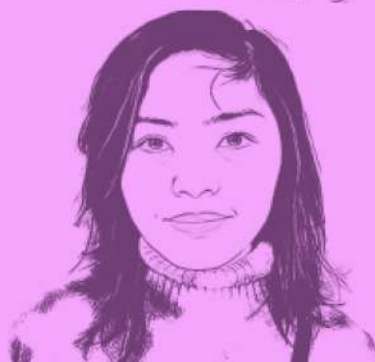
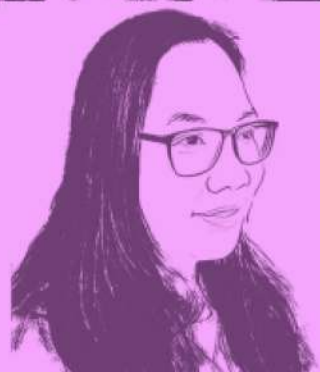
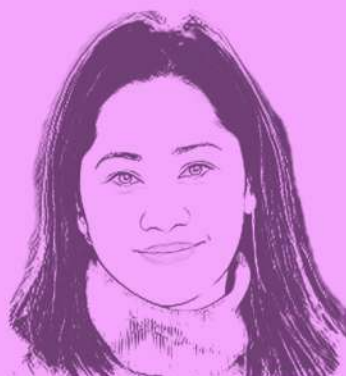




Women Behind Closed
The
Journey of
Migrant Domestic
Workers in the UK
Doors!

Women Behind Closed
The
Journey of
Migrant Domestic
Workers in the UK
Doors!

The Journey of
Migrant Domestic
Worker in the UK

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

The Journey of
Migrant Domestic
Workers in the U.K

OMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

WOMEN BEHIND

Women Behind CLOSED

Doors:

The
Journey of
Migrant Domestic
Workers in the UK

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

The Journey
of
Migrant Domestic Workers
in UK

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

Women Behind Closed Doors

The journey of Migrant
Domestic Workers
in the U.K.

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

The Journey of Migrant Domestic Workers in the UK

Behind closed doors, we weight of silence, our dreams muffled by the walls that concealed the torment within. Our hands bore the scars of hard work, yet our spirit yearned for understanding. Our pain echoed quietly, ignored by those who chose not to acknowledge the struggles veiled behind the appearance of ordinary life.

We, migrant domestic workers, driven by economic disparities in our home countries, make the difficult decision to leave and search for better job opportunities. The promise of higher wages and improved living conditions serves as a beacon of hope for us, pushing us to traverse borders and accept positions as domestic workers.

Many of us face harsh realities abroad. Exploitation, abuse and violation of our rights become part of our daily experiences, overshadowing the dreams that fueled our migration. Our vulnerability often makes us easy targets for unscrupulous employers. The exploitation of migrant domestic workers is deeply rooted in systemic issues. Inadequate legal frameworks and limited protections contribute to the perpetuation of these abuses.

In arriving in the UK we carry with us the aspirations of financial stability and a chance to support our families back home. Unfortunately, the path to realising these dreams is fraught with challenges, exposing us to a range of difficulties, both professional and personal. Many of us find ourselves in a precarious legal situation upon arrival. The tied visa system, which binds the worker to a specific employer, leaves us vulnerable to exploitation. Behind the facade of well-maintained homes and manicured lawns lie stories of exploitation and

mistreatment. We are isolated within private households and endure long working hours, inadequate pay and even emotional or physical abuse. The lack of oversight within the confines of private residences exacerbates our vulnerability.

The Voice of Domestic Workers (VODW) plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and well-being of migrant domestic workers. Through various campaigns, VODW strives to raise public awareness about the challenges faced by migrant domestic workers. By bringing these issues into the spotlight, the organisation encourages public discourse and understanding, paving the way for increased empathy and support for the rights of migrant domestic workers.

Mimi Jalmasco

Domestic Worker Trustee of The Voice of Domestic Workers

Self, Others, Places: Mapping the Journey of Migrant Domestic Workers with Zine Making

In 2014-2018, I was one of the volunteer partners of an empowerment project called "Educate, Express, Empower: Breaking the Silence of Migrant Women," supported by the Mission For Migrant Workers of St. John's Cathedral (MFMW), a union for migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong. This project consisted of seminars and workshops and resulted in the creation of a series of two zines called "Work is Work." These zines included personal writings, photographs, poetry, comics, recipes, fieldwork research, and experimental drawings by Filipino and Indonesian MDWs. Through the process of creating the "Work is Work" zine, MDWs were provided with a space to express their emotions, insights, and creative forms, and to explore ways of their empowerment.



Work is Work zine issue 1, 2014 (left), issue 2, 2018 (right), Hong Kong

During my artist residency in London this year, I had the opportunity to explore the working conditions and policies of MDWs in the UK. I met members of The Voice of Domestic

Workers (VoDW) on May 1st, also known as Labour Day, when workers from various fields gather at Trafalgar Square to demand improved salaries, labor rights, and legal policies. A few months later, I proposed a zine workshop to the members of VoDW at Unite the Union in Holborn. I was amazed by the openness and thankful for the trust shown by the VoDW members, allowing me to conduct the zine workshop and producing a zine with them. I am also grateful for the strong support and assistance from Marissa Begonia and Ximena Ruiz Del Rio, the director and coordinator of VoDW.

During the first zine workshop with the members, I learned about the journeys and stories of these women, including their experiences of migration and abuse at work. These heartbreaking stories were familiar to me from my time in Hong Kong. The lack of awareness among the general public and media in the UK, coupled with the conservative policies of the UK government, contribute to the invisibility and helplessness of MDWs and perpetuating the cycle of modern slavery and trafficking. I have many questions in my mind about how to improve the legal status of MDWs and create safer working environments. Will there be a day when these women no longer have to leave their families and countries to work abroad under life-risking conditions?

In order to find out how the workers ended up in London, we used "mind-mapping" as a way to visually represent the paths of MDWs, intertwining with others (people and factors) and places. These maps depicted the traces of their journeys and what led them to their current situations. Each participant created a unique map with background information relevant to their identity and experiences. The title "Women Behind Closed Doors" accurately reflects the struggles and fears that MDWs have to endure and conceal while at work. I hope

that creating this zine and conducting the workshop with the members of VoDW will be just the beginning of an ongoing creative manifestation of MDWs, calling for an end to all forms of injustice.

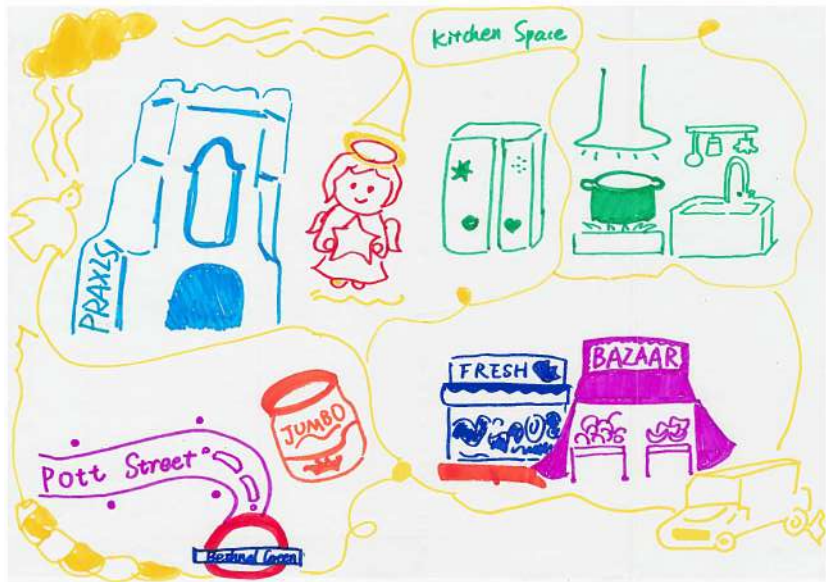
Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude for the coordinating support from Xuan Fang, Lai Pin Chieh and Wenxi Liao. Xuan and Pin Chieh are master graduates of Migration and Diaspora Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. It was invaluable to have them share their research subjects and experiences with migrant workers and diasporas. Their writings about their experiences and observations with migrant workers are included in the later part of this zine. Wenxi is a fresh graduate of MA Curating Contemporary Art at Royal College of Art, London. He had been engaged with several community art projects in China.

I hope you enjoy reading this zine. Let's work together to end modern slavery for MDWs!

Beatrix Pang

Dec 7, 2023, London

Beatrix Pang (they/them) is currently the international resident artist and awardee of Loewe Foundation/Studio Voltaire Award in London.
Instagram: @smalltunepress/ @zine_coop/ @queer_reads_library



Reflecting on my year of volunteering with Praxis, a human rights charity based in London with over 35 years of experience, has been a deeply insightful journey, as they are dedicated to supporting migrants facing crises and ensuring their essential human needs are met while helping them overcome encountered barriers.

My volunteer role involves supporting and facilitating the NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds) action group. NRPF denies individuals access to any welfare safety net, leading to devastating consequences such as cycles of poverty, homelessness, and hunger. This policy disproportionately affects Black and Asian migrant communities, reinforcing structural inequalities and patriarchal structures, particularly impacting single mothers, children of colour, and people with disabilities. Having contributed to grassroots campaigns, such as reducing the residency requirement for citizenship and

advocating for additional rights, like free school meals and childcare support, I gained invaluable insights into the nuanced challenges immigrants face in the local context and the areas requiring support.

As a workshop volunteer, my responsibilities extend to facilitating training sessions and group discussions, running the creche for children, and preparing communal meals. In our daily group activities, the kitchen serves as a vital internal space, where cooking utensils, fridges, and storage areas shape relationships among members, predominantly from West African countries, including Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, etc. Thus, we usually cook and share African dishes, specifically tailored to West African tastes, with Ivory Coast flavours.

Once, I had the unique task of acquiring a highly sought-after African spice, “Jumbo chicken stock seasoning”, essential for the authentic taste of Ivorian dishes. These ubiquitous stock cubes play a pivotal role, and without them, the culinary experience would be incomplete. Our usual grocery procurement involved mainstream supermarkets like Sainsbury Local or Iceland due to their affordability and variety. However, acquiring special ingredients for local flavours necessitated visits to distinctive stores.

On that particular day, I embarked on a journey from Praxis’ office on Pott Street in Bethnal Green, a repurposed church now serving as a community space. This voyage led me into one of London’s largest Bengali and Indian communities, exploring vibrant street markets such as “Fresh Bazaar” until I secured this kind of elusive spice. That experience opened my eyes to the intricate dynamics and mutual support deeply embedded within immigrant communities.

Transitioning from the bustling markets to the workshop with the Voice of Domestic Workers, my migration experience became a valuable asset. Despite occasional language barriers hindering seamless communication, drawing emerged as a powerful medium for expression and reflection. Through art, we found a universal language to convey our experiences, articulate our thoughts on self and others, and explore the nuanced relationship with our surroundings. This artistic endeavour not only bridged communication gaps but also fostered a sense of shared understanding among participants.

Xuan Fang

Xuan is a freelance writer and editor with years of experience collaborating with migrant artists in mainland China and the UK. Currently, she coordinates initiatives within the East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities in London to create a friendly and inclusive space. She holds an MA degree in Migration and Diaspora Studies from School of Oriental and African Studies.

WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: The Journey of Migrant Domestic Workers in the UK

This zine is jointly produced and published by ZINE COOP and The Voice of Domestic Workers (VoDW), printed in London, December 2023

Special thanks to the support by Marissa Begonia and Ximena Ruiz Del Rio
www.thevoiceofdomesticworkers.com | www.zinecoop.org

The contents are copyrighted by members of VoDW and the contributors
Layout and Compiled by Beatrix (ZINE COOP)

All handwritings in the folded poster and on the zine cover are by members of VoDW

Workshop facilitators: Beatrix, Xuan, Pin Chieh, Wenxi

Workshop Participants/ Contributors of this zine:

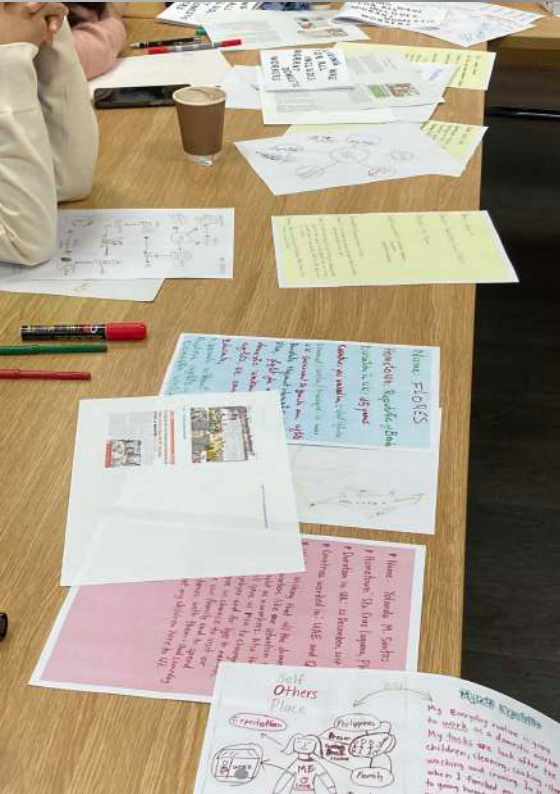
(Members of VoDW) Arlene, Danah, Dareen, Dotty, Flora, Ghie-ghie, Grace, Jenny, Mimi, Nerisa, Sahara, Wendy, Yolly; Beatrix, Xuan, Pin Chieh

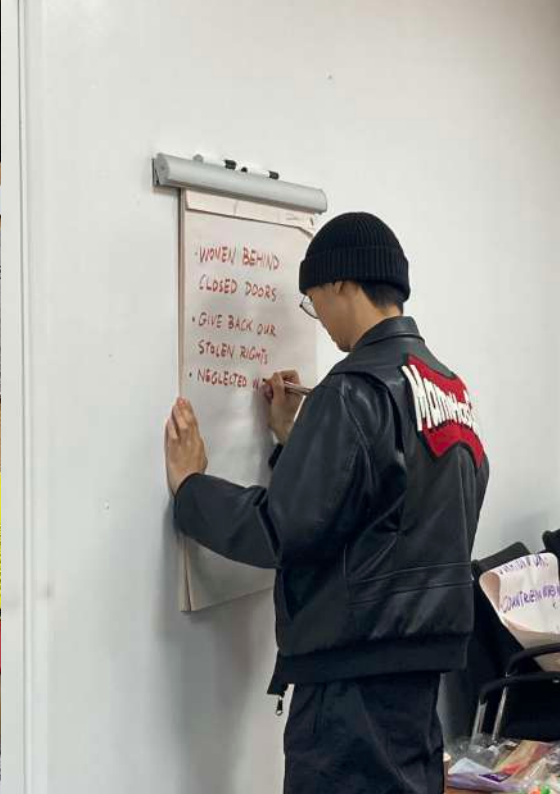


print version



view version







FAMILY...

SELF
OTHERS
PLACE

UK

THE VOICE OF

DOMESTIC WORKERS

HOPE

Name: ARLHYNE DELA ROSA

Home Twn: Cavite , Philippines

Duration In UK: 6 years

Countries you Worked In: Taiwan , Saudi Arabia

Demand: Right To Work with Proper Visa.

Wish: I wish that this coming election who ever wins that the Domestic Workers Rights will be included in Manifesto. So our Rights are be reinstated so we can worked without boundaries and work with our proper rights and have our Visa and Right to work.

Message: Im Grateful and thankful In this charity The Voice of Domestic Workers for giving me HOPE AGAIN. Without this Charity Im still Hiding in my Fears and dont know how to protect my self and know my rights.

Name
Home town

Duration in UK:

Countries you worked in

Demand / Wish / Message: or more to say.

Im Arlene of Cavite Philippines. I've been to United Kingdom for 6 years. I've been to Taiwan as Production Workers for how many years. Year 2014 I applied as Domestic Workers In Saudi Arabia as Nanny Housekeepers for 4 Years

Fighting for our Rights.

One day I can go ^{in my native Home with a passport} home.

Expectation dream

Philippines

Self

Family
Friends



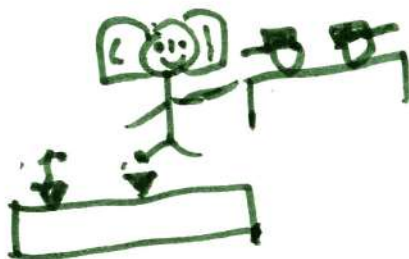
Transmigration



work

Employer
Family

Well
~~being~~



Full Goal.

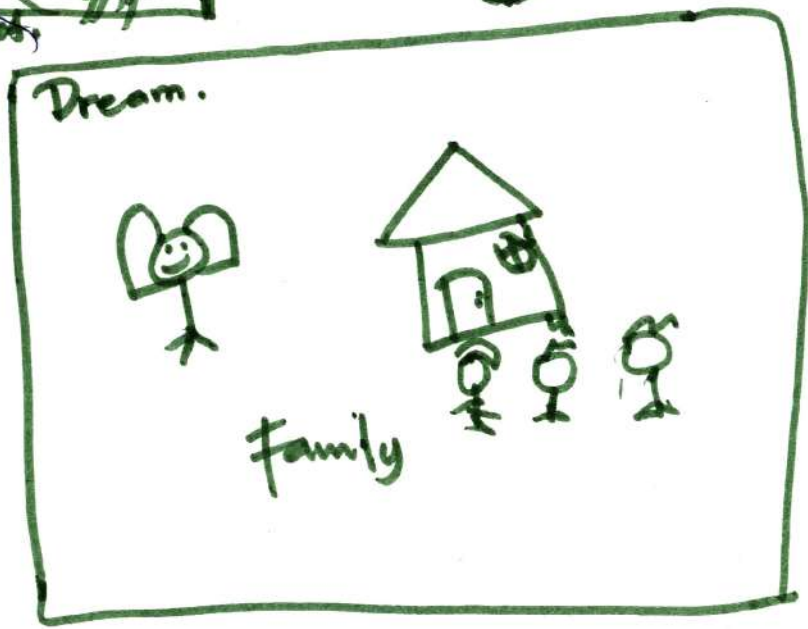


Place.
Space



They paid
for
work.

Expect



Name: Dandyn M. Ramos

HomeTown: Pangasinan Philippines

Duration: 4 Months

Countries you worked: Dubai U.A.E.

Demand / wish / Message or more to say:

~~Delight~~: Working as a Domestic Worker, treating well, respect and appreciate of what we are doing from employers and even Governments.
~~the~~ Working here in UK at the same time praying and fighting for our rights.
Hopefully Government in UK will heard us..

* The Cycle of My Life "

* Living in a small quiet Village
From the Beginning of Childhood full of Dreams.
That Poverties Generation will be off someday.
Patience Hard work is the only way.

* While Growing up, I totally Understand
My families Poverty. Background I.
That even I will cry of Blood ^{do} nothing will to us.
First Drawn Dreams, will fall fast.

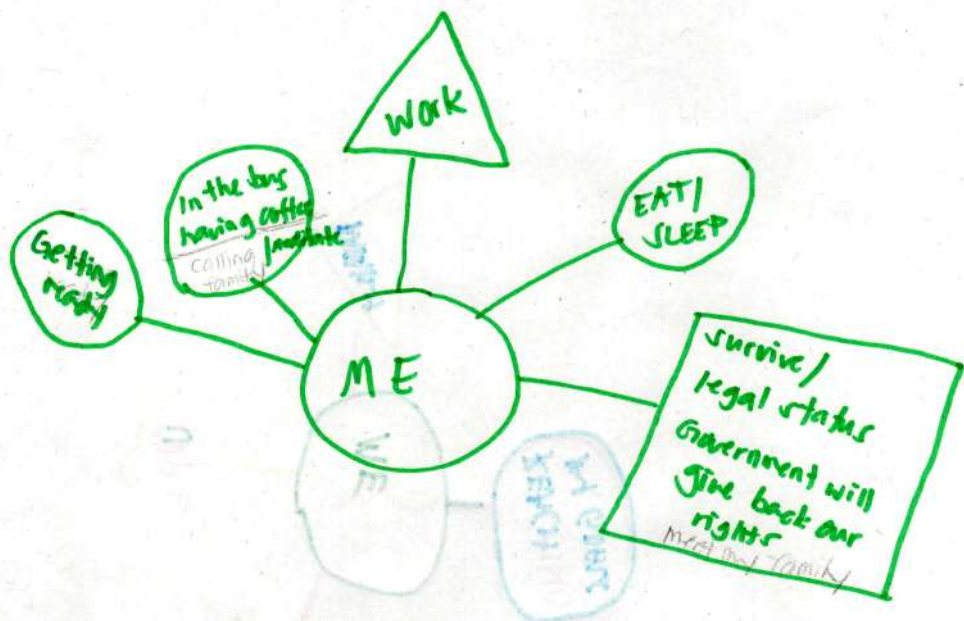
* I entered Being a maid, hoping to finish.
As time past, It hurts me a ~~colat~~ much.
Molestation Accident are the reasons.
Acceptance and ~~forgetting~~ escaping somewhere.

* I Flew in another Countries
Carrying my Little dreams
Unfortunately, I ran away ~~that~~ those I serve.
And became the ~~new~~ Brand new life.

* In UK We met the voice who save.
Disaster in any time will be happen.
Thankful to the Tres Marias forever
Giving opportunity hoping to Start Again.

* Dreams I Build The ~~first~~ very first time.

* ~~Seaboy~~ Praying slowly soon will fullfill.
Fighting for our Rights, hope we get
That someday will come back home to my native home.



- Darren -

NAME: Darren Patayahay

HOMETOWN: ^{Both} Philippines

DURATION IN UK: 4 yrs

COUNTRIES YOU WORKED IN: Qatar, UK

DEMAND / WISH / MESSAGE :

- I wish that everybody could commit freedom.

- As a migrant domestic worker, I wish that employers and people around me will treat me as a human being.

My message:

Always choose to love yourself!



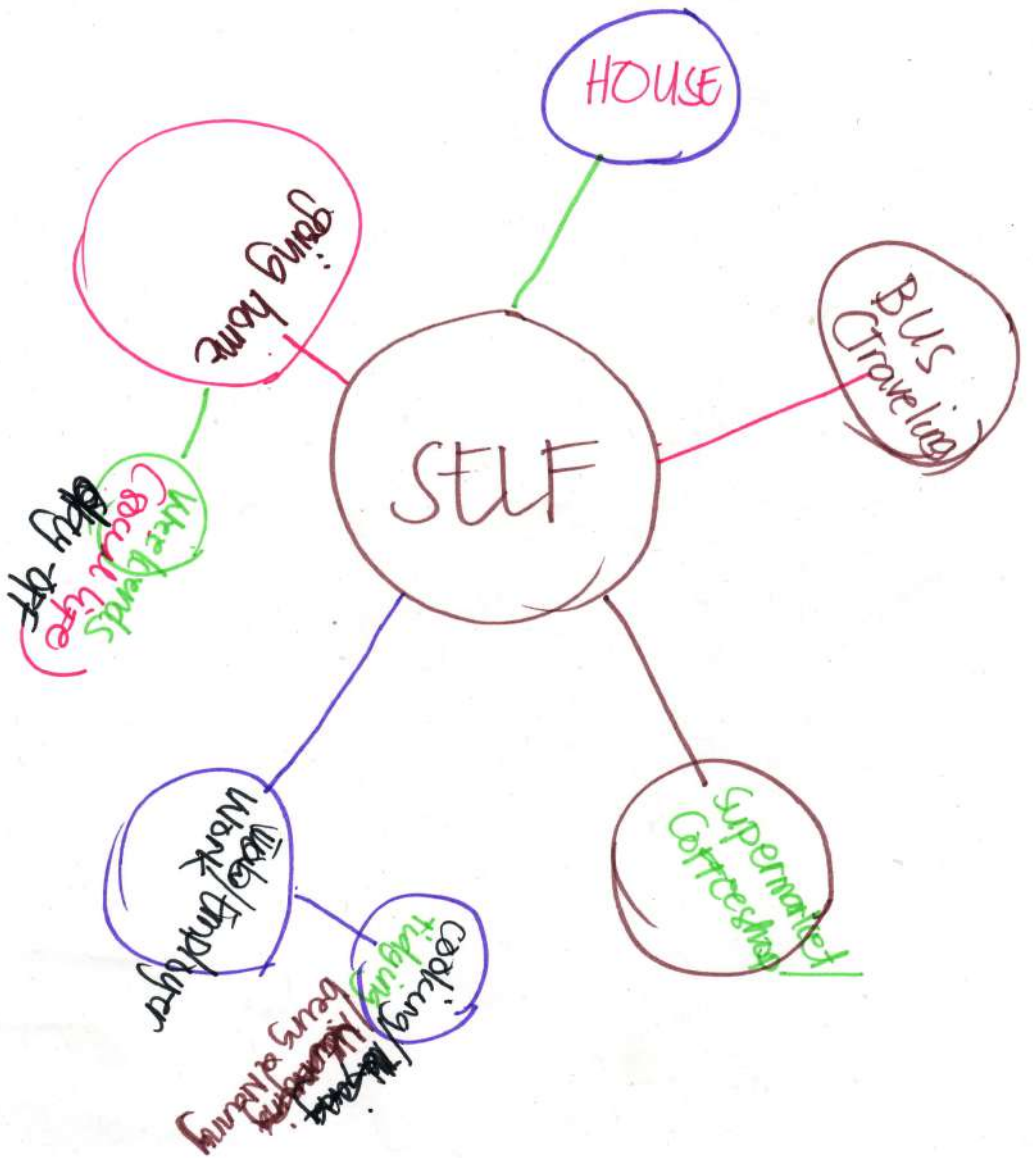
NAME: DOTTY FERNANDES

HOMETOWN: BOMBAY, INDIA

COUNTRIES
I HAVE
WORKED
IN: DUBAI, UAE
DOHA, QATAR
KUWAIT

DURATION
IN UK: 17 YEARS

- MESSAGES: - VISAS GRANTED FOR ALL DOMESTIC WORKERS
- TREAT US (DOMESTIC WORKERS) LIKE HUMAN BEINGS
 - DOMESTIC WORKERS ARE HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS



Name : Ghie - ghie

Hometown : Malkati city

Duration in U.K. : 10 years

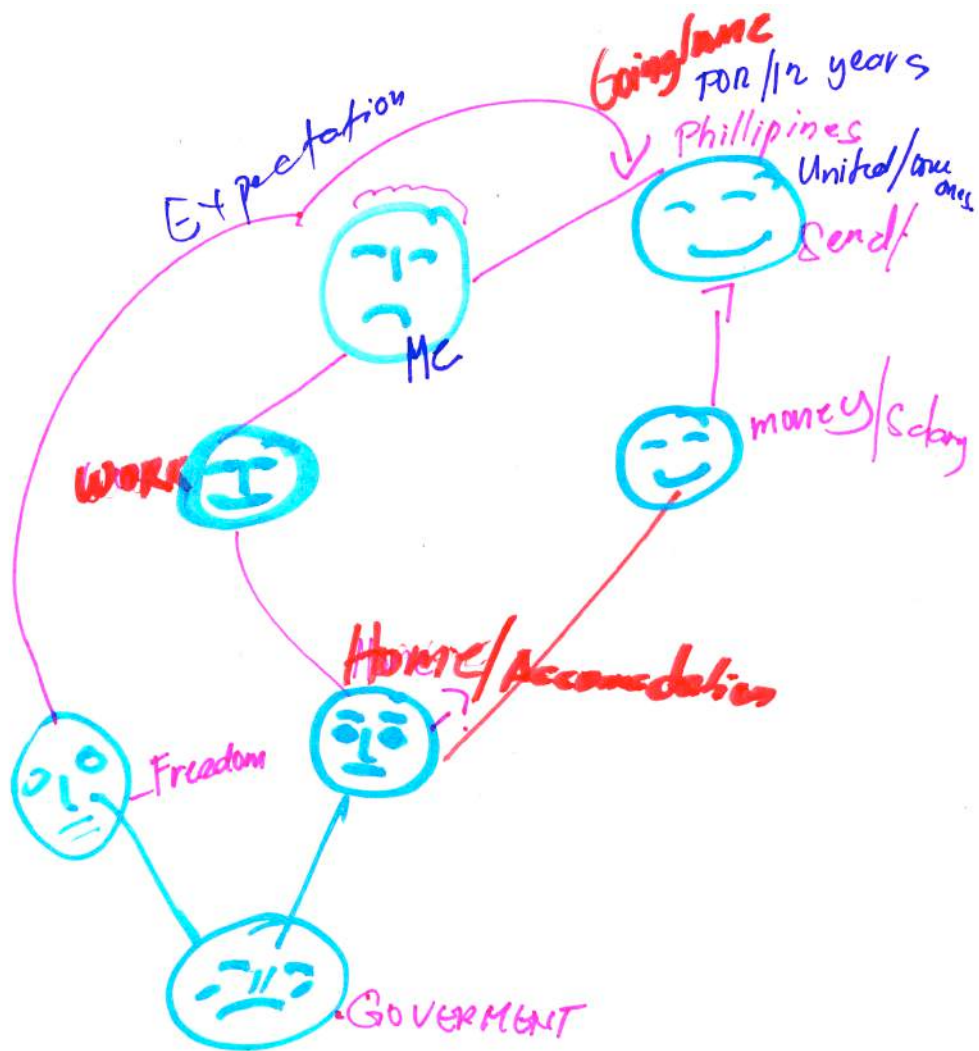
Countries you worked in : SAUDI ARABIA

Demand / Wish / Message or More to say :

Demand : I'm calling the government to re-state the Overseas of Domestic Workers Visa that they abolished in April 2012.

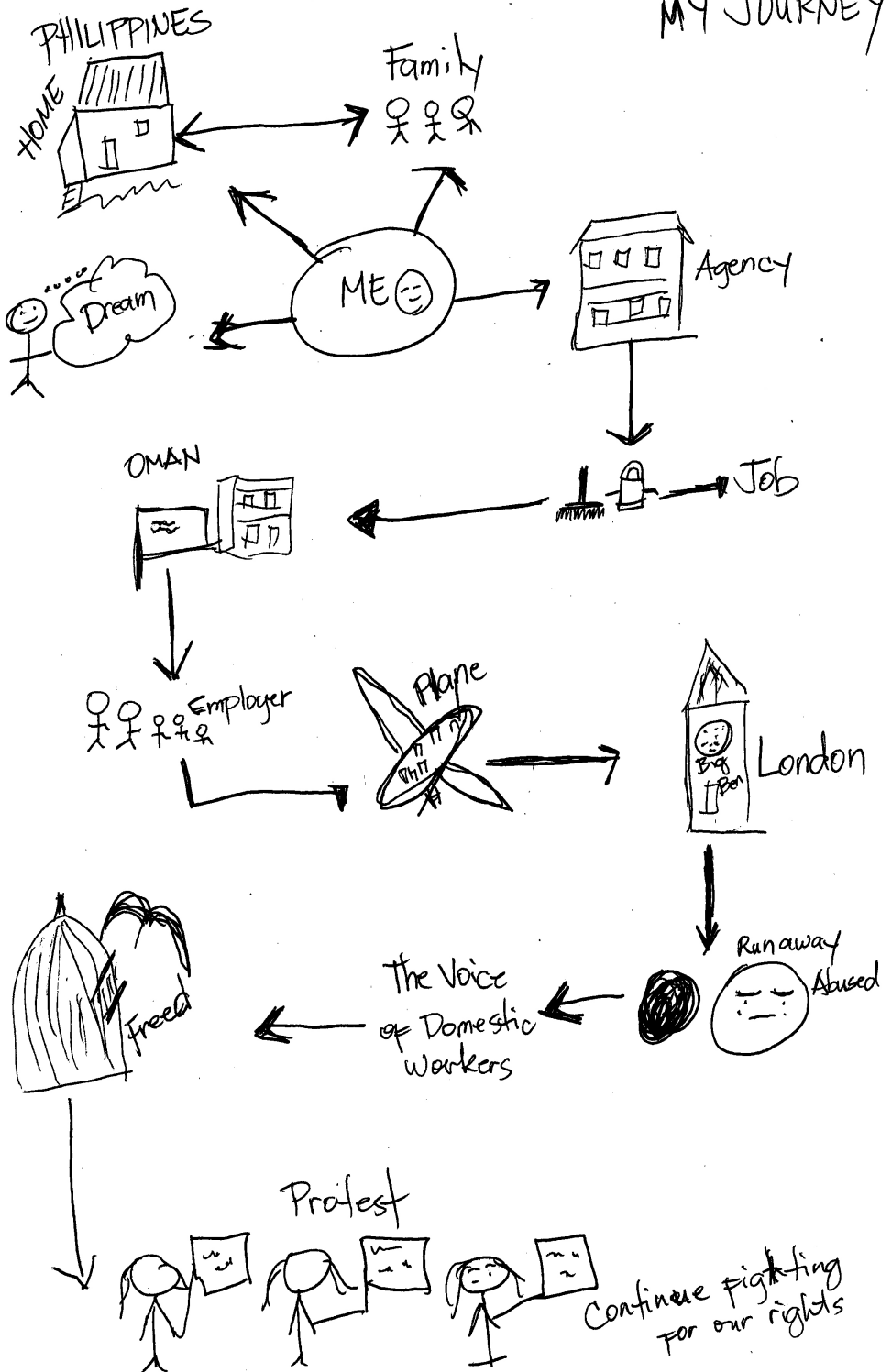
Wish : To work legally in this country

Message : to abolish the National Referral Mechanism..



- < Name - GRACE J. NING
- * Hometown - Pavia Iloilo Phillipines.
- DURATION IN UK - 2014 to Present.
- COUNTRY you work in. - Hongkong - Domestic Workers.
Kuwait - Domestic Workers.
- Demand/With /message (or my to say) -
- Demand - Respect as a domestic Workers. from the employer, to the people and from the government.
- Wish - Just give our Rights. To renew visa and can apply leave to remain and eventually to be a british citizenship. Just can move freely and can go home to meet our family for that we don't hug and cuddle for a long time.
- message - Hopefully the government hear us now. They been ignoring the domestic Workers right. They are close they look and eyed for a long time.

MY JOURNEY



Name: Jenny A.

Hometown: Diffun, Quirino Province, Philippines

Duration in UK: 7 years

Countries you worked in: * SAUDI ARABIA
* OMAN
* UNITED KINGDOM

Demand/Wish/Messages or more to say:

Demand: To reinstate the rights of migrant Domestic workers who was stripped since 2012.

Wish: I wish that they will grant all of our demand and give us the chance to be legalise here so we can go back home in our country and be with them once in a while.

Message: Keep on fighting and believing that there is a rainbow after a storm.





Name: FLORES

Hometown: Republic of Benin

Duration in UK: 15 years

Countries you worked in: West Africa

Demand / wish / Messages. or more
UK Government to grant our rights
Reinstate Migrant domestic workers
Visa, fight for all Migrant
domestic workers, for our
rights, we campaign, we
Educate,
A Decade without rights
Restore rights of Migrant
Domestic workers Visa

THANKING GOD Everyday

SELF CARE / WORLD
GOOD HEALTH PEACE
SAFE / SECURE / Hope
HAPPY
RESPECTED / DIGNITY

FRIEND
FAMILY

Me

Singapore
Housing
JPDW - 11

UK
UNITE
TVODWS

JOB
DREAM
GOAL

FAMILY
EM PLD
ER

ROOM / House
CHURCH Address
BUS / TRAIN STATION
MIS / SHREARY / COOP
GREEN / ELDER

Name : NERISA F. VALERIO

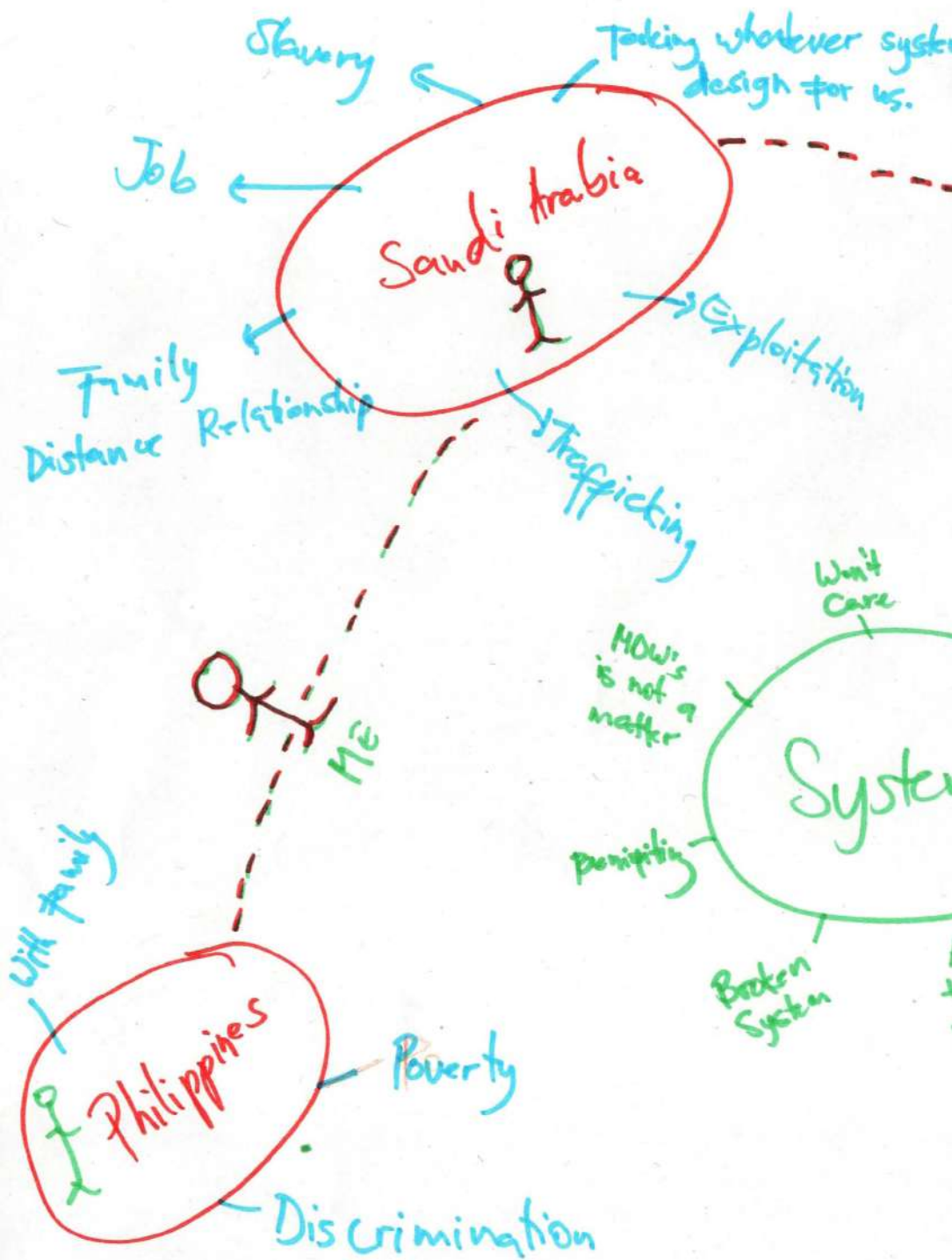
Home Town : SAN FABIAN PANGASINAN, Philippines

Duration in UK : 16 yrs.

Countries You Work in : Singapore, Hongkong,
Jordan, France. UK

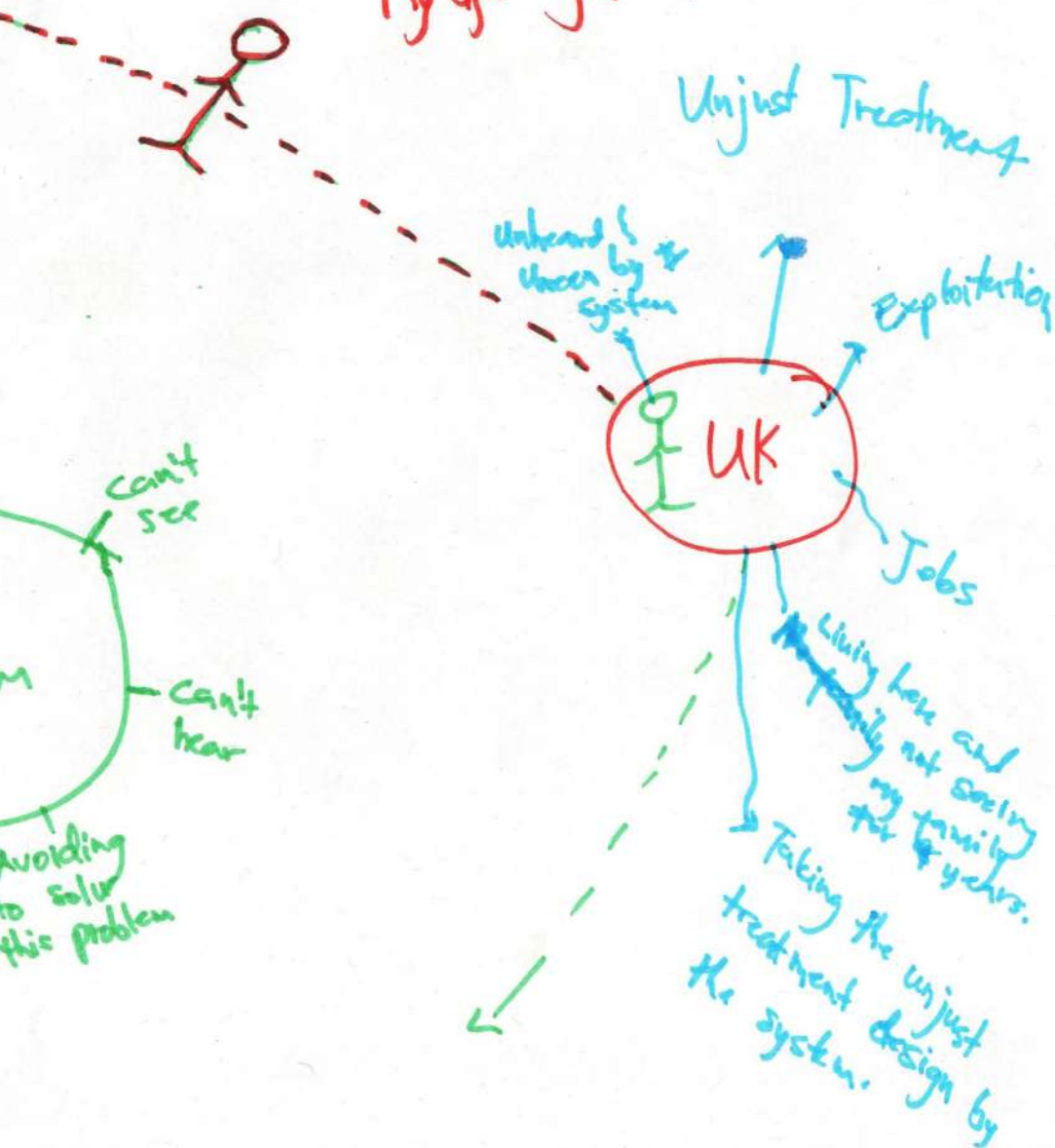
Demand / Wish / Message :

My message is for the Government
will give back the rights for the Domestic
Workers the Reinstatement of the Old Domestic
Workers Visa.



~~MEM/COU'T CYCLE~~

My life cycle w/ the Gov't System



NAME: SAHARAH MAMATAS

HOMETOWN: COTABATO, PHILIPPINES

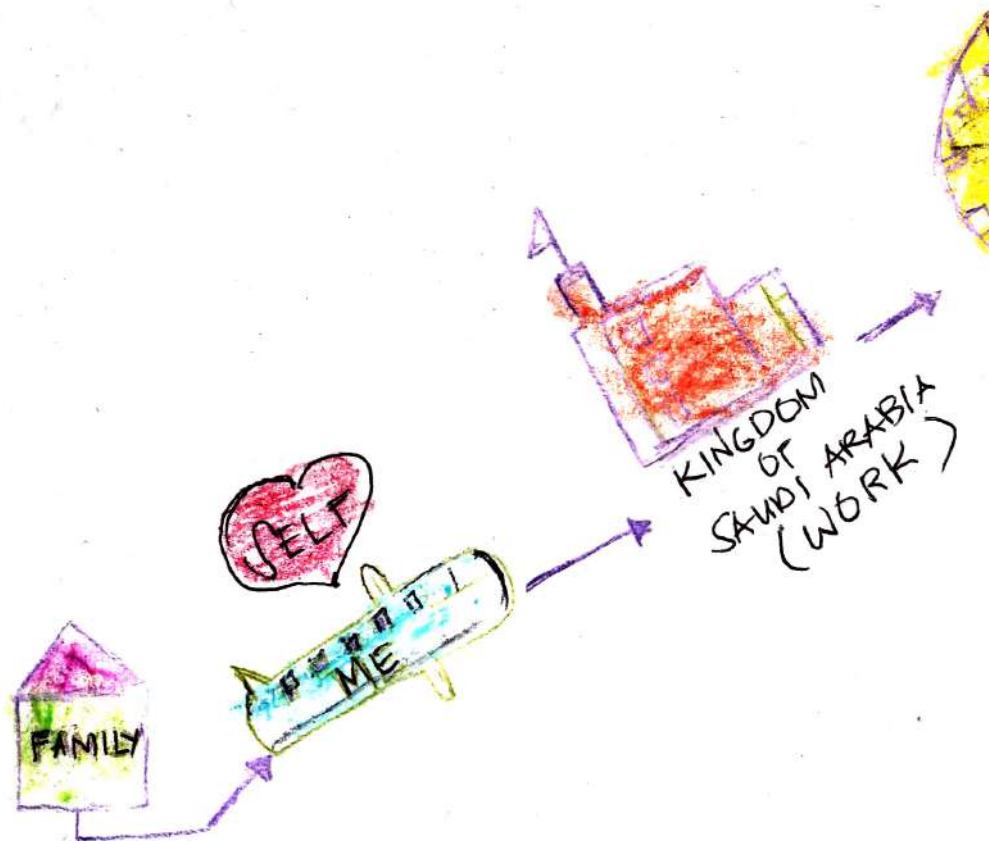
DURATION IN UK: 5 YEARS

COUNTRIES YOU WORKED IN: SAUDI ARABIA
UNITED KINGDOM

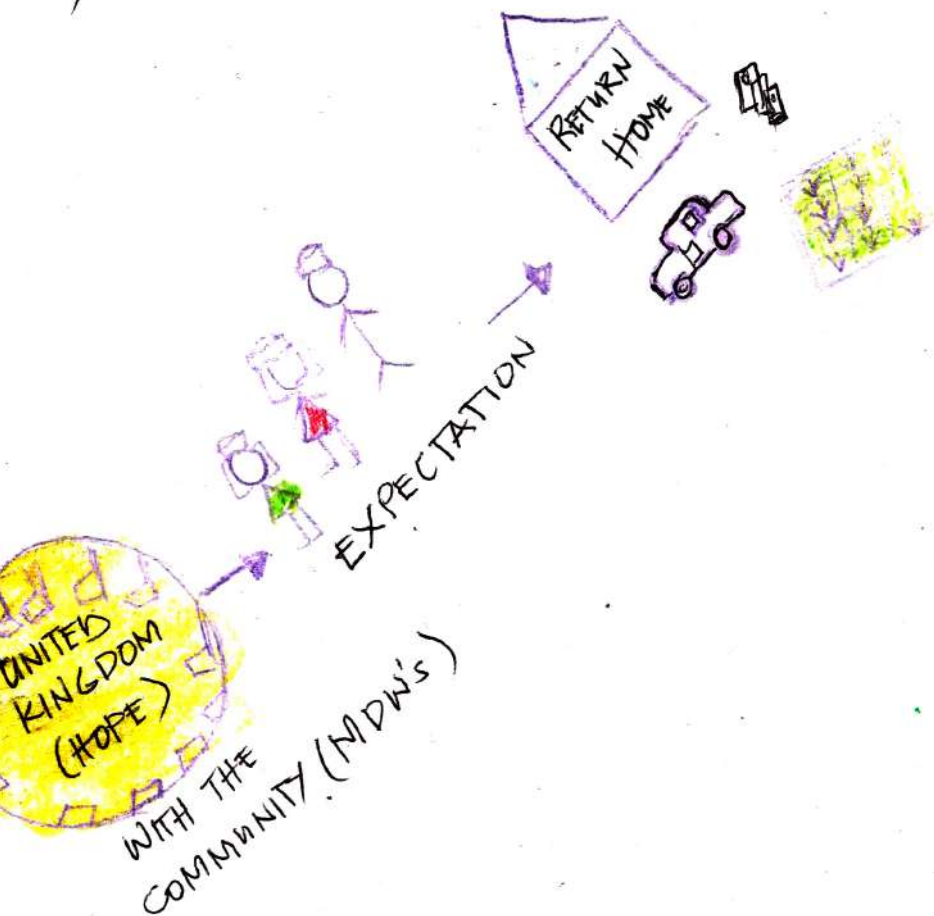
DEMAND/MESSAGE/WISH: TO HAVE A VISA THAT
ALLOW MIGRANT DOMESTIC
WORKER TO WORK AND STAY
AND HAVE PRIVILEGE TO
SEE THEIR FAMILY.

: WE DEMAND FROM THE GOV'T
TO GIVE VISA AND RIGHT TO
WORK FOR THE MIGRANT DO-
MESTIC WORKERS.

THE VOICE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS - we



ndy.



Name: Wendelyn C. Nova

Hometown: Daet, Philippines

Duration in UK: 5 years now

Countries you worked in: Saudi Arabia / United Kingdom

Demand/Wish/Message or more to say....

Demand: recognize our work & protect MDWs

Wish: I wish that the government will reinstate the rights of Migrant Domestic Workers (MDW's) & ratified ILO-C189

Message: My personal message to all MBW's globally & here in the United Kingdom to keep fighting & be strong. Life is too tough but God never give us a problem that we couldn't solve. Keep hoping that we can see our family not now but soon. We suffered a lot but there's a good news later on. #LIGHT!!!

Self Others Place

Yolly



Myself Expectation

My everyday routine is going to work as a domestic worker.

My tasks are look after the children, cleaning, cooking, shopping, washing and ironing. In the evening when I finished my work I traveling to going home. Every Sunday, I am going to Unite the Union to attend the classes provided by the VODW who helped me here to UK. They're became my second family. This charity ~~campaigning~~ campaigning for domestic workers right to the government to give us visa. So we can go back home to see our family in the Philippines.

- * Name: Yolanda M. Santos
- * Hometown: Sta. Cruz Laguna, Philippines
- * Duration in UK: 22 December, 2017
- * Countries worked in: UAE and Qatar

* Wish: Wishing that all the domestic workers like our situation get right as a workers. Also they will give us visa to change employer and for live to remain, to give us chance to visit or to see our family and to spend some times with them. And someday I will get my children here to Uk.



Arlene



Wendy



Sarah



Flora



Nerisa



Ghie-ghie



Jenny



Dotty



Dareen



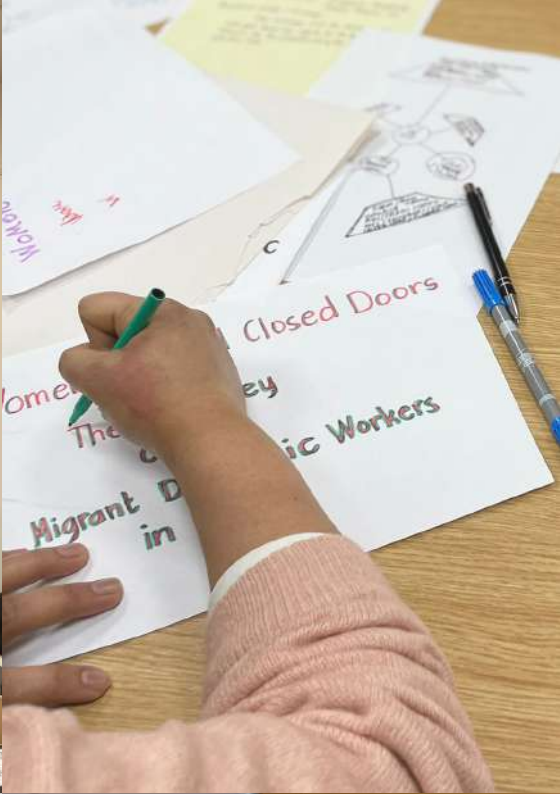
Danah

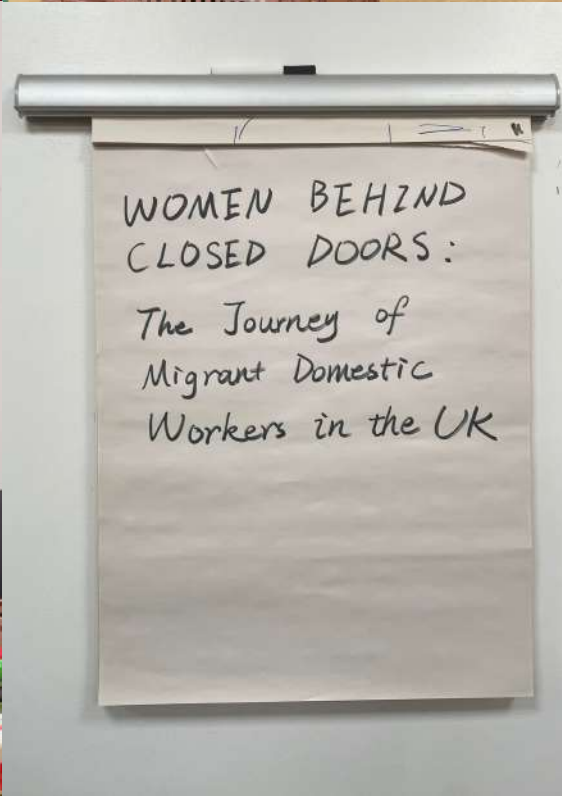


Yolly



Grace





Taiwan Migrant Workers and Their Paintings

Since the introduction of foreign labour in Taiwan in the 1990s, about 728,000 migrant workers from Southeast Asian countries have been working as workers, caretakers, and fishermen in factories, homes, and fishing vessels in Taiwan. It was against this background that the media I used to work for, the "Four-Way Voice" (FWV), was founded. It provides a platform for the Southeast Asian population in Taiwan to receive information in their mother tongue and has several language versions. The earliest version, Viet Nam newspaper (Báo Bốn Phương), was launched in 2006.

In addition to providing social news, labour information and migrant stories, the newspaper also accepts submission from readers. Just like now, we use Zine to record and express our stories, migrant workers and new residents do that by submitting their prose, articles and poems to the newspaper. At a time when smartphones and social media were not yet common, it was very popular with migrant groups, and some readers sent in their paintings, which reflected their moods and labour conditions in Taiwan.



Source: Bao Bon Phuong,
<https://www.facebook.com/Bao4P>



Source: Bao Bon Phuong, <https://www.facebook.com/Bao4P>

Take the cover of this Viet Nam newspaper as an example, it delicately depicts the feelings of migrant workers who have left their homeland and their lives. In the picture, the hands of the clock show that the time is 2am. Migrants who cannot sleep due to homesickness and work pressure are sitting on their beds, pondering. The space in which migrants live is a common dormitory provided by Taiwanese employers, where you can see bunk beds for multiple occupants, simple assembled wardrobes and suitcases. Migrant workers often have to share the same space with many colleagues, enduring a crowded environment that lacks privacy. This work shows the mental stress and poor living conditions of migrant workers.

Among the readers of FWV, there are also prolific creators; for example, former undocumented migrant TRẦN DUY HƯNG, FWV also made a special report on him. His paintings are mainly about the oppression he suffered from the labour system and other migrant workers' stories that he read on FWV. For example, a caretaker who pushes an older woman in a

wheelchair is still sad even when she walks in a beautiful garden because of her homesickness and the harsh labour conditions. In order for the Taiwanese public to better understand the plight of migrant workers, FWV has also collected the works of these creators and organised an exhibition.



Source: Bao Bon Phuong,
<https://www.facebook.com/Bao4P>

Just as foreign domestic workers in the UK face oppressive social systems, migrant workers in Taiwan also experience unfair labour conditions. "Taiwan International Workers Association" (TIWA) has pointed out that the Taiwanese government's management policy has cheapened migrant workers and turned them into slave labour, including problems such as the following:

1. Unjustified private agency system
2. Inability to change employers freely
3. Domestic workers are not protected by Taiwan Labor Standards Act.
4. Migrant workers do not receive the same pay for the same work

There is also discrimination against the people of Southeast Asian countries in Taiwan, as well as long-term stigmatisation by the media, which makes it difficult for migrant workers and new residents to settle in Taiwan.



Source: Lakbay,
<https://www.facebook.com/LAKBAY>

Every two years, the "Migrant Empowerment Network in Taiwan" (MENT) organises "Migrant Workers' March", in which migrant workers and labour organisations take to the streets to demand labour rights from the government. As a member of the march in 2012, FWV combined migrant workers' paintings with copywriting to make protest posters as a weapon to make their voices heard.



Source: Bao Bon Phuong,
<https://www.facebook.com/Bao4P>

Lai Pin Chieh

Pin Chieh interests on international migration and human rights issues. She graduated from Migration and Diaspora Studies at School of Oriental and African Studies, London. She is the former chief editor of the Indonesian section of "Four-way Voice", a newspaper for the Southeast Asian population in Taiwan.

DOMESTIC WORK IS WORK

Findings from a Survey of 200 Overseas Domestic Workers in the UK

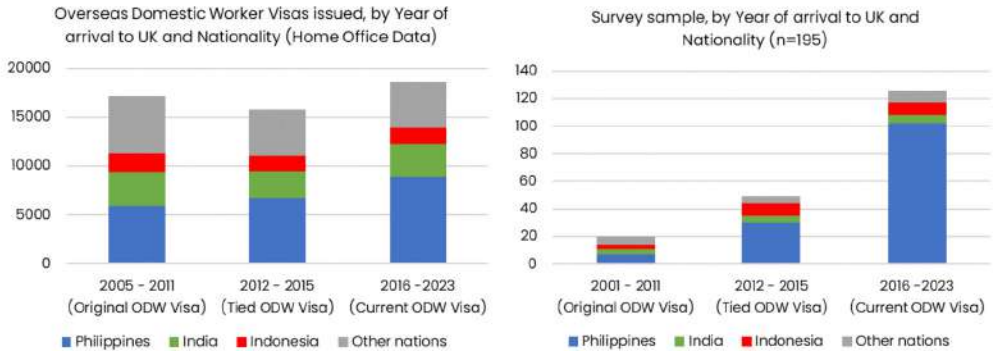


A SHORT HISTORY OF THE OVERSEAS DOMESTIC WORKER (ODW) VISA

		Right to change employer?	Right to renew visa?	What did this mean for Overseas Domestic Workers?
Before 1998		✗	✗	With no official visa, nor any ability to seek alternative employment, workers were frequently mistreated and abused during this period.
1998 – 2012		✓	✓	After campaigning by a coalition of groups including Unite the Union, Labour introduced the first ODW visa. With more rights, workers' conditions improved dramatically. The ILO cited this visa as international best practice. ¹
2012 – 2016	 	✗	✗	The coalition government's new visa prevented workers from asserting their basic rights and the abuse reported by workers rapidly increased.
2016 –	 (in theory)	✓	✗	After further campaigning, the government accepted that workers need an escape route from abuse and removed the employer tie from the visa. However, as this report shows , without the option to renew their visa, employers' abuse has continued and workers who have escaped often work without a contract for below minimum wage.
2024		✓ ?	✓ ?	Will a new Labour Government help free workers from exploitation by restoring the original Overseas Domestic Worker Visa? In this report, we provide evidence for why they should.

WHERE DO OVERSEAS DOMESTIC WORKERS, AND THEIR EMPLOYERS, COME FROM?

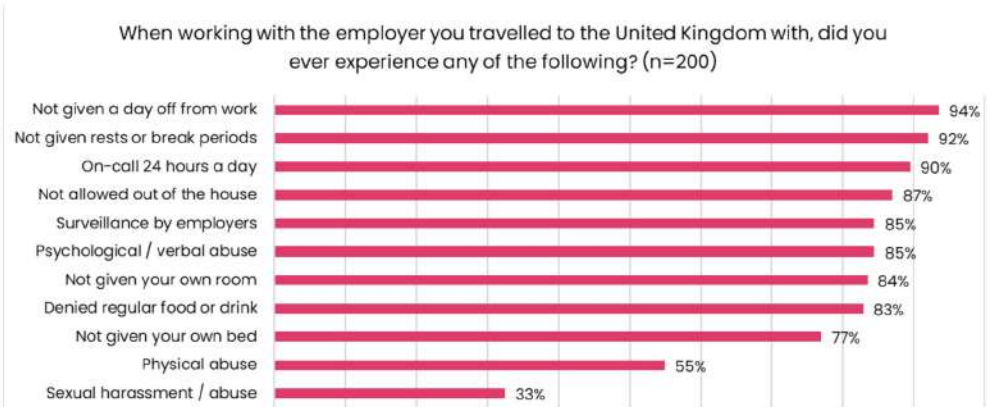
According to Home Office Data, the countries which have issued the most ODW Visas are the **Philippines**, **India**, and **Indonesia**. Our sample of 200 is similar, but with a skew towards those who have arrived since 2016, under the current visa regime.



In our survey, employers from the **Arab States** (e.g., Saudia Arabia and Qatar) make up **79%** of those who bring Overseas Domestic Workers with them to the UK, followed by **China** (5%) and **the UK** (5%) (n=198). This largely mirrors international trends of domestic work reported by the ILO.²

HOW ARE OVERSEAS DOMESTIC WORKERS TREATED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS IN THE UK?

As the chart below highlights, most workers who answered our survey had to work around the clock, live in inhumane conditions, and face multiple forms of abuse, all within the UK.



52p per hour

The median wage of our survey respondents - £73 for 140 hours of work a week. (Q: How many hours a week did you work with this employer? (n=186), Q: How much were you paid by this employer, if at all? (n=184) Converted from multiple currencies to £ at exchange rates as of Sept 23)

HOW DOES THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT ALLOW THIS ABUSE TO HAPPEN?



Workers should be interviewed at a Visa Application Centre but **only 34%** of survey respondents were (n=195). Of those who *did* attend an interview **only 15%** (n=67) were given a leaflet explaining their employment rights, and how to access support in the UK.

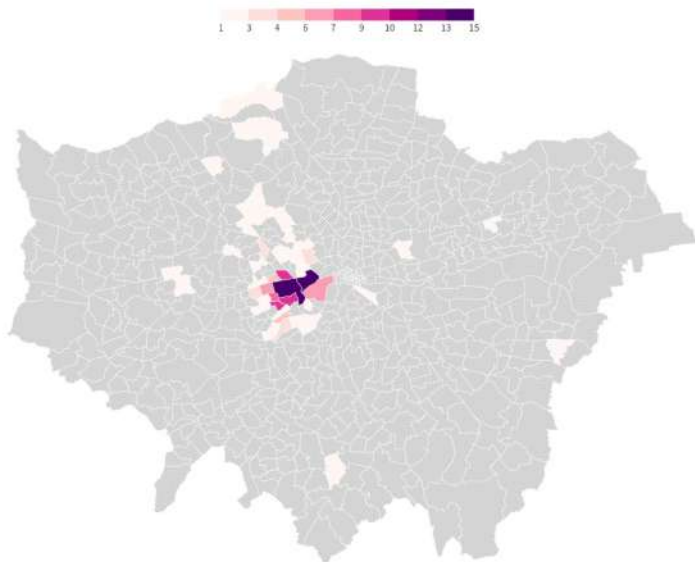


Workers should sign a written contract before they come to the UK, but **only 33%** of survey respondents did so (n=195). Of those who *did* sign a contract, **only 29%** read and understood their contract before signing it, and **only 6%** were given a copy to keep (n=65).

WHERE IS THIS ABUSE HAPPENING?

In our survey, **80%** of workers stayed with their employers in **Greater London** (n=200).

As this map shows, ODW employers are clustered in some of the UK's wealthiest neighbourhoods – Kensington, Knightsbridge, Belgravia, and Mayfair. However, this is also a national issue: we received survey responses from workers in every corner of the country, from Brighton, Glasgow, Gloucester, Swansea, and Manchester.



HOW ARE WORKERS SUPPORTED AFTER THEY ESCAPE THEIR EMPLOYERS?

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should allow Overseas Domestic Workers to be identified as potential victims of modern slavery and receive appropriate support. Despite the abuse our survey respondents faced, **only 44%** have been referred to the NRM (n=174), and those who have expressed their frustration with the process in responses to a question about their experiences:

"It's confusing because there's no point in this process. It will end with nothing, and I will still be stuck in my situation."

"How many years in NRM? And no update still."

786 days of waiting

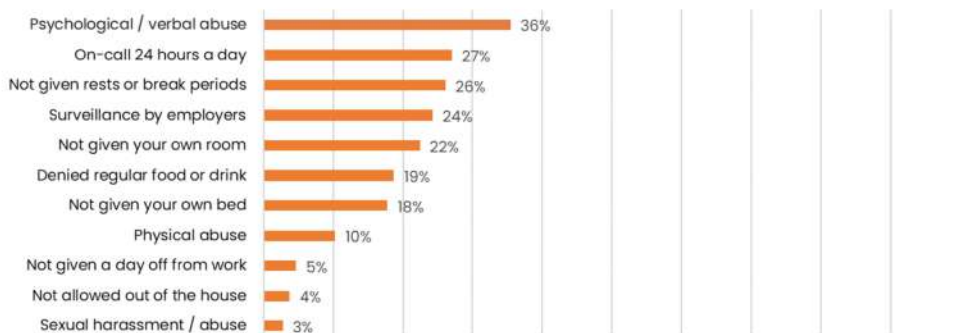
The median waiting time for ODWs between a reasonable grounds decision (where the Home Office decides if somebody *may* be a victim of modern slavery) and a conclusive grounds decision (when the Home Office accepts or rejects this evidence), according to five years of client data from **Kalayaan**, a charity who supports migrant domestic workers in the UK through the NRM process.³

HOW ARE DOMESTIC WORKERS TREATED BY THEIR CURRENT EMPLOYERS?

Over half of our survey respondents (55%) are working as domestic workers for a new employer after escaping their first employer. Unlike their first employers, most of their current employers are British (54%), with employer from the Arab Nations only making up 9% of employers (n=106).

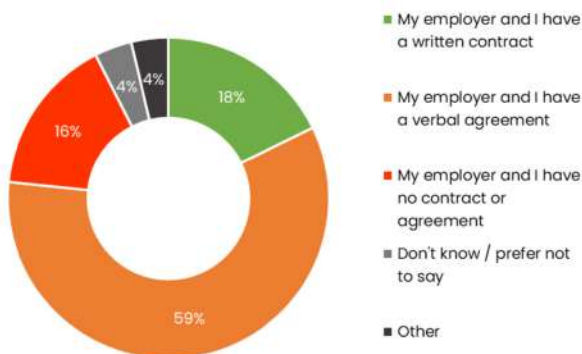
Although workers are treated relatively better by their current employers than those that they came to the UK with, the chart below shows that exploitation and abuse are still far too common.

Have you ever experienced any of the following with your current employer? (n=107)



Which of the following best describes your current situation? (n=107)

Workers receive a median wage of **£9.60 per hour** (£460 for 48 hours of work a week) from their current employers, much more than 52p, but still **less than the National Living Wage of £10.42**. As the chart on the right shows, this low wage may be due to the fact that **only 18% have a written contract** with their current employers.



HOW DID WE DO THE SURVEY?

This survey was designed and analysed by members of The Voice of Domestic Workers with the help of Matt Reynolds, PhD Researcher in the Sociology Department at London School of Economics and Political Science. The survey was open from 4 August to 20 September 2023 and was distributed online via The Voice of Domestic Workers' mailing list, social media channels, and word-of-mouth. All participants had to give informed consent before being able to complete the survey questionnaire. Notes:

¹ https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_146243/lang--en/index.htm,

² https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_802551/lang--en/index.htm,

³ <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/19268/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

Women
Behind
Women Closed
Behind Doors..
Women Closed
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Women Closed
Behind Doors..
Women Closed
Behind Doors..
Closed
Doors..

The Journey
of Migrant Domestic
Workers in the UK



Women Behind
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The Journey
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Women Behind Closed Doors

The Journey of Migrant
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Women Behind Closed Doors: The Journey of Migrant Domestic Workers in the UK

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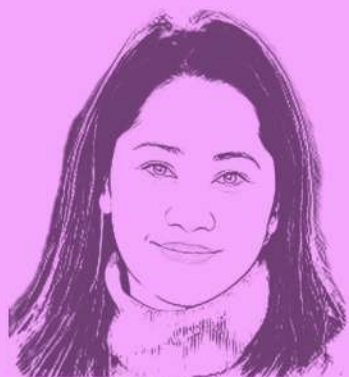
Women Behind Closed Doors:
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WOMEN BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.

The Journey
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Migrant Domestic
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The Journey of Migrant Domestic Workers in the UK

