(Female CDW, 15, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

**“I have my own room, which is quite pretty; it is safe and I am left in peace there.”**  
(Female CDW, 17, Cajamarca, Peru).



Above left: Ram's drawing of life in the countryside, (Nepal).

Below left: Janaki depicts the tasks in her day including washing, collecting water and cooking, (Nepal).

**“Some days I stayed without food. I was not allowed to share the table with the family and to touch anything. I used to eat in the kitchen.”** (Female CDW, 17, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania)

**“Sometimes the lady sees me sitting there and she says ‘come and sit at the table with me’. I feel shy.”**

(Female CDW, 14, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“My employer sends me to hospital without deducting my salary.”**

(Female CDW, 15, Mwanza, Tanzania).

**“The worst time in my life was when my employer kicked me out, as he knew that I have glandular TB.”**

(Female CDW, Nepal).

**“I don’t like to say that I am ill. Sometimes I just say to my mum ‘come to see me, mum’ she takes care of me; she has looked after me when I was ill [...] and then another time my employer got me tablets.”** (Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“My employer didn’t look after my health; if I get ill he doesn’t take any notice. I have to look after myself at home; most times I take medicines that my mum gives me.”**

(Male former CDW, 21, Cajamarca, Peru)

**“The lady once said to me that I could not be in the living room when they had visitors, that I was not part of the family. (And what happened?) I started crying alone. It was her daughter’s birthday, the lady only looked at me, nothing else.”**

(Female CDW, 12, Lima, Peru)

**“We don’t get treated properly. We are discriminated against because of our race or our culture. That’s how my employer’s eldest daughter treats me, as inferior.”**

(Female CDW, 16, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“We don’t feel well because the adults we work for shout and discriminate against us.”**

(Female CDW, 16, Tejarcillos, Costa Rica).

**“Treatment is so, so. I have to make sure I am in my place [...] In their eyes I am a domestic worker serving them.”**

(Female CDW, 17, Cajamarca, Peru).

While for CDWs in Dogbo (Benin) the poor quality and lack of **food** was a significant issue, most of the child domestic workers we spoke to reported that the food they received was adequate. The bulk of concerns regarding food arose over when and where they ate. In Lima, female CDWs mostly had to eat in a different place or at a different time. In India, about half of the CDWs reported eating alone, on the balcony or near the kitchen - and in some houses they were asked to wash down the places where they had just sat and eaten, which amounted to a form of untouchability. In the Philippines, domestic workers were expected to eat only after their employers had finished their meal. Some were forced to eat spoiled food as a form of punishment. But in Tanzania, most CDWs reported that they usually ate with the family or with the children of the family.

In the majority of cases, employers made some kind of effort to assist CDWs in times of **ill-health**, which amounted to providing medicines, giving some rest time and maybe covering their medical expenses. Sometimes, the cost of the medicines or the visit to the doctor was deducted from the CDW’s wage. However, a significant minority of children across the study countries reported that they received no help if they fell ill or were injured during the course of their work, and just had to take care of themselves. Some participants said that they had just asked to leave or go home when they got seriously ill, rather than be a burden to their employers.

In previous research, child domestic workers have reported that the daily experiences of **discrimination** and their **isolation** in the employer’s household (most often because of the job they do, because of their ethnic origin, or because they are poor) are the most difficult part of their burden. Even if their relationship with members of the household is good, these relationships are not on equal terms.

In this research the overwhelming majority of child domestic workers in Benin and Togo reported that they are not granted the same rights as the employers’ children. For example, they are not allowed to play together or watch TV with them. One child said that she is only allowed to watch TV through a window from outside.

## Differences in treatment by male and female employers and their children

Since responsibility for child domestic workers rests largely with the woman of the household, it is not surprising that CDWs for the most part reported being verbally abused and physically assaulted by their female employers.

In Peru responses varied widely, with each consultation location exhibiting its own characteristics - reflecting the different ages, genders and experiences of the child domestic workers working there. The general opinion amongst former child domestic workers in Pucallpa, for example, was that male employers were kinder, although it was pointed out that sometimes niceness on the part of the male employer was a cover for intended sexual abuse:

**“They treated me differently. The lady was very rough, the boss on the other hand was nice to me, but I thought, ‘he is nice for a reason’; that’s what I thought, ‘he is interested in me’. Because he would say, ‘here you are, 10 soles for you’, and I would take it and say thank you of course, I was just a child. And then this is what happened in the end, he took advantage of me, just touching me, nothing else, he did not try to rape me.”**

(Female, 19, Pucallpa, Peru).

In a number of cases child domestic workers found themselves caught in the middle of tensions between male and female employers:

**“Well, what I don’t like is when there are problems. There are always problems in a house, between couples, aren’t there? (And when they argue, that affects their relationship with you?) Well, they have an argument, and then the man, who seems to be the one with a worse temper, gets annoyed with all of us, even the babies.”**

(Female, 17, Pucallpa, Peru).

In Togo, some of the older child domestic workers reported that male members of the family had given them a present but that their female employers became jealous and beat them. After experiencing this, one child domestic worker recommended that they should not be given presents directly by their male employers, to avoid the trouble they could cause.

In Tanzania, the majority of CDWs said they preferred female employers, because they help them to solve problems and once in a

while they give them a hand in doing their work:

**“I was staying with a stepmother who poured hot water on me. My employer who is my aunt buys me uniforms and pays for my schooling.”** (Female, 14, Mwanza, Tanzania).

**“Mother (employer) listens to me.”** (Female, 15, Mwanza, Tanzania).

It was noted that female CDW’s are spending most of their time with female employers. Almost a quarter preferred male employers because they are bought clothes, given money and presents:

**“I like father (employer) because when he returns home he brings small presents like sweets and gives me money.”** (Male, 15, Mwanza, Tanzania).

**“Things like this have happened to me but I am thankful to the father who stood on my side. As I can remember one day dad (male employer) told mom (female employer), ‘do not treat her like a donkey, please stop that that is why a man is better than a woman.’”** (Female, Tanzania).

In Tanzania and Togo some participants said they preferred the employers’ children because they helped them:

**“I like my employers’ children because they defend me against their mother”** (Female, 17, Mwanza, Tanzania).

In Nepal, while many CDWs liked one or other of their adult employers, the majority expressed a strong dislike for the children of their employers, with many echoing the following reasons, that **“...they never appreciate what I have done, they try to disturb my study or free time, or they create trouble for me.”**In the Philippines, most CDWs develop an attachment to the children they are looking after. This attachment makes it difficult for them to leave, even when abuse by the employers happens.

**“My employer also beats me when he beats his wife. But their daughter asks me to be patient when her parents get mad at me.”**(Female, 16, from Mindanao, Philippines).

There are many instances when the female employer turns her anger on the domestic worker. **“The wife got jealous and accused me of being the other woman”.** (Female, 23, Manila, Philippines).

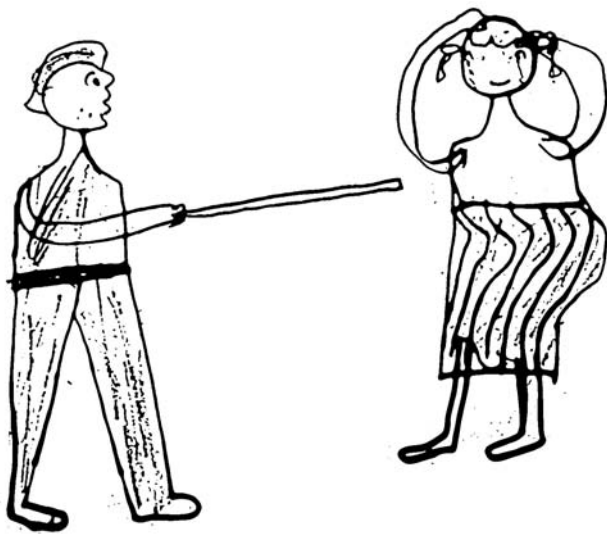
**“On the way back from the market with my employer, we decided to take a taxi. But the taxi was full and we had to sit together on the front seat. But my employer refused and said she cannot sit together with her domestic, in front of everyone else. So I had to take another taxi. I was very shocked.”**

(Female CDW, Lomé, Togo).



**“I hated my employer who was a lawyer. They curse me whenever their epileptic child falls. Instead of helping me, they actually got me into trouble.”**

(Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).



Elisia's drawing showing her being caned and crying.  
(Mwanza, Tanzania).

**“One day, I went to fetch water. When I came back, my employer hit me on the back and pulled me on the ground because the bowl was not filled to the top with water. She continued slapping me even after I fell on the ground.”**

(Female CDW, Lomé, Togo).

**“They hurt me, spank me, throw things at me, use hurting words - maybe just to shame me in front of other people.”**

(Female CDW, 17, Manila, Philippines).

**“My punishment was not being able to see my family; they knew my family was my weak point.”**

(Male former CDW, 20, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“When I don't pay attention or don't do my work I get the belt, but not if there is no reason, only when I don't listen.”**

(Female CDW, 13, Lima, Peru).

**“When I was grinding pepper, it started to rain and the pepper got wet. My employer got angry and threw pepper into my face.”** (Female CDW, Lomé, Togo).

**“...the children, they insult me you see, they call out my mother's name, everyday. It's their way of telling me off if I don't do things right, if their bed is not made properly. They are very arrogant and quite big. Once they wanted to hit me because I had not done their things.”**

(Female CDW, 12, Pucallpa, Peru).

## 2.9 Verbal, physical and sexual violence

Evidence of many different kinds of violence emerged in all of the consultations - sometimes this information was openly shared, and sometimes it became apparent in more subtle ways, through the way the participants responded to certain questions, or through their drawings.

In Benin, CDWs reported that they were frequently hit as a form of punishment - indeed virtually all of the children who participated in the consultations in Benin and Togo spoke of being hit with sticks or by hand if they made mistakes in their chores. Some reported that they were pulled by their ears, splashed with dirty water, or slapped until they collapsed. Many of the children who sell goods in the market said that if they did not sell everything they had for the day, they were often shouted at and beaten.

In the Philippines, participants talked about the common use of physical abuse to discipline young domestic workers. They were often shouted at when they failed to follow instructions. Some employers had forbidden them to sleep until they had finished their tasks completely. Some were forced to eat leftover food, and at times denied any. Some CDWs reported that they felt they were being treated as animals and not as people, because their employers hurt them so that they would work even harder.

In all three consultation locations in Peru, most participants said that they were not punished, and that when they made mistakes they were just corrected. However, many kinds of violence were evident, including shouting, scolding, insults and physical violence.

In Tanzania, almost half the participants said that they were punished by being beaten, insulted, denied food or forced to remain out of doors. While it is not uncommon in Tanzania, as in many other countries, for a child to be beaten as a form of discipline, the physical and emotional pain reported by some child domestic workers was compounded by the humiliation of being beaten by people other than members of their own family.

Several child domestic workers in Tanzania reported that they had been sexually harassed or abused. Two teenage participants working in Dar es Salaam said that male employers assaulted them sexually. Others said that they had been wrongly accused by the employers of having sex with their male employers.

In Costa Rica, CDWs recognised their vulnerability to sexual abuse by their employers, or the employers' children, relatives, neighbours or friends. In Nepal, over half of the participants not able to attend school reported that they had been sexually abused.

A number of participants from the Philippines

reported that they had been sexually assaulted. One was sexually harassed when she was 11 years old; another reported being touched on the breast and waist when she was 14. It was also reported that some employers who also owned bars and brothels forced their CDWs to work as prostitutes.

Some of the girls in Benin and Togo - especially in Benin - reported that they were regularly abused by gangs when they sold things on the street. The gangs stole their goods and, in order to get the goods back, they had to perform sexual favours. Some of the girls reported that they were raped while selling items in the market.

## 2.10 Good and bad experiences of being a domestic worker

In Peru, many participants referred to situations where employers had expressed affection or gratefulness to them, or times when they had learned new skills. Some participants recounted times when they had been treated 'fairly' - although what constituted 'fairness' was different for different people. For some it meant that the employer was pleasant, or that there was trust and good humour between the child and her employer. Others spoke of their employers being patient with them, or that they had been allowed to study, have family visits, or were not shouted at. Amongst the boys in Peru, getting enough food and being paid in cash were positive experiences in that this was as much as they could hope for.

In Costa Rica, many CDWs remarked on the importance of gaining work experience and how their wages helped to augment family income. At the same time, they recognised the limitations that this work placed on them.

In Tanzania, some participants reported that their employers treated them the same as their own children, in that they were provided with the same food, clothing and shelter, and were being helped with their work.

Some explained how the employers helped them in getting education, how they gained cooking skills or had been taught 'a better way of living'.

In Nepal, several children said that one of their most positive experiences had been when their employers had agreed to send them to school. For others, it was the moment when abuse ended, and for one child it was 'when the employers' son who used to treat me like an animal left home.'

In the Philippines, CDWs who were allowed to study were considered fortunate. As a result they felt obligated to their employers to the extent that they would often endure hardships and abuse. Overcoming such trials is seen as 'just part of the job' and was considered to be good training for later life. For some, job satisfaction came from being able to serve others who had been kind to them.

**"I was caned one stroke after losing some money. I am caned as a way of disciplining me."**  
(Male CDW, Tanzania).

**"... it is very risky. Many of my friends, who work like me, tell me what happens to them [...] that sometimes the man tries to go too far, and sometimes he does, and because they are afraid they don't want to say anything."**  
(Female CDW, 17, Pucallpa, Peru).

**"My employer forced me to undress, except for my bra and panty. She hit me my body with a bottle, chair or anything she got hold of."** (Female CDW, 17, Manila, Philippines).

**"The eldest child (of the employer) impregnated me and they chased me away."**  
(Female former CDW, 23, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

**"The worst time in my life was when I had to leave my first working home and live in the street."**  
(Female CDW, Nepal).

**"I had been receiving lots of insults, and yet the husband wanted to have sex with me."**  
(Female CDW, 16, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

**"By working you learn to value things and you gain experience but you have to sacrifice lots of things..."**

**On the one hand it feels good to help but on the other hand it does not feel good to have to work...**

**We like to work because sometimes we get paid or get something. Because I can help my family."**  
(CDWs, Costa Rica).

**"The best time in my life was when my employers agreed to send me to school."** (Male CDW, Nepal).



Right: Abdalah - who indicated a very friendly relationship with his employer, (Tanzania).

**“I enjoyed taking care of the young child and the sick and elderly. They do not hit me or abuse me. Serving them gives me a chance to help other people.”**

(Female former CDW, 19, Manila, Philippines).

**“I like my sister (the employer’s daughter) best. She helps me in my work, brings clothes for me, cooks delicious food and she works too - that’s why I like her.”**

(Female CDW, Nepal).

**“[The employer’s] daughters get cross with me about nothing, just because they say I don’t do their things properly, but I do everything for them. One of them did slap me once because she was angry with me.”**

(Female CDW, 11, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“I have been experiencing so many bad experiences because the employer is always trying to block me from participating in the CWISH programme.”**

(Male CDW, Nepal).

**“Oh yes, the man wanted to take advantage. I lived in and had a room; he must have known that I was on my own. The lady had gone out, he arrived and he just came into my room. I was asleep, I had a gown on and the sheet but my chest was bare; I could feel somebody touching me. I got up and just then his mother-in-law came into the room and beat him with a broomstick...I left after that, I was scared, and that’s why I left.”**

(Female former CDW, 19, Pucallpa, Peru).

The continuing kindness of an individual in the employers’ family was the most positive experience for many CDWs. In Nepal, this tended to be adult members of the employing family, including ‘grandmothers’, ‘aunties’, and male and female household heads.

Interviewees tended to regard bad experiences as times when they were treated unfairly, or punished excessively, but there were many other individual bad experiences, such as sexual harassment.

In Nepal, the children of employers - both daughters and sons were often singled out for criticism. ‘She takes away my pencils and all my things with her’; ‘He scolds me and does not allow me to sit for a moment and even scolds me when I eat.’ In Peru, the worst experiences for many younger CDWs (under 14 years) were related to physical violence, verbal abuse and unhelpfulness on the part of the employer’s children. Some of the bad experiences faced by CDWs in the Philippines have already been quoted in other parts of this report, but usually the worst situation was considered to be violence against them which took place without any apparent explanation, or cases when they had been wrongly accused of stealing.

In Tanzania, a number of participants recounted that they were given more work than they were able to do, and remarked that if the woman (female employer) caught them resting, she would scold them. Others argued that their female employers sometimes told lies against child domestic workers to their husbands. They reported that if a man takes the side of the child domestic worker, his wife might think there is sexual relationship between the child domestic worker and her husband and chase the child away. In these situations, the only alternative is to stay quiet. Overall, they agreed that things are worse for ‘housegirls’ (female child domestic workers) than for ‘houseboys’, since they work under maximum supervision of the woman employer. The male employers are more distant and they care less about child domestic workers in the house.

For some child domestic workers, their worst experience was being deprived of activities they liked. For others, the long working day was the worst part of their experience in the job - which was often connected to their childcare responsibilities. For those keen to continue their education, not being able to start school, or having to participate in studies geared towards adults, were negative experiences. Other negative experiences spoken of by participants included not having their families nearby, not being paid as agreed, being falsely accused of bad behaviour or stealing, having accidents at work, witnessing arguments and rough treatment within the employers’ family, and not being considered a member of the employers’ family.



Above: Anna's picture depicts her with the child she looks after biting her arm, (Peru).

**“My worst experience was the employer not letting me go out, not even to play sport for a bit, nothing.”**  
(Male CDW, 14, Lima, Peru).

**“My employer kicks me and rubs my face inside the refrigerator. She throws at me anything she can get hold of, for no apparent reason at all. She forces me to sleep under the stove. I sleep there without any pillow or blanket. My employer throws things at my back just to wake me up when I could not hear her. She even did not allow me to eat for two days. One day when I was not able to follow the instruction to slice calamansi (citrus), she ironed my left arm. I fainted out of fear.”**  
(Female former CDW, 19, abused when she was 16, Manila Philippines).

**“My experience is that I now know how to work, I can do lots of things and I can support myself without relying on others now.”**  
(Male former CDW, 18, Pucallpa, Peru)

**“The nicest thing was when Mrs [name of employer] gave me a big floppy doll, so nice! I play with her!”**  
(Female CDW, 7, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“When she (the employer) was good, when she was happy, she would call me her daughter.”** (Female CDW, 11, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“Once a watch went missing and they blamed me; they spoke to my mum. (And what happened?) Nothing, the watch was with the lady's things, she just didn't know how to look and she blamed me! I didn't go back there. I left.”**  
(Male former CDW, 24, Lima, Peru).

# 3. Child domestic workers' views on who can best help them and how

**“For a long time we have only been talking. Now is the time to act.”**  
(Female CDW, India).

## 3.1 Key people in their lives

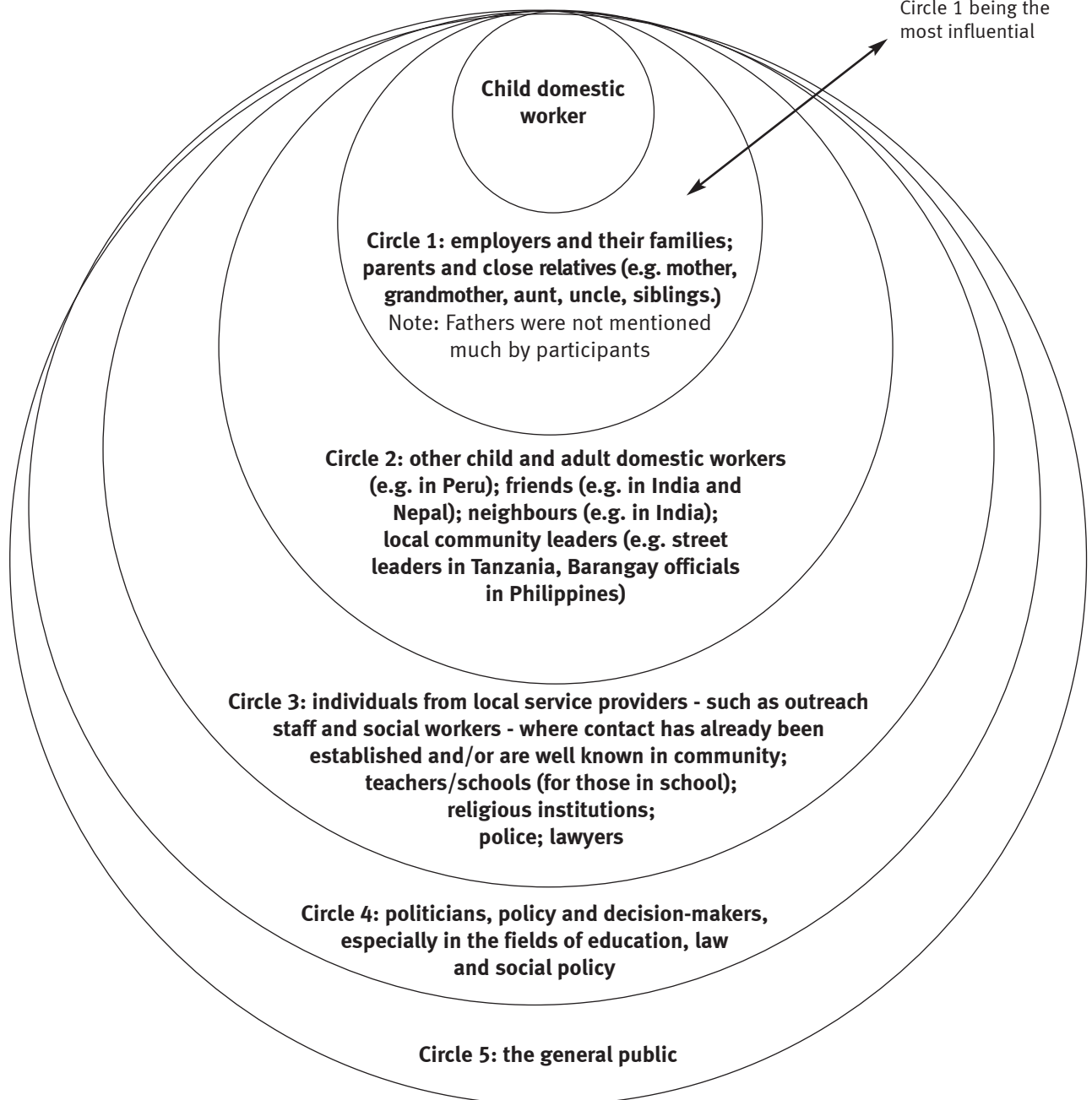
Child domestic workers were asked about who had the most influence over their lives and who was in the best position to help them.

The following graphic illustrates their responses by putting the child domestic worker at the centre of a group of concentric circles, representing the levels of direct influence they have over the child's physical and emotional well-being. Those closest to the centre are considered by child domestic workers to be the most influential. The circle analysis presents a generalised picture, since each child domestic worker is in a unique situation, and contexts vary considerably.

### Levels of influence - key people in our lives

**Level of direct influence**

Circle 1 being the most influential



Despite this, it illustrates clearly the major actors in their lives and, by implication, identifies those who are in the best position to reach and assist child domestic workers.

In general, the above were the main influencers in the children's lives - although there were many differences in responses relating to their individual experiences, e.g. in Togo and Benin, children who are already under the care of NGO service providers were only able to identify these NGOs as change agents. On the other hand, at one consultation, participants identified only the Ministry of Social Affairs since it was the only service provider they had come across. Often, child domestic workers are isolated because they are in a place without friends or familial support, and also because they are unaware of the existence of local service providers. In such cases, CDWs may turn for help to officials such as local leaders, teachers, police or religious leaders.

The degree to which child domestic workers are accessible determines the extent to which interventions can be effective. Access to CDWs is usually restricted because they are scattered and unseen as a result of being in the homes of their employers. Furthermore, few institutions target CDWs as primary beneficiaries, which has the effect of marginalizing them from basic services such as education, protection and the like. Making CDWs visible within each of the different levels of influence by making them accessible to key influencers is a very important implication of this framework.

The circle analysis leads to a number of general conclusions about those in the best position to assist child domestic workers.

### 3.2. Who can help them?

**Child domestic workers themselves:** Time and again during the consultations, child domestic workers demonstrated themselves to be the central agents of change in their own lives, and in the lives of other children in similar situations.

Participants spoke of the need for service providers and adult decision-makers to recognise the competence and agency of child domestic workers, and to develop responses which develop the capacities of child domestic workers to help themselves. This is particularly important in light of the fact that even where child domestic workers have had contact with, and are able to access services from, local service providers, there are still far too few providers in existence to cope with the numbers of children who are estimated to be out there. Furthermore, the services they provide are not always available at the times when child domestic workers may need them.

For participants in Peru, building relationships between child domestic workers was considered beneficial in terms of: providing emotional support and advice; improving their treatment and a respect for their rights; sharing problems and reducing their isolation by having fun together.

It is not surprising, therefore, that participants' comments often refer to the need to develop their own capacities and resilience to be able to negotiate for better working conditions, to protect themselves and others, and to know where and how to get help.

**“We are helping each other in different activities such as home activities and those who are schooling they help each other academically.”**

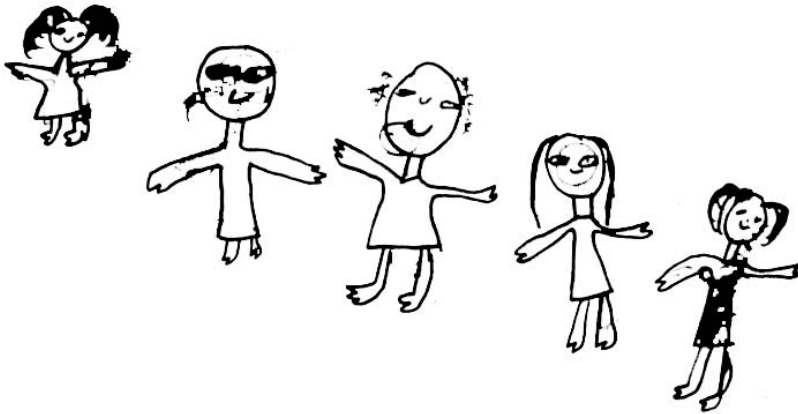
(CDWs, Tanzania).

(Do you have a day off?) **“Yes, thanks to my own effort.** (Didn't you have one before?) **No, I used to live in, you see. When I lived in I helped him on Sundays, so I worked every day, then my friends said ‘you are nobody's slave, you don't have to explain what you do when you are not working, isn't that true? You have to speak up.’ So now, I don't go in on Sundays, I am studying IT on Sundays and I never go in to work now. The lady was a bit annoyed, she said, ‘since you have decided all by yourself to take a holiday you don't eat on Sundays’. So I can't really talk yet, I still feel quite low, I still don't have...(the courage).”**  
(Male CDW, 17, Pucallpa, Peru).

(Do you know other DWs?)

**“Yes, and I help them offering them my friendship, advice, encouraging them. They have also helped me with their friendship and affection, which for me is more important than material things. We need friendships.**

(Male former CDW, 18, Cajamarca, Peru).



Below: Lalita depicts herself (far left) and her family, (Nepal).

**“Well, when I had serious problems I went to my employers; they helped me when I had problems with my family. I used to argue with my brother and sometimes we fought; my mum and dad always take his side. I talk to my employers; they understand me and help me.”**  
 (Male former CDW, 20, Pucallpa, Peru).

(How did you get the employers of CDWs to change their mindset and become ambassadors for the cause?)  
**“We encouraged them to have a good relationship with our parents. Our parents were then invited to some cultural programmes [organised by the NGO service provider] and the employers were encouraged to join them. So, slowly, the employers joined the cultural programmes and were informed about child rights - thus the process began.”**  
 (Female CDW, Chennai, India).

**“The problems of the domestic worker have become clearer for me. I can now give advice to other domestic workers without being affected because of my own experiences.”**  
 (Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).

**“Whenever it happens that I need help, I always talk to dad and if he does not listen to me I would talk to the street leader.”** (Male CDW, 17, Mwanza, Tanzania).

**Employers:** There is a dichotomy in the relationship between the child domestic worker and her employing family. On the one hand, employing families are responsible for a great deal of the exploitation and abuse suffered by child domestic workers, and on the other hand can be a key source of encouragement and opportunity for them.

Whether they get on with their employers and their employing families or not, child domestic workers are heavily influenced by their behaviour and are dependent on them for their basic needs. Across the study countries, participants spoke of the importance of engaging constructively with employers as the best way of assisting child domestic workers. In Tanzania, for example, participants argued for the need to involve employers in a positive way in actions to assist child domestic workers, since they considered the majority to be supportive and ready to co-operate. Results from the consultations also indicate that without engaging constructively with employers, all other efforts to reach out to and assist child domestic workers will remain very difficult. Some participants reported that demonising their employers had served to alienate them, which resulted in child domestic workers becoming harder to reach, monitor and assist.

In the consultations, some child domestic workers talked of developing a healthy relationship with the children of their employers, especially with children of a similar age who they consider to be friendly and sympathetic. These are often teenagers who treat their domestic workers as playmates and confidantes, who share with them their personal problems. One proven way of reaching out to child domestic workers has been to enlist the help of employers' children - by conducting advocacy in schools.

While it was agreed that violence by the employing family should not be tolerated, differences of opinion emerged amongst the participants over how to deal with such situations, and how employers should be punished.

Many participants spoke of the need to have some kind of written employment contract with specified hours of work and a minimum salary. In Togo, for instance, participants recommended that employers should sign an agreement with child domestic workers and their parents, which specifies working hours, weekly time off and which provides two weeks' annual leave. It was also

**Across the consultations, child domestic workers had several common demands of their employers, which were that employers:-**

- Should respect their rights as a child;
- Should not discriminate against them with regard to food and treatment;
- Should not be abusive or violent;
- Should give them adequate rest time each day (including agreed daily start and finish times) and a set day off each week;
- Should allow them to stay in contact with their families and give them annual leave to return home;
- Should give them the time and resources to attend school or vocational training;
- Should allow them opportunities to make friends and access any local services which may be provided for their benefit;
- Should give them their wages directly;
- Should look after them when they are sick and not deduct the cost of medicines and medical care from their wages;
- Should allow them to participate in activities such as advocacy.

recommended that the agreement should include a clause requiring employers to treat child domestic workers as part of the family.

**Parents and close relatives:** Parents and close relatives are naturally very influential in the child's life. Indeed, most of the participants reported that they were in domestic service out of their strong sense of duty towards their families. However, when it comes to protecting their children, it is clear that parents and relatives are not always in a position to help because of their geographical distance from the child and their relative powerlessness in relation to the employing family. For example, in Nepal, child domestic workers did not consider that their parents could play a significant part in changing their situation because of the financial and social status-related inequalities between their parents and employers. While difficult family dynamics had been a catalyst for some child domestic workers to leave home, maintaining contact with parents and close relatives was a high priority for almost all 'live-in' participants, not least because they recognised that more contact with their own families reduced their isolation, afforded them emotional support and gave them a modicum of protection.

Some participants spoke of their obligation to support their families financially, and, therefore, that financial assistance was the kind of help that they needed. At the same time, the participants argued strongly that their parents must allow them to go to school and, in particular, to be able to continue on at school beyond the first few years. In Togo, participants said that no child should be allowed to become a domestic worker before attaining her first diploma (Primary School Leaving Certificate), at the earliest.

**The local community:** Community leaders, church leaders, neighbours and friends are well placed to assist child domestic workers, providing they are aware of the child's situation and are willing to help. In Mwanza, for example, locally elected street leaders are in the forefront

**“I am closest to my mum, she hugs me and I hug her. She worries about my brothers and me and she works for us. If it weren't for her I would not be able to study.”**

(Female CDW, 15, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“I am closest to my sister. (Why?) Because she tells me what I should do. When I am told off she is on my side.”**

(Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“Some financial help, some money for example. When I was in that job I needed somebody to help me out with some money. I didn't get enough for myself and for my family. And some help with studies too, the books that schools ask you to get, or the uniform for example.”**

(Male former CDW, 22, Pucallpa, Peru).

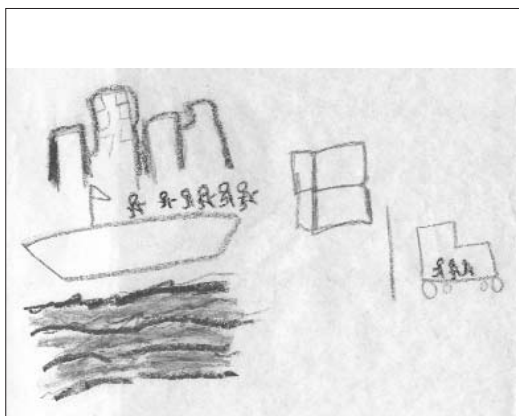


(Who do you go to when you need support?) **“To a priest, father Gerardo, because I trust him more than my mother. I am not very close to my mother, I don’t know how to explain it but I am not very close to her or to my father [...]. But I trust him; maybe because he is a priest and when you confess the priest doesn’t tell other people, he only talks to God [...]. He also guides me. I talk to him about my problems at home: my mother lives with my stepfather, and they are always arguing about things that we shouldn’t hear. I get nervous and I cry, I cry for anything they do.”** (Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“My employer accused me of stealing. I didn’t know anybody in Manila and they did not allow me to leave the house. I asked for help from the Barangay (local neighbourhood) and the police. They raided my employers’ house.** (Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).

**“Kivulini [local service provider] has uplifted the knowledge of our rights. All what we are doing now is important, because we are coming together with our employers and it is our hope that they will change their behaviours and their habits.”** (Male CDW, 15, Mwanza, Tanzania).

**“We went straight to the port after we ran away from our employer because we wanted to go home. We asked a taxi driver for help. He gave us money to go to the pier”** [i.e. to get on a ship to go home].  
 (Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).



Left: A child domestic worker depicts her journey into domestic service in Manila, Philippines.

of efforts to assist child domestic workers because of their power to enter houses and take action. But their assistance can be limited and short term without assistance from a local service provider who can provide specialist help. Key local community members need to be sensitised to the issues and provided with resources to provide effective support. In the Philippines, community child-watch mechanisms have been developed to monitor abuses against children as well as monitor the activities of traffickers who usually recruit young people into child domestic work. Members of these child-watch groups usually report suspicious activity by recruiters.

Other community members such as local vendors, caretakers, security guards and taxi drivers are also well placed to assist child domestic workers, and a number of participants reported receiving help from them. In a number of cases law enforcement officials had assisted participants to escape from abusive situations. Again, training in order to build the capacities of community members to act effectively and appropriately is necessary. Equally, service providers are reliant on the vigilance and local knowledge of community members to be able to reach out to child domestic workers. This means that service providers must work closely with, and maintain a high profile in, local communities to ensure that their services are well known and accessible - but this also carries with it the responsibility to intervene, particularly in moments of crisis. In Benin and Togo, participants spoke of their high expectations of local service providers to intervene in cases of exploitation and abuse of child domestic workers. Of course, this assumes that the service providers actually exist - which is often not the case.

**Local service providers:** In Manila, participants highlighted the role played by NGO social workers and outreach workers in helping them. Many such workers are former child domestic workers who identify and talk to child domestic workers in local parks or through night schools. This outreach work is the first step in reducing their isolation. “I found out about Visayan Forum (local NGO)

**Tanzania: “Most of the CDWs did not know or have any direct contact with any NGO before these focus group discussions. They simply did not know about these organizations but are also afraid of reporting their issues to anybody. Some have learned about Kivulini from brochures or have read books written by Kuleana while others have seen T-shirts. In Dar es Salaam, some children got support from KIWOHEDE who trained them in sewing.”**

from a friend that saw them in Luneta Park”. (Female, Manila, Philippines). In the Philippines, local service providers have developed relations with media outlets which assist in reporting cases of abuse.

In Peru however, most of the participants had no knowledge of any institution that worked with child domestic workers, but there were high expectations of what such an organisation could provide.

**Government structures:** Participants often identified ‘the government’ and its officials as having responsibility for helping them - but in general identified few examples of ways in which government officials had helped them directly.

Some participants alluded to the need for the government to make greater efforts to develop infrastructure to rural and marginalised urban areas - particularly in the form of schools and health care - and of the need to provide financial assistance to poor families. This would prevent many children from being sent away to work and would make repatriation efforts easier.

### 3.3 What services do they need?

A number of clear messages emerged from the participants regarding the kinds of services that would best assist them and protect them from exploitation and abuse. They also had much to say to existing service providers and local authorities with responsibility for their care.

Concerns were expressed by child domestic workers in a number of countries that not enough projects are currently in existence to protect them specifically. Where service providers do exist they should first ask child domestic workers what they need, and should involve their beneficiaries in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating the services being provided in order to ensure that they remain of best benefit to the children. It is also imperative that service providers are able to assist child domestic workers as soon as they come into contact with them - since there is no guarantee of being able to reach the child again.

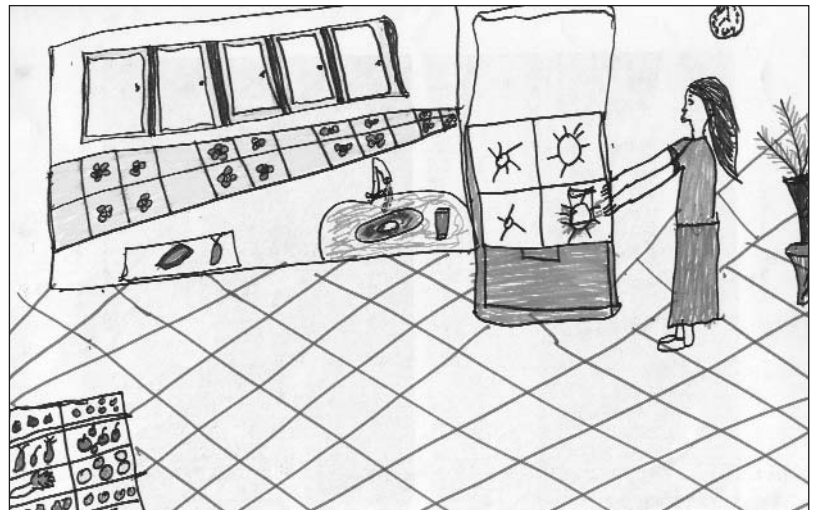
In Costa Rica participants complained that many of the projects set up to assist child domestic workers had not lasted long enough, and that some service providers left their communities too quickly. In the Philippines, participants spoke of the need for service

**“When I have a problem in school, my family or employer, I tell it to the social worker. She encourages me to go to school. She gives me advice. She gives me strength.”**  
(Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).

(Have you heard about any organisations that support children working ‘at home’?)

**“Only the ones that look after children who work in the street. (And for the ones who work ‘at home’?) No, I don’t know of any.”**  
(Male CDW, 15, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“Government officials should be prepared to help us.”**  
(Female CDWs, India).



Above: Patricia cooks in her employers house (Peru).

(If there were an organisation that worked in this field, what would you ask of them?)

**“I would ask that organisation to treat the boys and girls with love, and to offer to help them, with their studies for example. Or they could make loans available, which we would have to return. I would like that. Also I think that they should help the women and the children so that they are not so exploited by men or by employers. Because female employers also exploit children, they say, ‘oh he is young, he is a boy, he can do anything; we are old, we can tell him to do this and that’. I don’t agree with that, I don’t think it is right.”**  
(Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).



Child domestic worker, (Costa Rica).

**“The AMF [a local service provider] has given me school materials and some money towards the registration fee at school. We have workshops to teach us a little bit about [...], to talk about rights; they teach us lots of things that might be useful in life.”** (Female CDW, 11, Cajamarca, Peru).

**“Verbal abuse [by teachers] in school has to stop. I was verbally abused by my teacher. It was discouraging but I did not give up.”** (Female CDW, Chennai, India)

**“Learning I.T., English, doing Maths homework... playing, having a good time [...] showing me all the things I can learn, computing.”** (Female CDW, 12, Lima, Peru).

providers to be more flexible in catering to the erratic schedules of child domestic workers.

As reported earlier, participants indicated the importance of service providers engaging with employers in a positive way. Some participants in Peru and in other countries reported that local service providers had achieved improvements in their working conditions by working with the employers at the same time as improving the ability of child domestic workers to negotiate more assertively.

In order to ensure the most efficient service for child domestic workers, participants identified the need for service providers working in the same localities to co-ordinate and to develop referral mechanisms between each other. Participants also reported the need for service providers to be aware of related issues, such as early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, trafficking and early marriage, and to ensure that they were linked up with other specialist services in order to assist child domestic workers in need of such help.

**Access to education/help to study:** Across the study countries, access to education (whether in the form of schooling or vocational training) was a top priority for child domestic workers. In addition to being given the time off to attend classes, participants spoke of the need for their study to be supported both materially and academically.

Materially, participants most needed financial support as well as the necessary equipment (in the form of books, uniform and stationery) to be able to participate. In a number of countries the call was for the provision of study grants or scholarships to cover the costs of the school fees and other expenses.

Academic support for child domestic workers was considered central to making the most of their education opportunities. In Peru and Costa Rica, many participants wanted a space where they could do their homework and get help. In the Philippines, where many child domestic workers study in night schools, a common request was for access to library facilities, which are usually open only for regular students in the daytime.

**The need to provide accessible education:** Concerning the education provision that was on offer, child domestic workers identified the need for schools to be made more accessible for them. Schools need to develop more flexible teaching arrangements to

accommodate those who are combining work with study. In all of the study countries the cost of attending school was too high for child domestic workers, because of the requirement to buy books, uniforms and other school equipment. In Costa Rica, participants called for charges to take examinations to be dropped. In Tamil Nadu, the call was for improvements in school infrastructure to make them safe, as well as the provision of free nutritious school meals and bus passes to enable them to get to school.

The standard of teaching must be improved. In Tamil Nadu participants called on teachers not to ill-treat, abuse, degrade or use violent language to them. In Tanzania it was considered that primary school does not teach children the necessary skills to live an independent life, and that the curriculum content and the methods used to teach it should be more practical.

While some night schools in the Philippines allow CDWs to access education opportunities which would otherwise not have been possible, concerns persist about the quality. CDWs have reported that they feel discriminated against as compared to non-working students in school because they are excluded from overall performance academic evaluations. CDWs are not expected to perform well, but merely to survive the rigours of being able to attend school while working. Such exclusion perpetuates a feeling of separation, low expectation and low self-esteem.

Many of the adolescent domestic workers who considered themselves too old to return to the classroom sought vocational (skills) training opportunities in order to be able to leave domestic work and earn an independent living. The vocational training must offer them marketable skills and opportunities for a sustainable income. Such training must be designed with the demands of their job in mind, i.e. the demands of their job mean that most child domestic workers are available only for short periods of time.

**Reducing isolation:** A strong desire was expressed by child domestic workers to reduce their isolation in their employers' households. Most participants expressed the wish to stay in contact with their families and to be given the opportunity to socialise with other children of their own age - particularly other child domestic workers. In some instances, participants articulated that they were seeking this contact in order to ensure



Juan Carlos depicts himself struggling to operate his employers household appliances, (Peru).

**“We know of others who were able to get jobs after they entered vocational/skills training like dress making.”**  
(Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).

**“All children must be treated equally and not be distinguished by higher and lower caste.”**  
(Female CDW, Chennai, India).

(Who do you go to when you have a problem?)

**“I keep my problems to myself. I would like to tell them to somebody sometimes, but I can’t, I am not very good at that.”** (Why?) **“I don’t know, I am afraid and I keep them to myself. I would like to get things off my chest but...”** (What is the matter with the people around you? Don’t you trust them?) **“I don’t know, maybe, maybe I don’t trust them, or I think they’ll say ‘you know what.’ I don’t know how to put it, maybe I am scared they’ll reject me, I think it is that.”** (Female CDW, 16, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“I want to play like other children do. When I see other children playing, I want to join them.”**

(Male CDW, Cotonou, Benin).

**[He drew a ball and explained that it signified his desire to play]**

**“I was working but was studying at night. There came a time when I had problems with my employer. I also had employers who physically hurt me. SUMAPI gave an orientation in our school. I attended the outreach activities.”**

(Female CDW, Manila, Philippines)

**“The children’s Sangam takes up community issues, then we discuss them and follow up with the authorities until the work is carried out. Even in our families we push for children’s participation. For example, during feast days we ask that we should be given dresses we want to wear, not something that is forced on us. After we have had meetings with our parents they begin to respect us more and understand us better. If there is a child or a family in crisis or distress, we discuss the issue in the group and then take the appropriate action. The staff of Arunodhaya are very helpful and they have put in a lot of effort to train us”** (Female CDW, Chennai, India)

**“When you are placed as a domestic in someone else’s home, an employer will not buy shoes for you. But if the employer decides to buy shoes for you, it means that you are part of the family.”** (Female CDW, 13, Cotonou, Benin).

**“A social worker was able to help me because they rescued me from my previous employer. I was fed scraps, wasn’t paid at all and they had me work at the farm. I would like to thank the social workers because they rescued us from our abusive employers.”**

(Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).

that they were properly paid and treated. But maintaining these links is not easy, and generally seems to become more difficult to maintain for child domestic workers working in the capital city. In Lima, for example, where most of the child domestic workers had migrated from the rural areas, there were a greater number of individuals without a peer network to develop friendships and seek help, especially amongst those who did not go to school. A number of participants spoke of their loneliness when it came to sharing problems.

In the Philippines and Peru child domestic workers were keen to become more resilient by seeking help to improve their interpersonal skills and self esteem. The practical purpose for them in doing this was to be able to negotiate more effectively with their employers to improve their working conditions.

Establishing local support groups of domestic workers was seen not only as a way of reducing isolation but also of empowering their members to improve their working conditions and treatment. In the Philippines, where a national network of support groups has been established (known as SUMAPI), the importance of training domestic worker leaders in organisational management was raised, in order that members had the requisite skills to ensure a strong and sustainable group.

#### **Better treatment within the household:**

Participants sought help with a number of their basic needs that were not being provided by their employers. Such basic needs included: better quality and quantity of food; adequate shelter and clothing; personal hygiene needs and access to medical care. However, their basic demand was that they be supported, loved and cared for.

The clarion call from many participants was to be treated the same as their employers’ children. This included: receiving the same quality and quantity of food, and eating it at the same time as the rest of the family; for sleeping arrangements to be the same; to receive adequate clothing; to receive better health care and to be able to go to school. For one Togolese participant the embodiment of discrimination against her was in having to go to bed after her employers, and she proposed that no employers should be allowed to go to bed before their child domestic worker.

**Rescue and redress:** Crisis intervention, in particular the need to rescue and remove child domestic workers from the most abusive employers, was considered to be an essential service - although differences emerged amongst participants in and between countries on what kinds of redress to seek from guilty employers and recruiters. Decisions about whether or how to proceed with legal redress against exploitation and abuse depended on a number of factors, including financial considerations, how long it would take and the likelihood of receiving justice, but most importantly on the willingness of the abused to pursue it.

In Costa Rica, participants spoke of the need for law to be applied in order to assist and protect child domestic workers, and in the Philippines they called for legal assistance to seek redress from abusive employers. In Benin and Togo, participants were firm in their resolve for legal action to be taken against abusive employers, and demanded that a mechanism be developed for child domestic workers to lodge complaints against them.

Child domestic workers in the Philippines recommended that service providers who undertook legal actions against employers and/or recruiters should have their own 'in-house' lawyers to focus on such cases, and social workers should know more about legal processes in order to be able to offer advice and guidance for the child. It is imperative that legal cases are dealt with as rapidly as possible to enable the children to 'move on', and at the same time to ensure that such cases are handled as sensitively as possible. In this regard, rapid repatriation to their families was important for those child domestic workers who wished to get home, in part to avoid becoming institutionalised in shelters. Another important consideration for the Philippines' participants, echoed by others, was that child domestic workers who had been victims of rape should not have to be present in court.

**Dealing with officialdom:** Participants raised the need for assistance in accessing government and state infrastructure that can help them; for example, in obtaining birth certificates, enrolling in school, in accessing health care, in locating families and returning home. In Costa Rica, adolescent Nicaraguan domestic workers were keen for assistance with their immigration papers so that they could work without problems, and could receive the same rights as Costa Ricans.

**“I knew a girl who was working as a CDW who was raped and later delivered a child. The girl and the child were both tested to be HIV positive and now no-one in the community wants them. They are both in an NGO centre and are fine, but the perpetrator was not punished. The police only took action after it was made an issue by the people and the NGOs.”**

(Female CDW, Madurai, India).



Pete Williamson

**“In Padhai we got a case of a girl from the village who was raped by her father. We did not know what to do. We had no knowledge of Childline [a national telephone helpline] and the phone-booth personnel asked for money to make the call to the police. The help desk at the railway station, which has the words ‘May I Help You?’ did not help us. CDWs need to be made aware of the places and contact numbers that they can contact in a crisis situation.**

**The people who are handling children in crisis should be properly trained and should be friendly to the child - since the child has already undergone trauma and should not be further traumatised.”**

(Female CDW, Chennai, India).

**“Having enough money to look after my baby and give him an education. And maybe getting married and not being abandoned so that we could be a family, a good family. That my child should not be abandoned by his dad, like ours did to us.”** (Female former CDW, 18, Cajamarca, Peru).

Child domestic workers across the study countries also wanted their voices to be heard amongst decision-makers. In Tamil Nadu they demanded that local councillors listen to them, and deliver on the promises they had made to act.

**Raising public awareness:** Participants in Benin and Togo emphasised the importance of raising awareness amongst the general public on the issue of child domestic labour. In particular they considered that a national television and radio campaign is necessary to sensitise employers about levels of acceptable treatment of domestic workers, and that they must treat child domestic workers in their care as their own children. Child rights organisations and service providers should become involved at local level - going house-to-house to talk to individual employers. Such a campaign must also encourage the public to report cases of abuse and exploitation of child domestic workers, and a free telephone hotline should be established for this purpose.

**Telephone hotlines:** While, in some locations, participants were encouraging the establishment of telephone hotlines, others cautioned against their use unless they could be properly staffed and resourced. Their concern was that some hotlines were not able to live up to their ‘hype’ as a provider of instant 24-hour assistance, which could lead to child domestic workers in need of help being let down.

**Welfare centres and temporary shelter:**

Centres were popular amongst participants as they offered them a place away from their employers’ houses to relax, play, seek advice, take classes, get help with schoolwork, eat, make friends and meet up, contact their families and seek refuge (although it was evident that not all centres provided all of these services).

In Benin and Togo it was recommended that the government should establish so-called ‘welfare centres’ which would be focal points for services to assist child (and adult) domestic workers, and would foster the creation of associations of domestic workers. Anyone wishing to employ domestic workers must go through such a centre, which would ensure that the worker was above the legal minimum working age and received fair and regular pay, as well as other basic employment standards. The welfare centre would also have the power to withdraw those working under the legal minimum working age.

In the Philippines, CDWs argued the need for a safe house to stay in when they decide to pursue long-term legal action against their abusers - cases which can take many months or even years. CDWs are ill-prepared to testify in court and to undergo lengthy interviews and cross-examinations. Without the safe haven, abused CDWs often drop their fight for justice as a result of intimidation and threats by employers or recruiters.

### 3.4 What constitutes 'a better life'?

Education played a central role in participants' perceptions about how to improve their lives. "Getting on", "Making progress", "Being somebody", i.e. having a better life, was associated in most cases with being able to study, which would allow child domestic workers to move on to different jobs which paid enough to cover their basic needs and those of their families. Many participants expressed the desire for domestic work to be accorded greater dignity. For others it was the desire to work independently and not having to take orders.

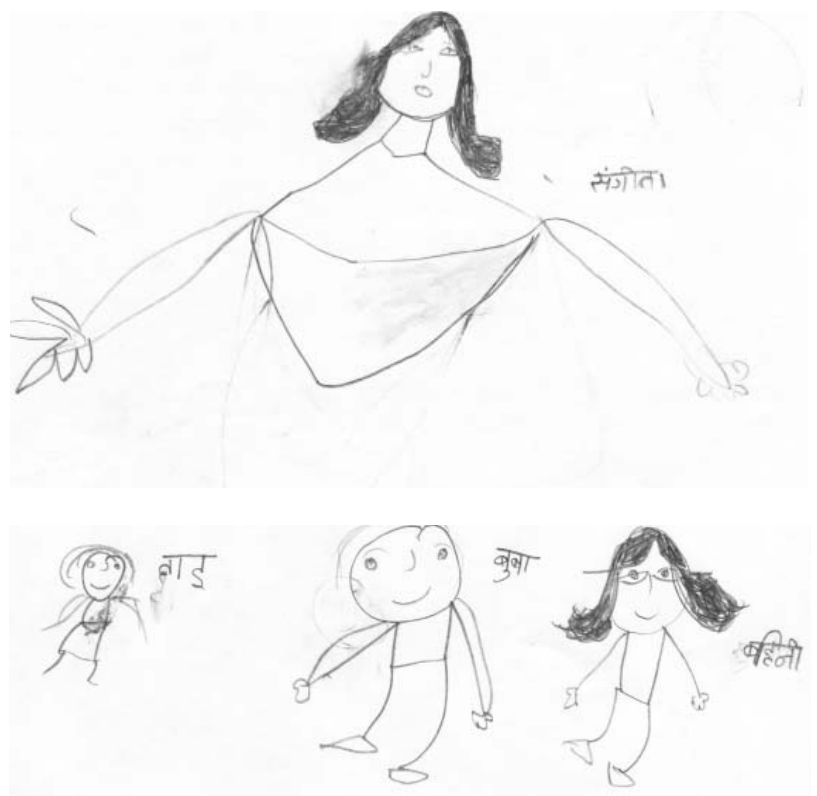
In general, a better life was to a large extent associated with security: having a house; a stable job; money. Also stressed was the importance of family - to be able to spend more time with their families and to have families of their own. Personal and emotional development was also mentioned as part of a better life. Participants wanted to be happy, learn new things, have friends and help others.

**"I was fed scraps, wasn't paid at all and they had me work at the farm. The social workers rescued us from our abusive employers. They also helped me overcome my trauma. They helped me locate (my parents) in the province."**  
(Female CDW, Manila, Philippines).

**"[What I need is] Advice... on how to say what I want to my employer."**  
(Female CDW, 16, Pucallpa, Peru).

**"There is no way to escape mistreatment. The only way out is to abandon the work."**  
(Female CDW, Tanzania).

**"I want to get on in life; I want some help to have a career, to work. I am a student; I want to study and to do well... I want to help my mum and my family."**  
(Female CDW, 14, Pucallpa, Peru).



Sangita's family, (Nepal).





Above: "I want to be a hairdresser", Cotonou, Benin.



Above: "I want to be a pilot", (Lomé, Togo).



Above: "I want to be a car mechanic", (Lomé, Togo).

**"If I were given a chance to go to school and become someone important - like a Minister - I would be rich enough to give something to my employer, which she would have to accept."** (Female CDW, Togo: explaining that, given a chance, she could do as well as others in life, and should be treated equally).

### 3.5 What are their expectations for the future?

## I want to ...

**...be a hairdresser or a tailor.** In Benin and Togo most child domestic workers wanted to become hairdressers or tailors - two of the most accessible jobs for those without schooling or formal qualifications. Participants also talked of becoming nurses, doctors, midwives, teachers, bakers, cooks, mechanics, singers, weavers, traders, computer operators, farmers and housewives.

A young female child domestic worker in Lomé wanted to be an airline pilot. **"I see aeroplanes passing in the sky and I dream of being up there."**

Despite vehicle maintenance being considered a male preserve, a female participant wanted to be a car mechanic, since she liked cars and said she wouldn't mind working amongst the men. Surprisingly few participants wanted to become teachers, but this is believed to be because relatively few have ever been to school. However, the dream for one of the youngest participants was to become Minister for Education, **"so that I can make sure all children go to school"**.

**... learn a trade.** In Tanzania, most child domestic workers wanted to learn a trade such as tailoring, carpentry or masonry, or to acquire skills for setting up their own businesses. Some asked for access to some capital or a small loan to enable them to start up their own business. Several participants wanted to become nurses or doctors. Others are hoping to get married.

**... become a social worker.** In Nepal, the majority of participants expressed the desire to become a social worker, in order to help those in similar situations to themselves. Others wanted to become police officers, teachers, doctors and one was keen to become a singer.

**... have a family.** In Costa Rica the participants - most of whom were adolescents - were very conscious of the need to help their families. The girls in particular expressed a desire to build a home life. Participants talked of becoming doctors, teachers, lawyers and seamstresses. Others spoke of being able to finish their studies and of improving their working conditions - being able to play; not

being given leftovers to eat or being treated roughly by the employer; being trusted more. One wanted to be a grown-up and others were keen to ensure that other children should not suffer.

**... be a teacher.** Amongst the participants in Tamil Nadu, half of them wanted to become teachers, with many others wanting to become doctors, police officers or civil servants. Some child domestic workers said they wanted to work towards removing other children from domestic work.

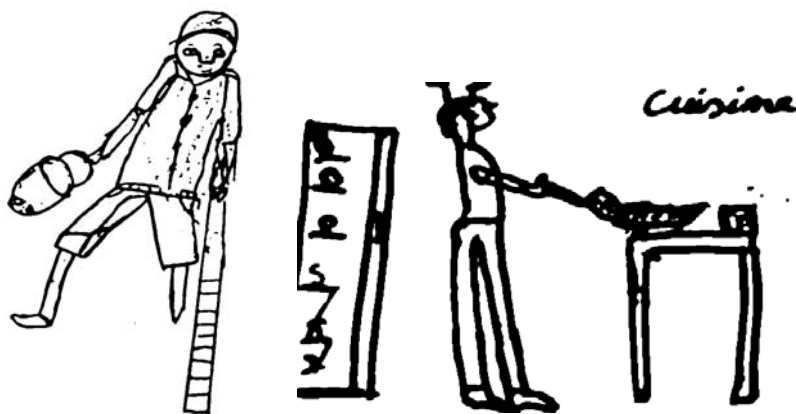
**...work with computers.** In Peru, when participants were asked about their expectations for the future, most of them talked about their desire to study and have a career or a job outside domestic work. A great number of options came up: computing; motor mechanics; nursing; teaching; secretarial work; accountancy; gynaecology; medicine; engineering; law; the army; baking; and carpentry, amongst others.

**... to land a professional job.** In the Philippines, most child domestic workers wanted to study again to be able to get a more decent job, such as as a nurse, teacher or social worker. They have a strong desire to help fellow domestic workers by showing that, despite odds and the discrimination they face, every domestic worker can be successful.

**“I would like to be a lawyer. Yes, I would, to defend women’s rights and children’s rights; and there are also the rights of men. I would like to make a law with all that. Because I see lots of problems, there is a lot of exploitation of children and women. (Female CDW, 13, Pucallpa, Peru).”**



“I want to go back to school, Atakpame, Togo)



Above: “I want to get enough money to build my own house, (Mwanza, Tanzania).

Above: “I want to be a cook, (Togo).

**“I would like to be an English teacher. (You wouldn’t like to be a domestic worker?)**

**No. (Why not?)**

**Because it wears you out. It is tiring, all that sweeping, cleaning, shaking [...] and then there is the walking to work; and on top of all that when you say to people ‘I work at home’ they look at you in a funny way; if you don’t tell them they look at you quite normally, but the moment you say I am a home help, you are discriminated against. I never said I was a home help [...] I just said, ‘I work’.**

**(How were you discriminated?)**

**You get put to one side. A friend of mine used to say ‘I am a domestic worker’ and people discarded her, they called her ‘Natasha’ (after the name of a DW character in a television soap), so I say to her ‘Why do you say what you do? You should just say ‘I work’ and that’s it.’**

**(Female former CDW, 20, Pucallpa, Peru).**

### 3.6 Would they allow their children to become domestic workers?

**“No. I would like them to study, to be professionals one day, not like us. We have grown up working, being treated badly, washing, ironing... no, I wouldn’t; we were treated badly at the place where I worked. I wouldn’t want them to be treated like that.”**

(Female CDW, 12, Pucallpa, Peru).

**“We don’t want our kids to be harassed sexually and treated as we are treated; we are not getting any thing at all more than torture.”**

(Tanzania, group work).

**“I have suffered a lot with this work. I can’t let my kids pass through the same path while I know the pros and cons of the work. In Tanzania primary education is now free, I will send them to school. And I will cultivate and use what I will be earning for education of my kids.”**

(Female CDW, Tanzania).

In Peru, while a number of participants said that they would do domestic work again, most of them said that they wouldn’t want their children to do it because of the bad treatment and exploitation. However, a few said they would give their children the choice of whether to go into domestic work or not.

Three quarters of participants in Tanzania said if they had had the choice, they would not have become child domestic workers because of the oppressive conditions, that they work like slaves, are verbally abused and are working long hours. Almost none of the participants wished their children to become a child domestic worker - while a minority would do so if the working conditions were improved and if laws existed to guide employers.

In India, none of the participants would choose domestic work for themselves or for their children - wanting, instead, the opportunity to study.

In the Philippines, participants were adamant that they would discourage their children from becoming domestic workers.

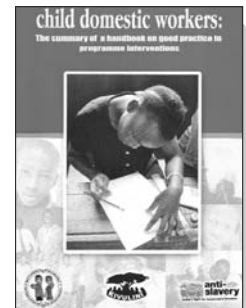
In Nepal, most participants said that they did not want their children to become domestic workers at a young age, citing the heavy burden of work, abuse, isolation from family, lack of education and recreational opportunities, and the general lack of protection for this type of work as reasons for its unsuitability. They also concluded that adult domestic workers should be properly protected and the status of the work improved to reflect the

## 4. The broader context

### 4.1 Introduction

Child domestic labour is to be found almost everywhere in the world. While there are often remarkable similarities in child domestic workers' experiences in and between countries and regions, there are also myriad local differences which are likely to influence the experiences and views of the child domestic workers found in this report, and which also influence the perspectives and approaches of the NGO partners who undertook the consultations.

While it is not possible to examine in detail all of the many contextual factors at play, this section aims to put the child domestic labour phenomenon in a broader perspective, through: a brief examination of some of the key factors which 'push' and 'pull' children into domestic labour and which direct the approaches of those who assist them; an overview of the current programme and policy environment and the legal context. In addition, sections 4.4 and 4.5 of this chapter explore the connections between child domestic labour, slavery and trafficking - in order to explain why child domestic labour can often legitimately be considered a modern form of slavery.



Above and throughout section 4: Publications produced by partners to raise awareness about child domestic work and children's rights.

#### Terminology

There are inevitable local differences with regard to who is or is not considered a child domestic worker - depending on the local context. While the general term 'child domestic worker' is commonly understood to cover a person under 18 years working in other people's households, doing domestic chores, caring for children, tending the garden, running errands and helping their employers run their small businesses, more precise terms have evolved in different locations to suit the particular context and legal, political and social environment. The use of the term 'child', for example, to describe teenagers and/or those who have attained the legal minimum working age can be problematic. In Latin America, for instance, the preferred term is 'child and adolescent domestic worker'. Other terms are used which emphasise the arduous nature of the work involved, such as 'child domestic labour'; or which indicate the terms under which the child is working, such as 'children in domestic servitude', 'child servants' or 'child slaves'. In response to the low status connected with domestic work, the use of terms such as 'household helper' or 'household worker' are being encouraged in order to dignify the work and elevate its status.

### 4.2 Push and pull factors

There are many factors which may combine to push and pull a child into domestic labour. Poverty invariably underlies a child's vulnerability to this form of exploitation, along with other push factors such as gender and ethnic discrimination, social exclusion, lack of educational opportunities, domestic violence, rural to urban migration, displacement, and the loss of close family members as a result of conflict and disease. At the same time, there may be several factors pulling a child into work, including: a demand by employers for cheap, flexible labour; increasing social and economic disparities; the perception that the employer's household is a safe environment; the need for women seeking work outside the home to 'replace' themselves and the illusion that becoming a child domestic worker may provide more opportunities for advancement.

#### 4.2.1 Poverty

The majority of child domestic workers come from poor families, and are sent to work to supplement their family's income or simply to lessen the financial strain at home. It remains a popular coping strategy for poor families because the job requires no education or training, and is considered useful preparation for a girl's later life.

Poverty amongst populations displaced by conflict and natural disasters, devastated by HIV/AIDS, or suffering the backlash of economic globalisation, is forcing more poverty-stricken young women and children into domestic work far from their homes. In many societies, uneven patterns of economic development are creating more demand for young domestic workers, which at the same time is creating more supply. Economic expansion in urban centres has meant increased employment in these areas, and a corresponding decrease in the local workforce available for domestic labour. This gap is often filled by younger women and children from families marginalized and impoverished by the same modernisation process.

### 4.2.2 Culture and traditions

Children become domestic workers primarily as a result of their families being poor, but also because the practice is seen as normal and, indeed, beneficial for girls who will one day become wives and mothers. Powerful and enduring myths surround the practice which encourages its continuance. Parents believe, for example, that a daughter working for a wealthier family might bring opportunities for her and for her own family. Social restrictions on girls mean that domestic work is one of the few types of employment considered appropriate. It is also widely accepted that domestic work is less arduous than other kinds of labour and that work in the home offers a protective environment for girls and for younger children. Employers of child domestic workers, far from seeing themselves as exploiters, consider that they are helping the child and her family by taking her in. In many cases employers believe that they are treating these children as 'part of the family'.

At the same time, employers often seek out children and adolescents in particular because they are cheaper to hire than adults, are more malleable and cost less to support. For the children and adolescents themselves their age and dependence on their parents means that they are usually unable to resist plans to send them away. Such children also feel obligated to go out of a sense of duty towards their parents; but they may also enter domestic service of their own volition, in order to escape from a difficult home situation, or to continue their education. However, although being a child domestic worker is a good experience for some, the typical view of child domestic workers is that their jobs compare unfavourably with those of other child workers. This is usually due to their sense of inferiority, their isolation and their powerlessness against the behaviour of their employers.

### 4.2.3 Gender

Understanding child domestic labour in the context of child rights alone is only a partial analysis. Child domestic workers are linked to wider patterns of exploitation and abuse, not only because they are children but because they are girls. The evidence shows that the practice is hugely gender-biased, in large part due to entrenched societal notions of domestic work as fundamentally the domain of women and girls. Across the world, domestic work is an important source of employment for adults as well as children. In Asia, for example, it has been estimated that employment in households accounts approximately for a third of female employment. At the same time, domestic work, including childcare, is seen as economically unproductive and is consequently given little or no value. Typically, because domestic work is the assumed role of women it is not recognised as 'work', and therefore lies outside the ambit of labour legislation in many countries. Despite the importance of domestic work to the functioning of economies and society, its sheer commonness and ordinariness conspire to maintain its continued invisibility.

Child domestic workers often become adult domestic workers as it is seen as girls' training for later life. In many cases their lack of education and the ability to develop other skills leave young domestic workers with few options other than continuing in domestic service; but also, their experiences of child domestic labour absorbed during that time stay with those concerned and may serve to strengthen their low self-esteem and inertia regarding their inability to do anything else.

In general terms, the low status of domestic work and the circumstances under which it is carried out serve to make those who do it intrinsically vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.



This vulnerability is likely to be even greater amongst those who have moved or have been trafficked far from home. Recruitment of workers for domestic work has become an important business, both nationally and at international levels, with such recruitment and movement often unregulated and linked to organised smuggling and trafficking operations. Because of the acceptability of domestic work, in some places it is also commonly the lure for the recruitment of women and young girls into commercial sexual exploitation.

### 4.3 Overview of the child domestic labour programme and policy environment

Significant progress has been made over the past 15 years in highlighting the situation of child domestic workers, both at national and international levels. Understanding of the issue and of its complexities is greater now than ever before, and has resulted in increasing awareness of and action on the issue from a growing number of stakeholders, who are tackling CDL from a range of perspectives. Child domestic workers themselves are becoming increasingly visible through greater efforts to mobilise domestic workers of all ages.

#### Results of an international baseline survey<sup>5</sup>

A 2004 baseline survey undertaken by Anti-Slavery International of 67 child domestic labour programmes in 28 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America found that these interventions typically help relatively small numbers of child domestic workers, and that they mostly target child domestic workers and stakeholders in capital cities and major urban centres - with comparatively little work being undertaken in communities of origin. Thus, the focus of assistance is on the protection of children already working, rather than on actions which prevent children from becoming domestic workers. The findings also indicate that, with some notable exceptions, child domestic workers themselves have only limited involvement in designing and implementing interventions which were intended to assist them.

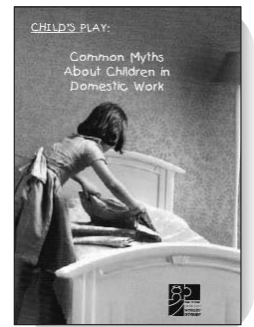
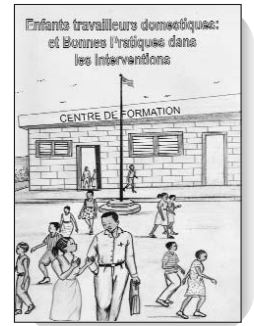
Despite its limitations, the results of the baseline survey also indicated that while, in the main, NGO providers of services to child domestic workers do co-operate informally, few formal networks exist between them, and this may have negative repercussions on the quality and sustainability of the services being provided. There was also little evidence of collaboration between NGO service providers and those statutory bodies with a duty of care towards child domestic workers, calling into question the long term sustainability of services for them.

While responses to tackling child domestic labour differ across locations, it is possible to broadly group current approaches and strategies to assist these children into five main categories, as follows<sup>6</sup> :-

**Removing under-age child domestic workers from the workplace**, which often involves: the use of hotlines; mediation; temporary shelters for children; working with law enforcement and justice systems and actions to reintegrate child domestic workers back into their families (where this is desired and does not expose them to further risk).

**Protecting child domestic workers from abuse and exploitation**, which requires familiarising child domestic workers and their employers with an understanding of rights - often through the provision of education and health services. In the longer term, efforts involve advocacy, registration and promoting the application of codes of conduct for employers.

**Enhancing the well-being and capabilities of child domestic workers**, through interventions including training, counselling and the formation of peer groups for mutual support, as well as facilitating re-entry into formal schooling, providing non-formal education, vocational training and academic support services, health care, advisory services and legal assistance.



<sup>5</sup> The baseline survey was conducted by questionnaire. Respondents were mainly NGOs. In Africa, 16 interventions were identified in 10 countries; in Asia 33 interventions in nine countries; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 interventions in nine countries were identified. The baseline survey was undertaken on a self-reporting basis. The language limitations of the questionnaire meant that some organisations were unable to respond to it, or to provide as much detail as they might have wished.

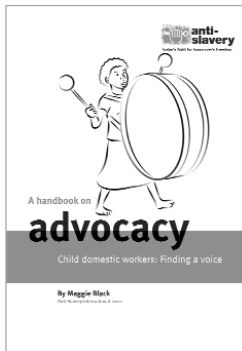
<sup>6</sup> Adapted from *Child Domestic Workers: A handbook on good practice in programme interventions*, written by Maggie Black, Anti-Slavery International, 2005. The handbook contains the experience of numerous local practitioners from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as from international organisations and networks working on the issue. Available from [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)



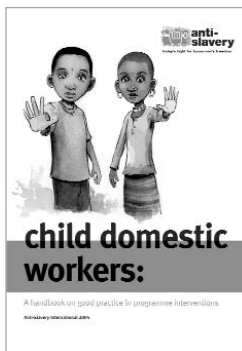
**Raising the status of domestic workers**, which usually involves the development of codes of conduct and draft contracts for employers and domestic workers, legislative change, as well as advocacy designed to change public attitudes and behaviour towards domestic workers.

**Preventing the entry of children into domestic work**, involving work in areas from which children are sent or trafficked. Parents and local authorities could be familiarised with the reality of what happens to child domestic workers, and awareness campaigns undertaken, for example through the use of radio.

While it is argued that children in domestic labour have benefited indirectly from interventions which tackle the situation of child labour in general, there is little evidence that these generalised and often uniform approaches - which are not specifically intended for child domestic workers - have any significant impact on their situation. Responses tailored to their particular needs and the contexts in which they live and work are required in order to assist them effectively and in a sustainable way.



In recent years the **ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)**, through its partners, has been particularly active on the issue of child domestic labour in many countries around the world, in terms of research, public policy, awareness raising, the provision of education and vocational training and through the provision of basic needs assistance to children and their families. ILO-IPEC's particular successes have been to create national policy frameworks (such as government-adopted national programmes of action on child labour) and to strengthen the capacities of governmental institutions and others to step up and sustain efforts to protect child domestic workers and prevent children from entering domestic labour. In a number of countries, child domestic labour has, for several years, been designated a priority issue for action by governments under the ILO's Time Bound Programme framework.



While responses to child domestic labour in **Africa** have been patchy, NGOs, community-based organisations, trade unions and others in a number of countries have taken the lead in acting to curb the exploitation and abuse of child domestic workers. There is a particularly strong emphasis on engaging with local communities - for example through community-appointed street leaders in Tanzania. In West Africa, much of the response on child domestic labour is in the context of efforts to end child trafficking - since many of the children trafficked between countries in the region are destined for domestic service. Fledgling networks to combat child domestic labour and child trafficking have been established in West Africa as well as at national level in a number of countries.

In **Asia**, NGOs are at the forefront of efforts to combat child domestic labour in the region, and some governments - such as the Philippines government - are proactive on the issue. A number of NGOs from south and south-east Asia have developed targeted and effective programmes of assistance, based on an in-depth knowledge of the situation of child domestic workers and of the local context. A number of NGO pioneers on this issue have established a regional network (Asia Task Force on Child Domestic Work, co-ordinated by Child Workers in Asia, a regional NGO) to share information and undertake joint activities across the region.

In **Latin America** and the **Caribbean**, NGOs have become increasingly active on child domestic labour across the region, especially in relation to policy advocacy and service provision focused on promoting access to education. ILO-IPEC action has focused on supporting governmental and civil society efforts through projects aimed at the 'prevention and elimination of exploitative child domestic work through education and training', which has included non-formal education, mainstreaming children into formal education and vocational training initiatives. Networks exist on the issue in many countries throughout the region, and are emerging at sub-regional level.

## 4.4 The legal context

While international legal standards such as the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (C.182) draw attention to child domestic labour (C.182 has been instrumental in getting CDL on national agendas in many countries), specific local regulation and enforcement remains almost non-existent because of a perceived conflict of interest with regard to privacy laws, inherent difficulties in regulating informal sector activities, backed up by continuing societal assumptions that children are well protected in private households. Despite these obstacles, legislative progress has been made in a number of countries. For example, in India in 2006 employing children under 14 years (the legal minimum working age) as domestic workers became illegal when the practice was added to the list of proscribed activities under India's 1986 Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act.

While it is clear that neither national nor international laws will by themselves stop the exploitation and abuse of child domestic workers, their existence is important in setting a benchmark and can be a useful way of highlighting the issue. As a sector, domestic work is very often not covered by, or is indeed specifically excluded from, national labour legislation, which means that domestic workers are devoid of the protection provided to other workers and are unable to access their rights. An ILO study of national laws in 65 countries revealed that only 19 of them have enacted specific laws or regulations dealing with domestic work, and these laws often afford lower protection to domestic workers than to other categories of workers. In Peru, for example, a Domestic Workers Law was passed in 2003. While the law goes some way to protecting adult and adolescent domestic workers (in conjunction with existing legislation to protect children), it does not grant them the same rights as other workers. Under this law, it is not mandatory to pay domestic workers the legal minimum wage, and they can only access the social security system if they are paid the minimum wage. The ILO study also found that there have been very few convictions of abusive employers or intermediaries involved in the trafficking of domestic workers.<sup>7</sup>

In a number of African countries, the inability of legal systems to adequately protect child domestic workers from abuse and exploitation has led to the development in a number of countries of 'codes of conduct' as a way of regulating the age at which a child can work, as well as the conditions and treatment of child domestic workers. While not formally enforceable in the way of legislation, codes of conduct often carry moral weight which encourages adherence to them - particularly because parents, employers and local communities have often been involved in their development, and have a stake in their successful operation. In Tanzania for example, a code of conduct for the treatment of child domestic workers - in line with Tanzanian legislation - was developed several years ago by a Mwanza-based NGO, and was approved by the Ministry of Labour and Youth Development. In parts of Dar es Salaam this code of conduct has been adopted by and is enforced through a local 'Association of Responsible Employers'.

In West Africa, where thousands of children are trafficked across borders, many of them for domestic service, a number of bilateral agreements have been negotiated between countries (often with the assistance of multilateral agencies such as ILO, IOM and UNICEF) to curtail the flow. In Togo in 2004, WAO Afrique developed a voluntary Code of Conduct concerning the employment of child domestic workers which covers: minimum age for admission to employment; working conditions; recruitment methods; education and vocational training of the child. In addition to Togo, six other countries in the region are also committed to using the Code as a guiding principle for programme and policy actions.

Codes of conduct have also been developed in some Asian countries (in Sri Lanka, for example), while at the same time focusing on advocacy to gain formal legal recognition for domestic work - either through changes in existing legislation - for example in India - or by developing new laws specific to the particular needs of the sector, as in the Philippines.

<sup>7</sup> J.M. Ramirez-Machado: *Domestic work, conditions of work and employment: A legal perspective*, Conditions of Work and Employment Series No. 7 (Geneva, ILO, 2003).



In the Philippines, legislative efforts at the national level have centred around the development and promotion of the *Batas Kasambahay*, or the Magna Carta for Household Helpers. This draft national legislation sets out to protect domestic workers from exploitation and abuse, and to improve their working conditions by taking steps to formalise the labour relationship between worker and employer. It has been developed to highlight the sector, as well as to plug gaps in existing labour code legislation on the issue.

The provisions of the *Batas Kasambahay* relating to child domestic workers are as follows (paraphrased):

- No child should be employed as a domestic worker under the age of 15. 15-17 year olds can work (in accordance with minimum employment age laws), but only under certain circumstances (see below);
- Children of domestic workers should not be considered domestic workers themselves;
- Normal hours of work are limited to 10 hours per day;
- Night work is prohibited;
- Engaging children in hazardous work and dangerous working conditions is a criminal activity, as is the trafficking of children for domestic work;
- Child domestic workers have the right to receive the wages they earn;
- Days off and vacation leave should be regularised;
- Emergency services should be more accessible to CDWs;
- Resources for repatriation should be improved/increased;
- Education and training opportunities should be made more accessible and affordable;
- There needs to be licensing of more institutions that can take custody of child domestic workers.

Alongside efforts to secure national legislation, local ordinances requiring the registration of all domestic workers have been enacted in several cities in an attempt to make adult and child domestic workers more visible and less isolated. Early indications suggest that the ordinances have been successful in identifying exploited workers, monitoring working conditions, increasing awareness amongst domestic workers of their rights and assisting in the formation of domestic worker associations in many localities.

Adapted from *Child Domestic Labour in South East and East Asia: Emerging Good Practices to Combat It*, ILO, 2005.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, many countries have recently developed legislation to protect domestic workers, including child domestic workers, but enforcement of these laws remains weak. A number of initiatives in this region have focused on the need for written contracts, for granting full employment rights, and fulfilling obligations with regard to labour legislation.

## 4.5 Is child domestic labour a form of slavery?

**“It is slavery because it is totally different from home. One has no freedom of saying no to what one doesn’t want.”** (Female, 18, Mwanza, Tanzania).

Fundamental to identifying the full implications of child domestic labour is the need to understand the ways in which many children enter such work and the terms under which they remain working.

Experts on slavery have been concerned about child domestic labour in various guises for the past 100 years. In 1925, for instance, the Temporary Slavery Commission of the League of Nations condemned the transfer of children for domestic service under the pretext of adoption as slave dealing.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For further information see Miers, S. *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem*, AltaMira Press: Walnut Creek (USA), 2003.

The findings of this Commission formed the basis of the League of Nations' 1926 Slavery Convention, which considered slavery to encompass "any or all of the powers of ownership" (Article 1(1)) and which called for the "abolition of slavery in all its forms" (Article 2(b)). This international standard thus broadened the definition of slavery beyond that of chattel slavery to encompass practices which are similar in nature and effect - which have been taken to include issues such as forced labour, servitude and trafficking. Building on this bedrock, subsequent international human rights standards and concepts have, both in their definition and interpretation, recognised child domestic labour situations as a contemporary form of slavery.

### **Child domestic labour as forced labour**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was the first international organisation to discuss forced labour in depth, culminating in the adoption of Convention No. 29 in 1930 - which has been widely ratified since that time.

Under Convention No. 29 forced labour is defined as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily".

In 1993 the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of the Conventions and Recommendations (80th Session), discussed the situation of young children working as domestic servants, drawing on information which they had received about *restavèk* ('stay with') children in Haiti. In Haiti, children, generally girls from poor rural backgrounds, were found being given away or sold by their parents to other families for whom they were expected to work as domestic servants. The placement of such children is often arranged by an intermediary.

The placement is generally informal, and there is no effective method of keeping track of what happens to the *restavèk* child or where the child ends up. Contact between the young *restavèk* child and her parents is severed, causing the child to become completely dependent on her employing family. This dependency increases her vulnerability and leaves her open to other forms of exploitation.

The *restavèk* child is not viewed as a person, but rather as a transferable resource. If members of the employing family decide at any time that they are not happy with the child, they may throw her out or give her to another family (to work as a *restavèk*). Yet should the child become unhappy in her situation or become the victim of abuse and attempt to flee, she may be recaptured, beaten and returned to her employing family. This is indeed evidence that she is being subjected to forced labour.

In the Report of the ILO's Committee of Experts in 1993, the Committee commented on *restavèk* children in relation to ILO Convention No. 29. The Committee recognised and noted the child's separation from her home and family, the threat of physical and sexual abuse, the long hours, the exploitative conditions, and the humiliation she must endure. The Committee also took note of the *restavèk* child's total dependence upon her employing family for her welfare, and her complete lack of freedom of movement. They further noted that the child was not consulted regarding her work as a domestic, and was often so young upon her departure from her natural family that if she were, at some point, able to return home, she would not know where to go. The Committee commented that *restavèk* children were found "...to work as domestics in conditions which are not unlike servitude. The children were forced to work long hours with little chance of bettering their conditions; many children were reported to have been physically and sexually abused."

For many *restavèk* children, the Committee noted that their only choice was to run away and that in many cases they ended up, "Preferring a life without shelter or food to a life of servitude and abuse. The practice of *restavèk* was openly compared to slavery in Haiti."

Thus, the ILO's Committee of Experts equates the situation of the *restavèk* child with the following characteristics of forced labour:

- The child is not consulted as to her willingness to perform the labour demanded of her. She is not asked if she wishes to work as a domestic servant, nor is any thought given to her welfare. The interests of her employing family take precedence over the interests of the child;

- The child is completely dependent upon her employer; subjected to the employers' whims and abuse. The child becomes dependent upon her employer for her well-being and basic necessities. She is completely at the employer's mercy should any member of the employing household prove to be brutal or abusive;
- The child is completely denied her freedom of movement. Any attempt she may make to flee is liable to be met with physical punishment, such as beatings. The employer has the ability to throw her out of the house, but the child does not have the choice to leave.

### Child domestic labour as servitude

The UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956) is more specific than any other UN human rights instrument about what should be prohibited as "child servitude", and the concerns that it challenges are addressed under the terms of Article 1(d) of the convention, which states:

*any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years is delivered by either or both his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labour.*

The implications of this article are enormous, addressing as it does issues relating to a child who is living away from home to work, whether or not the child is paid. A key concern remains the child's total dependence on an employer for her health and well-being. Discussions during the drafting process of the Supplementary Convention provide strong indications of the practices which it was intended to prohibit. These included versions of the Chinese *Mui Tsai* (literally meaning 'Little Sister') system involving the 'handing over' of young children (mainly girls) by parents or guardians to be used by their new family as domestic servants under the guise of adoption.

Although the original concern with the *Mui Tsai* system stemmed from its false portrayal as a form of adoption, in practice this system has many parallels in the situation faced by many child domestic workers today.

For example, in a 1993 submission to the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Anti-Slavery International reported that throughout West Africa, girls from rural areas are taken in as servants by urban families with whom they stay for several years. Parents may give or sell the labour of their children either directly or with the help of intermediaries. In some cases the girls are barely five or six years old and they may remain with their employers until they reach adulthood or marry.

There are many similarities between the *Mui Tsai* system of the early 20th century and the situation faced by many child domestic workers today. These can be categorised as follows:

- The child's parent or guardian has 'handed over' control of the child to another person (this occurs in all cases - whether the child has been sold, given up to be 'looked after', or is used as collateral for a debt). The child is therefore under the control of adults whose first concern is not her well-being;
- The child is living, as well as working, away from family and home, limiting the ability of parents to monitor the child's welfare and increasing the child's dependence on her employer. The child has limited freedom of movement. She is dependent upon her employer for her well-being and basic necessities. [Evidently not all child domestics are in this situation; some continue to live with their parents, while others live together with other children rather than with their employers];
- The child is often not compensated directly for the work done. Wages may be paid directly to the child's parents, or the child's wage may be deducted at source in repayment of a debt to the employer or trafficker. Or, there may be no payment for the child's services at all, with meals and lodging being considered as adequate remuneration. Employers may withhold the child's wages, deferring payment on any number of pretexts (such as for breakages) and thereby denying the child access to her own money and tying the child to her employer.

## 4.6. Child domestic labour and the link to child trafficking

At its simplest, child trafficking can be described as the process of movement of a child for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>9</sup> It can occur within a country, across national borders or between regions, and may involve collaboration amongst several people. While trafficking patterns vary, it is relatively common for children from rural areas to be trafficked for exploitation as domestic workers in urban centres, and for children from poor countries to be trafficked to wealthier neighbouring countries and beyond. Sometimes it is the children themselves or their families who take the initiative to migrate and who themselves approach recruiters. Although these children may be more aware of the work they will be doing, they are generally unaware of the hardships that they are likely to face (ILO-IPEC, 2002). Invariably, the trafficked child is totally dependent on the trafficker for her well-being - particularly during the transportation process. Additional vulnerabilities arise when national borders are crossed illegally, as the child is undocumented and may be in a place where she doesn't speak the local language.

While prospective employers may approach the child or her family directly, in some countries it is often intermediaries who broker the deals between parents and employers, and who transport the children to their employing families. Intermediaries tend to be known in the communities from where they recruit children for domestic service. They are often local vendors or business people, with connections in both the source and destination areas, but they may also be recruiters from job placement agencies, friends, or even family members. In West Africa, for example, 'aunties' (who may or may not be actual relatives) are frequently involved in recruiting children for domestic work in urban centres both within the country or in neighbouring nations. Commonly, intermediaries deceive or coerce the child or her parents/guardians - who are fed false promises about the working conditions, opportunities for education and about what life for the child will be like.

While many child domestic workers can be said to have been trafficked, the term often belies the complex ways in which children end up in domestic service, and of the roles and motivations played by parents, relatives and employers in the process. Furthermore, the terms migration and trafficking are often confused, and government responses to child domestic labour as a trafficking issue may have unintended negative results.

Pete Williamson



<sup>9</sup> Movement of a child for the purpose of exploitation' is understood more specifically to mean "The action of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt [of a child] for the purposes of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices, and the removal of organs." (Adapted from the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000 (which entered into force on 25 December 2003).

Child trafficking has been prohibited in international anti-slavery and other human rights legislation for some years, and is increasingly being proscribed at the national level. While there are differences of opinion over the consequences of using the trafficking framework to curb child domestic labour, there is little doubt that showing the link between child domestic labour and trafficking has served to highlight the situation of child domestic workers across the world.

## 5. Data collection methods and lessons learned

### 5.1 Benin and Togo

Group discussions and plenary sessions with current and former child domestic workers in Benin and Togo took place over two consecutive days. Each followed the same basic process (adjustments were made according to the dynamics and mood of each group) which began by profiling the participants and their terms and conditions of work. This led to identifying what changes were needed to make their lives better, who can assist in making those changes, and what actions (interventions) would lead to such changes occurring. The use of drawings and personal anecdotes facilitated the discussion.



A participant explaining some drawings from the consultation.

Initially, participants were divided along age lines, but began to mix more as discussions progressed. At various points, facilitators changed the composition of the groups to reflect similarities of experience - for example by dividing school going and non-school going participants. When discussing interventions, participants divided themselves according to their suggested actions. Participation levels were found to be greater amongst the youngest children (the 7-9 year olds) when they were grouped with people of their own age, and after they had got to know each other.

Consultation locations in both Benin and Togo included urban and rural settings. Participants were reached through local NGO service providers working directly with child domestic workers or with the communities in which they could be found. In Cotonou, for example, an NGO which runs a non-formal education centre in the main market was able to identify employers of child domestic workers and ask them to participate.

#### Lessons learned

**In Benin and Togo, drawing was used extensively as a method for putting interviewees at their ease, with CDWs using the drawings as props, giving them the confidence to speak up. While few participants had previously had the opportunity to draw, their drawings often eloquently illustrated their working situations and their dreams for the future. As a result of this, NGO staff in both countries have adopted the method for use in their centres.**

**Selecting the right kind of venue and location takes careful consideration. Venues were chosen with a view to removing children as much as possible from their everyday environment - in order to avoid interruptions. In Atakpame, the setting hindered the discussion because it took place within walking distance of the homes in which the participants worked. While this meant that the venue was easy for participants to get to, it also made it easy for them to be disturbed - as was the case when a local leader became curious about what was taking place.**

**In Dogbo (Benin) a fictitious case study was developed to lead the discussion on interventions. The story of Cica and Tété (see below), which combined common elements from real situations faced by child domestic workers, proved an effective way of helping the participants to think about concrete ways of assisting the characters, and which led to lively discussion.**

**Ice-breaking games, songs and dances were important features of the consultations, helping to keep the participants alert and interested. Consultation dynamics were particularly enhanced as**

**a result of activities which sought to include all of the participants, rather than presentations performed by only some of the participants. This in turn was said to have had a positive impact on the quality of consultation outputs.**

## Eliciting their views: The story of Cica and Tété

A hypothetical scenario was used in Dogbo, Benin to discuss solutions to common issues faced by child domestic workers.

*Cica is a young girl aged 12 whose parents are poor farmers. Her father worked on the farm to feed Cica. Unfortunately her father died, so she was sent to live with one of her aunts who lives in Parakou. She helps her aunt to do the household chores and to sell products on the street. Cica gets up very early in the morning to do the chores. When she finishes the housework, she devotes the rest of the day to selling in the streets. Cica's cousin Tété, who is three years old and whose mother has separated from her father, has also been taken in by Cica's aunt. Tété is also obliged to do chores in spite of her age and also goes to the streets to sell beside her aunt. Cica wants to play with other children but her aunt does not allow her to. When Cica makes a mistake her aunt shouts at her, or beats her. Cica is worried about her situation and thinks about her future. Cica yearns to see her mother.*

Participants were asked "What would you do to help Cica and Tété if you came across them?" In groups, participants discussed ways that they would help the two girls, drawing on their own situations and experiences.

In their groups, CDWs recommended the following ways as to how Cica and Tété should be helped:

Group A: Participants in this group said that if they had come to know about Cica and Tété's situation before they had known about ESAM (a local service provider), they would not have been able to help; but now that they know the centre, they could have put Cica in touch with staff who could help her to learn a trade. As far as Tété is concerned, because she is very little, service providers or a member of the local community could help her to go to school.

Group B: In this group participants said they would first want to check if Cica and Tété's aunt had the necessary means to really take care of her two nieces. If their aunt didn't have enough money, they would get in touch with the local authorities or organisations which could assist her to send the children to school. If on the other hand she had the means and yet failed to take good care of the children, they would want to remind her of her responsibility towards these children in her care - and if she refused to put their advice into practice then they would lodge a complaint against her with the relevant authorities and children's rights organisations.

Group C: In this group they pointed out that Cica must learn a trade and that Tété must go to school. To that end, they would advise Cica to contact individuals, organisations or even the public authorities who are in a position to find a solution for them.

Group D: In this group, they also said that Tété was very young and that she must get support to go to school. Talking about Cica, they said she must learn a trade and after that be supported to settle down and practise her job.

## 5.2 Costa Rica

In Costa Rica a two-stage consultation process took place. In the first stage, focus groups and a residential workshop were organised which created space for exchanges, reflection and discussion between child domestic workers (mostly adolescents) and relevant adults from various areas of San José, as well as Turrialba and Monteverde. The process was designed in this way to maximise and promote the participation of child domestic workers, in relation both to this process and to future actions on the issue.

In a series of sessions, child domestic workers came together to: discuss their rights; examine the importance of education; identify key people in their lives; and to share their perceptions about actions which improve their situation and promote their opinions. The right to education proved to be one of the pivotal issues emerging from the consultation process, and when recommendations were discussed those that related to the right to education were prioritised.



Below: Participants from Costa Rica during the consultation process.

In the second stage, facilitators worked with child domestic workers living in Cartago and La Carpio over three consecutive days to explore education-related issues in greater depth. In these

sessions, participants explored their experiences of school and discussed the kinds of educational interventions that would help them to access and complete their education.

#### Lessons learned

**Considerable effort and imagination was needed to overcome the difficulties involved in generating spaces for interaction and discussion in pairs amongst a group of young people, most of whom were juggling work and school.**

#### EXAMPLE: Second stage: working session Day 1 - facilitator's schedule

[Cartago and La Carpio, San José (Costa Rica)]

#### Aims of session:

- To identify significant aspects of their experience in school scenarios;
- To be able to express feelings, hopes and interests about their present situation and the future.

Activities	Technique	Description	Time	Materials
Getting to Know Each Other	Introductions in pairs	The facilitator asks the group to split up into pairs to exchange personal information: Name, Age, Likes and Dislikes, How long they have been working. In the plenary session the participants will introduce their partners.	10 mins	
The Aims of Our Workspace and the Rules of the Game	Information	The facilitator talks to the participants about the reasons for the workspace and the importance of their views. The group will also work together to define the rules for participation that should be respected during the sessions on each of the three days.	10 mins	Paper Newspaper Marker pen Adhesive tape
Our Present Situation	Conversation	The facilitator leads a conversation based on a series of pump-primer questions to encourage the expression of feelings.	30 mins	
A Day in My Life	Free Plastic Techniques	The facilitator encourages participants to use the available materials to describe "A day in the life of each and every one of you."	35 mins	Plasticine; Crayons; Scissors; Cardboard; Paper; Magazines and Newspapers; Building Set;
Exhibition of Art Work	Plenary Session	Each participant presents their work to the others	20 mins	Permanent Markers; Glue; Old Newsprint

## 5.3 India (Chennai)

In Chennai, a two-day consultation was organised, involving child domestic workers from across the state of Tamil Nadu.

Profiles of the child domestic workers and their situations were built up during the course of the first session, through group discussions and with the aid of interview guide questions.

In the second session, facilitators focused the attention of the groups on 'my day as a domestic worker', where participants were encouraged to recall their daily activities through drawings which were then shared with the group. Following discussion in the group, participants drew a common picture depicting the life of a composite domestic worker. These composite pictures were then displayed so that groups were able to see each other's work.

The third session explored the child domestic worker's relationship with others. A socio-metric survey was done to assist the participants in identifying key people in their lives, and the type of relationship they had with them. This survey was later repeated, with participants asked to consider the relationship that they would like to have with the key people in their lives.

A playback theatre performance was presented to the entire group - with the actors performing the feelings as expressed by members of the audience. Audience members were then encouraged to share dilemmas they had faced in their lives, which were duly acted out. Finally, the theatre team asked the audience to recall incidents in their lives that had stuck in their minds. Individuals narrated these incidents to the rest of the audience, directing the actors to portray certain characters. Breaking into smaller groups, each participant was then able to recount her life story to members of the theatre team.

Interventions were discussed through the use of the 'Tree of Multiple Fruits, Flowers, Thorns and Plants' - as drawn by the children themselves. Flowers on the tree consisted of all of the services that were available to child domestic workers, with the fruits denoting the benefits of these services experienced by the children, and the thorns representing the hindrances and difficulties that the children had had in receiving the services and benefits. Drawings of plants were used to suggest ideas and methods to increase the effectiveness of services for child domestic workers.

### Lessons learned

**Group discussions were considered to be particularly helpful in drawing out the experiences of those who were less talkative, as the participants supported and encouraged each other.**

## 5.4 Nepal

Two one-day processes were undertaken by CWISH to consult with child domestic workers in the Lalitpur district of Kathmandu. Consultation participants were all beneficiaries of CWISH programmes. The first consultation focused on child domestic workers currently in school and attending CWISH child clubs; with the second consultation involving child domestic workers attending CWISH's non-formal education classes. Participants also represented a diverse range of ethnicities, ages, sexes and religious backgrounds.

Key tools and methods were piloted prior to the consultations, and orientation sessions were provided for consultation facilitators and rapporteurs. Profile information was collected individually by means of a form which was kept confidential. Similar tools and facilitation methods were used in both consultations, although it was found that the out of school children required more games and activities to aid their concentration and to keep them focused.

Group discussion was the main method used for discussion, with drawing used as a tool to encourage participants to speak up - for example, by sketching a picture of their families as a prelude to discussing how they entered domestic service.

### Lessons learned

**A one-day consultation was considered to be too short to discuss topics in depth. Two or even three days would have allowed for a more intensive discussion.**



**Above: Participants undertaking group work, India.**



**Above: Some participants working as part of the consultation process, Nepal.**



**Emphasis should be placed on confidentiality, to ensure that participants feel secure in being able to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of retribution. In particular, some children were concerned about commenting on their employers and the consequences of criticising CWISH and other NGO programmes. It was found that children who had only just begun participating in CWISH programmes were more open about speaking their minds.**

## 5.5 Peru



Above: Some of the participants in the Peru consultations.

Using an interview guide, individual interviews with current and former child domestic workers were undertaken in a variety of locations, including in their homes, at school and at drop-in centres. The choice of location for interviews depended on the degree of privacy required and the amount of time for which the child domestic worker was available.

It proved difficult to arrange group discussions because many child domestic workers were unable to negotiate time off to participate.

Interviews with younger children who had never been to school showed them to be more shy and less able to express themselves in words or with drawings. In general, however, the use of drawing facilitated and enhanced the interaction and the quality of information that was forthcoming. Interviewees were also encouraged to tell anecdotes about their experiences which were useful in clarifying and illustrating their responses.

### Lessons learned

**In the three cities where the interviews took place, contact with current and former child domestic workers was made easier as a result of the interviewers' previous working experience with this population. In Lima and Cajamarca the interviewers belonged to NGOs already providing services to child domestic workers. In Pucallpa one of the interviewers had wide experience of work in schools and ground level organisations in the region. Collaboration from school authorities, community leaders and agents (as a result of contacts developed by the NGO service providers) also facilitated contact with current and former child domestic workers.**

**It is important to pilot test the information gathering tools. With the 14-year-olds it would have been preferable to use more dynamic instruments, for example coloured cards with drawings or other materials that would help them reflect on their experiences in a more concrete way. The interview guide that had been prepared was too long for the younger children and it was difficult to keep them concentrated and motivated to the end.**

**It also proved necessary to set aside more time for the consultations than was originally envisaged, firstly because identifying children in domestic service of different ages and at different school stages can be difficult, particularly in the case of boys; and secondly because of the size and diversity of the sample, the amount of information, and the need to make comparisons at different levels (gender, school education and regions).**

## 5.6 Philippines



The consultation held in Manila involved child domestic workers and former child domestic workers from different programme locations in a number of cities in the Philippines (Batangas, Bacolod, and Davao and Manila). Most were already active members and leaders of SUMAPI - a domestic workers' association supported by Visayan Forum Foundation.

Two basic methods were used. First, one-on-one interviews brought out specific information as to the circumstances of recruitment and abuse. Social workers helped in the collection of this individual profile information. However, they were deliberately excluded in subsequent group discussions, which were undertaken alone by the facilitator and a documentor. No employers were consulted in this work.

The group discussions involved exploring themes about gender, discrimination, effectiveness of services and the role of various influencers in the lives of child domestic workers. It also explored the difficulties encountered by CDWs in accessing services, especially in relation to shelter, legal

action and repatriation.

A variety of techniques were used by facilitators in exploring key themes, which are outlined briefly below:-

**Theme 1:** Gender. Outline the body of a boy and a girl. Ask two groups to cite differences in roles and expectations between boys and girls. When finished, ask them to explain key ideas. Encourage a debate between the two groups.

**Theme 2.** Access and Quality of Services: What does and does not work? In a circle, ask each CDW to think of some news about a fellow CDW and write a headline. Ask each to read their headline like a news report and to act it out if necessary. Re-form a circle and ask everyone key questions: Who helped the CDW? How? Why was it difficult to help them?

To deepen the discussion, show pictures/drawings of significant people in their lives (for example, their parents, recruiter, employer, teacher, social worker, priest, etc). Each participant picks one of the pictures and answers the following questions: Why were they important in your life? How did they help you? To further deepen, conduct the "Travel Tour." Form a line and pretend to be a train. Go around the different rooms and significant symbols available in the location of the discussion. In each location, ask them to recount how they were helped in the past. Write answers (about services) on pieces of leaf-shaped green paper. At the same time, write answers (about results and impacts, as well as harm done) on fruit-shaped paper. Arrange answers from the "Travel Tour" on a large drawing of a barren tree trunk. Encourage discussion about their answers, i.e. about the effectiveness of interventions.

**Theme 3.** CDW recommendations. Play "The Magic Box." Put random items in a colourful box. Ask each CDW to select an item which can be used in a role-play about what should be done to help other CDWs. List all recommendations emerging from the role-play session. Later, engage in discussion to explain and add to the list of recommendations for specific influencers. Ask a specific question on how CDW themselves can help (or do harm) to fellow CDWs.

### Lessons learned

**Most participants had multiple employers prior to the consultations. In some instances, they worked with both good and bad employers. This makes it challenging to verify and sort out the various perceptions and experiences that the CDWs share. Utmost care and sensitivity must be exercised in putting into context the various responses elicited during the one-on-one interviews. It is important to consult with the interviewer/enumerator to verify the responses gathered.**

**When consulting children, care must be taken to avoid "putting words into their mouths." It is important for facilitators to verify with follow-up questions such as "Did you say that...?" or "What did you mean about ...?"**

**Often, there are quotes from children that get lost in translation. It is difficult to put them in proper context during the analysis stage. For this, it is important to facilitate a validation process with those consulted.**

**Follow up action to sensitive issues raised directly and indirectly by CDWs is necessary. Facilitators must be conversant with indicators of possible abuse that CDWs may be undergoing during the consultations. When a specific recommendation about a service provider is raised (such as the slow development of legal cases and repatriation), the child or children concerned should be assured that the concern will be raised with relevant staff, without divulging who said it.**

## 5.7 Tanzania

Various methods were used during the consultation process in Mwanza and Dar es Salaam, namely: structured and semi-structured interviews; group discussions; drawings; and dialogues with employers and community leaders.

Nyakato and Ilemela wards in Mwanza were selected because of the intensive work already underway by Kivulini in these communities. Sinza ward in Dar es Salaam was chosen because it



Above: Participant from Tanzania consultations.

contained a drop-in centre for child domestic workers run by local NGO KIWOHEDE.

Kivulini began the process in Mwanza by discussing the research goals with local street leaders, and gaining their support. Street leaders in Mwanza also assisted in identifying employers of child domestic workers. However, in Dar es Salaam the identification of employers was undertaken informally through influential local women - which proved less time-consuming than the more official approaches to street leaders.

Employers readily agreed to take part in the research because of local leaders' support for the initiative. Employers also became keen for their child domestic workers to take part after facilitators agreed to include sessions on preventing early pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

For the interviews and group discussions with child domestic workers, street leaders distributed the invitation letters by hand, which made the invitation more personal and binding - and resulted in a high turn-out. Similarly, in Dar es Salaam, an influential local woman distributed invitations by hand. Before conducting the group discussions, all of the child domestic workers were individually interviewed.

On average, there were 15 participants in each discussion group. Each group discussion was selected according to geographical criteria, and was therefore mixed in age and gender. This meant that the child domestic workers knew each other already, which assisted group dynamics. Older and male participants were prevented from dominating by the use of experienced facilitators. While street leaders attended, they were asked to wait outside during the course of the group discussions

#### **Lessons learned**

**The involvement of local community leaders (street leaders) in the process proved important in assisting in the identification of and access to child domestic workers. Their involvement also served to allay the fears of employers, who were happy to allow the children to participate because of the street leaders' presence.**

**Employers appreciated the openness of the process - in particular that they were informed of what was taking place and had been asked to take part. This helped to build trust and prevent misunderstandings about the purpose of the consultations.**

**It was important to get the timing right for interviews and group discussions with child domestic workers, since many were only in a position to participate when their employers were at home. It was found that the best time for child domestic workers was at weekends, particularly after church on Sunday.**

## Annex I: Contact details for organisations that co-ordinated consultations

### Benin

Enfants Solidaires d'Afrique et du Monde  
(ESAM)  
08 BP 0049  
Cotonou,  
BENIN

**Tel : +229 2130 5237**  
Email: [esam\\_benin@yahoo.fr](mailto:esam_benin@yahoo.fr)  
**[www.esamsolidarity.org](http://www.esamsolidarity.org)**

### Costa Rica

Defensa de Niñas y Niños Internacional  
(DNI - Costa Rica)  
Apartado postal 1760-2100  
Guadalupe,  
San José,  
COSTA RICA

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Email: [info@dnicostarica.org](mailto:info@dnicostarica.org)  
**[www.dnicostarica.org](http://www.dnicostarica.org)**

### India (Tamil Nadu)

Arunodhaya Centre for Street and Working  
Children  
15 Bazaar St,  
Royapuram,  
Chennai 600 013  
Tamil Nadu,  
INDIA

**Tel: +91 44 42632264**  
Fax: +91 44 42173383  
Email: [arunodhaya2000@yahoo.com](mailto:arunodhaya2000@yahoo.com)

### Nepal

Children-Women In Social Service and  
Human Rights (CWISH - Nepal)  
(P.O. Box: 21433)  
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Chabahil, KMC-7  
Kathmandu,  
NEPAL

Tel/fax : +977 1 447 4645 / 206 1213  
Email: [cwish@wlink.com.np](mailto:cwish@wlink.com.np)  
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### Peru

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Email : [figueroa@terra.com.pe](mailto:figueroa@terra.com.pe)  
**[www.gruporedes.org](http://www.gruporedes.org)**

### Philippines

Visayan Forum Foundation, Inc.  
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Cubao, Quezon City  
Metro Manila 1109  
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Email: [visayanforum@pltdsl.net](mailto:visayanforum@pltdsl.net)  
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### Tanzania

Kivulini Women's Rights Organization  
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Mwanza,  
TANZANIA

Tel: +255 28 250 0961  
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**[www.waoafrique.org](http://www.waoafrique.org)**

## Annex II: Further reading

### Anti-Slavery International

- Child Domestic Workers: A handbook on good practice in programme interventions (Maggie Black, Anti-Slavery International, 2005)
- Child Domestic Workers: Finding a voice, a handbook on advocacy (Maggie Black, Anti-Slavery International, 2002)
- Child domestic workers: A handbook for research and action (Maggie Black, Anti-Slavery International, 1997)

Download these and other publications from Anti-Slavery International's website in English, French and Spanish language versions: [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

### Human Rights Watch

- Swept Under the Rug: Abuses against Domestic Workers Around the World (HRW, 2006)
- Inside the Home, Outside the Law: Abuse of Child Domestic Workers in Morocco (HRW, 2005)
- Always on Call: Abuse and Exploitation of Child Domestic Workers in Indonesia (HRW, 2005)
- No Rest: Abuses against Child Domestic Workers in El Salvador (HRW, 2004)

Download these and other publications from Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

### ILO-IPEC

- Helping hands or shackled lives? Understanding child domestic labour and responses to it (ILO, 2004)
- Child Domestic Labour in South East and East Asia: Emerging Good Practices to Combat It (ILO, 2005)

Download these and other publications from the International Labour Organization: [www.ilo.org/childlabour](http://www.ilo.org/childlabour)

### UNICEF

Child Domestic Work, Innocenti Digest No. 5 (UNICEF-ICDC, 1999)

Download from [www.unicef-icdc.org](http://www.unicef-icdc.org)

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Child domestic labour is one of the most widespread and exploitative forms of child work in the world today, and is also one of the most difficult to tackle. Child domestic workers are hard to reach not only because they work behind the closed doors of their employers' homes, but also because society sees the practice as normal and - in relation to girls - important training for later life.

Since the early 1990s Anti-Slavery International and its partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have been in the forefront of efforts to raise the visibility of child domestic workers, to promote their cause and reduce their suffering. There are many reasons to take up this issue, but in the view of Anti-Slavery International, the situation of these young employees - in particular their frequent loss of liberty, methods of recruitment, low rates of pay (or no pay at all) and dependency on their employers - puts them in a category of human rights violation closer to slavery than many other child workers.

This report provides a global snapshot of the present condition, preoccupations and demands of a cross-section of child domestic workers, offering an insight into the key issues and concerns affecting the wider population of child domestic workers across the world. The report is a complementary volume to Anti-Slavery International's 2005 handbook: *Child Domestic Workers: A handbook on good practice in programme interventions*

The report is the product of group discussions and individual interviews with more than 400 current and former child domestic workers from urban and rural areas in Benin, Costa Rica, India, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania and Togo, and is intended to inform local and international programme developers and policy makers about the situation and needs of child domestic workers in order to better target programmes and policies on the issue. Its aim is also to encourage thinking about child domestic workers not simply as subjects of concern, but as social actors able to articulate their needs and capable of transforming their own lives, and the lives of others.

**Also available as a PDF download from Anti-Slavery International:**

*Child Domestic Workers: A handbook for research and action* (1997)

*International Action Against Child Labour: Guide to monitoring and complaints procedures* (2002)

*Child Domestic Workers: Finding a voice, a handbook on advocacy* (2002)

*Child Domestic Workers: A handbook on good practice in programme interventions* (2005)

[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

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