



DOMESTIC WORK IN ARMENIA.

SITUATION ANALYSIS



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Responsibility of the information and views expressed herein lies entirely with the authors

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List of abbreviations

ILO	International Labour Organization
DW	Domestic worker
OSH	Occupational safety and health
LFS	Labour Force Survey
IDI	In-depth interview
SSI	Semi-structured interview
KII	Key informant interview
CS	Case study
CSO	Civil Society Organization
AMD	Armenian Dram
USD	United States Dollar



General Context

The ILO Convention C189 on Domestic Workers¹ (hereinafter - Convention or C189) was adopted in 2011 and entered into force in 2013 for ILO member states that ratified it. Currently, 35 states have ratified² it around the world. The aim of C189 is to improve the living and working conditions of domestic workers and guarantee them decent jobs. For these purposes, the Convention stresses the importance of such specific regulations for domestic workers as decent working and living conditions (dignity at work, equality, fair income, and safe working conditions are supposed to be ensured by four pillars of decent work agenda: employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue³), requirement to inform domestic workers on terms of employment, guarantees for the employee living in households, regulation of private employment agencies' work, etc.

Domestic work, as defined in ILO C189, is *work performed in or for a household or households*; domestic worker is *a person who is engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship*. The Convention sets that a person performing domestic work only occasionally or sporadically, not on an occupational basis, is not a domestic worker. Domestic work includes a variety of activities, such as cooking, cleaning, dishwashing, ironing, general household chores, caring for children (including doing homework or preparation for school classes), the elderly, persons with disabilities, as well as gardening, housekeeping, taking care of pets, and driving a family car.⁴ Domestic work also includes workers engaged on a part-time basis and those working for multiple employers, nationals and non-nationals, as well as both live-in and live-out domestic workers. The employer may be a member of the household for which the work is performed or an agency or

1. ILO Convention C189 on Domestic Workers, https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189

2. Ratifications of C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189),

https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO::P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460

3. ILO, Decent work, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>

4. ILO, Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention 189 & Recommendation 201 at a glance ; p. 7

enterprise that employs domestic workers and makes them available to the household.⁵ It should be noted that the term “domestic work” shall not be confused with the term “homework”.⁶ Homework is carried out by workers in their own home, not at the workplace, for the employer or on the self-employed basis.

At the time of adoption of C189, four principles were envisaged as fundamental ones that state members should respect, promote and realize. These principles are the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor; the effective abolition of child labor; the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. More recently, a safe and healthy working environment is recognized as a fundamental principle for domestic work by virtue of amendments of 2022 to ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work..

While the ILO Convention C189 emphasizes the freedom of association and collective bargaining rights for domestic workers, these rights are often ineffective due to legal and practical barriers. Domestic workers frequently lack legal recognition as employees, excluding them from organizing and collective bargaining rights. Additionally, socio-cultural barriers and logistical challenges hinder their ability to organize. The Convention also aims to eliminate forced labor, emphasizing the importance of informed consent and freedom from coercion, and addresses discrimination, including prohibiting mandatory medical testing and protecting against gender-based undervaluation. Child labor regulations mandate strict limits on working hours and types of tasks to protect young workers. Specific provisions address the working conditions, remuneration, and social protection of domestic workers, highlighting the need for legal regulations on work and rest hours and suggesting model employment contracts to improve conditions, promote gender equality, and protect workers from violence and exploitation.

Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable due to their isolated work environments and informal employment status. Effective occupational safety and health (OSH) for domestic workers requires extending general labor laws to include them and creating specific standards through social dialogue among stakeholders.

ILO Convention C189 outlines various protections for domestic workers, emphasizing the need for member states to establish and communicate regulations, ensuring domestic workers have equal access to courts and dispute resolution mechanisms. It recommends mechanisms to protect domestic workers from abuse, harassment, and violence, including accessible complaint systems, thorough investigation and prosecution of complaints, and programs for the relocation and rehabilitation of affected workers. Additionally, Article 17 (2) mandates that member states develop and implement labor inspection, enforcement, and penalty measures tailored to the unique aspects of domestic work⁷.

To enable Armenia to implement the requirements of the above-mentioned convention related to the protection of domestic workers, it is essential to address and rectify the inconsistencies and gaps in the Labor Code and other laws, which we will discuss below.

The term “domestic work” or “domestic worker” is not defined in Armenian labor legislation. Article 98 of the Armenian Labor Code addresses “work from home” and “home-based workers,” but these do not fall under ILO C189. According to the Code, these workers perform tasks at home using materials, tools, and equipment provided by the employer or obtained at their own expense. This regulation does not cover domestic work done for a specific household.

5. Labour inspection and other compliance mechanisms in the domestic work sector: Introductory guide, Geneva: ILO, 2015, p. 38.

6. International labour standards regulating home -work were provided in the 1996 Home Work Convention

7. ILO Convention C189 on Domestic Workers, https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189

Armenian law lacks specific regulations for domestic workers increasing their vulnerability in terms decent working conditions, labor rights and social protection. Formally registered domestic workers are treated like other workers regarding work hours, rest periods, and leave. The Criminal Code addresses trafficking, but comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation is missing. To comply with ILO C189, Armenia needs anti-discrimination laws and a robust equality body.

The Armenian Constitution (2015) grants the right to form trade unions for labor rights protection. The Law on Trade Unions allows three or more employees to form a union and includes provisions for labor organizations comprising workers in the same field but different employers. However, only registered workers can form non-governmental organizations. To comply with Article 3 of ILO C189, Armenia should amend the Law on Trade Unions to allow workers in the informal economy to unionize. In its 2021 conclusions regarding Armenia, the ILO highlighted these restrictions and reminded the Armenian government to make necessary changes to the Constitution and the Law on Trade Unions to permit unionization for informal workers and other groups⁸.

When discussing the Armenian situation again, it is important to note that LFS data shows that the number of domestic workers in the non-agricultural sector in 2022 is the highest since 2016⁹. Their numbers increased by about 55% compared to 2021. This rise can be attributed to more women entering the workforce, as domestic workers help with household responsibilities, enabling these women to pursue economic activities. Additionally, the influx of people forcibly displaced from Artsakh to Armenia and a 31% increase in immigration in 2022¹⁰, as reported by the statistical committee, likely contributed to this growth. The significant rise in the number of domestic workers in the sector underscores the need for stronger labor protections, as outlined in the ILO 189 Convention, to ensure fair treatment, decent working conditions and labor rights for this growing workforce.

To briefly describe the experiences and challenges the domestic workers face in Armenia, it should be mentioned that the vast majority of domestic workers are women working in private households, based on verbal agreements. This latter makes them particularly vulnerable. Verbal agreements offer no guarantees or mechanisms to ensure decent working conditions or protect their labor rights. Employment in this sector relies heavily on mutual trust and social connections, complicating efforts to negotiate fair working conditions and labor rights. This reliance on informal networks often leads to exploitation. Additionally, the role of domestic workers is frequently undervalued and considered dishonorable work in Armenia, contributing to employers' negative attitudes and the violation of workers' rights.

Summary: The ILO Convention C189, adopted in 2011 and ratified by 35 states, aims to improve working and living conditions for domestic workers by guaranteeing them decent work and fair treatment. The convention defines domestic work and outlines protections for workers, such as the right to association, protection from forced labor, and non-discrimination. Despite these guidelines, barriers like legal gaps and socio-cultural challenges limit domestic workers' rights, particularly in Armenia, where the labor code lacks specific regulations for domestic workers. The growing number of domestic workers, driven by increased female participation in the workforce and immigration, underscores the need for stronger labor protections. Armenia must amend its laws to align with C189, enabling better working conditions, legal protections, and social recognition for domestic workers.

To thoroughly investigate these issues and identify potential regulatory solutions through engagement with stakeholders affected by the problem and experts representing the sector, this situational analysis has been conducted.

8. Observation (CEACR) - adopted 2020, published 109th ILC session (2021),

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) - Armenia (Ratification: 2006)

9. ARMSTAT; Labor Market in Armenia, 2018 (p. 122-123) and 2020 (p. 83) and 2021 (p. 165) and 2022 (p. 236-237) and 2023 (p. 245-246).

10. MIGRATION PROFILE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN 2022, https://armstat.am/file/article/migration_profile_en_2022.pdf,

MIGRATION PROFILE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN 2021, https://armstat.am/file/article/migration_profile_2021_en.pdf



Methodology

Research Framework and Methodological Strategy

The primary purpose of this analysis is to comprehensively identify and understand the existing challenges within the field of domestic work, and to identify actionable and sustainable solutions for regulating the sector. By thoroughly examining the current landscape, this study aims to enhance the protection and welfare of domestic workers while ensuring fair and effective regulatory frameworks for employers. The following specific objectives have been distinguished to guide the research:

- Identify the profile of domestic workers and their employers, as well as the types of domestic work,
- Understand the mechanisms of hiring and labor relations in the field of domestic work,
- Assess the working environment and conditions of domestic workers,
- Identify the main challenges faced by domestic workers,
- Explore potential formalization strategies through the integration of multiple data collection methods.

A multi-method research model was designed for a thorough and comprehensive study of the research problems. This involves using multiple methods of data collection and analysis to study the same problem. The qualitative component utilized four methods of data collection enabling the collection of information

from almost all actors related to the issue. Additionally, desk research was performed, providing context and deeper insights into the problem. For the quantitative component, a secondary analysis of the Labor Force Survey data was conducted.

Data collection methods

This section provides an overview of the methodologies employed to gather rich and diverse data on domestic work practices and perspectives, emphasizing the strategic use of snowball or chain sampling to enhance inclusivity and breadth of participant representation. The adoption of the snowball sampling approach in this study is not only practical given the informal nature of domestic work but also aligns with ethical considerations essential for this sensitive sector.

Four qualitative methods were used as primary data collection methods: in-depth interview (IDI)¹¹, semi-structured interview (SSI)¹², key informant interview (KII), and case study (CS). Below is the scope of application of each of the methods:

In-depth interviews: Used to gain detailed and comprehensive insights from domestic workers and employers about their personal experiences and perspectives, IDIs were conducted between April 1 and April 9. A snowball or chain sampling approach was employed for these interviews to ensure a diverse and comprehensive perspective. This sampling method was chosen because domestic workers and employers are often challenging to locate, as they mostly work informally. However, they are interconnected through social networks, which is the primary means of finding work in this sector. Within the framework of this method, finding one interviewee was followed by finding other cases through their social connections, creating a chain-like process. A total of 12 interviews were conducted, evenly distributed between domestic workers and their employers. The table below provides detailed information on IDI participants.

Table 1. Information on “domestic workers and employers” IDI participants

	Gender		Age				Education			Occupation		
	Male	Female	30-34	35-39	45-49	70-74	Secondary	Secondary specialized	Bachelor's degree	Cleaner	Babysitter	Landscape design specialist
Employees	1	5	2	-	3	1	4	1	1	3	2	1
Employers	-	6	-	5	1	-	-	-	6			

Semi-structured interviews: SSIs with domestic workers and employers were conducted between April 4 and April 23. Similar to the Key informant Interviews, the snowball or chain sampling method was utilized for the semi-structured interviews. This approach was chosen due to the difficulty in identifying and accessing the primary group. The method was also selected to facilitate representation of diverse types of domestic work. A total of 100 interviews were conducted, comprising 60 with domestic workers, 40 with employers. The table below provides detailed information on SSI participants.

11. You can find guides in Annex 1 and Annex 2.

12. For SSIs, a condensed version of the IDI guides was employed. Refer to Annex 1 and Annex 2 for the complete IDI guides.

Table 2. Information on “domestic workers and employers” SSI participants

	Gender		Age									Education					Occupation					
	Male	Female	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55+	RA	Primary	Secondary	Secondary specialized	Bachelor's degree	RA	Cleaner	Babysitter	Gardener	Elderly caregiver	Cooks	RA
Employees	6	54	1	2	3	10	4	12	9	10	9	2	19	14	12	13	12	30	5	4	3	6
Employers	5	35	1	5	8	9	5	3	3	1	5	-	4	4	19	13						

Key informant interviews: KIs were conducted between March 29 and April 10. These interviews were instrumental in identifying legislative and policy gaps within the domain of domestic work, as well as exploring potential strategies for regulating the field. Eleven (11) key informant interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders to identify challenges and potential solutions within the field of domestic work. The interviews included representatives from the following sectors:

- Health and Labor Inspection Body of Armenia,
- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia,
- Statistical Committee of Republic of Armenia,
- Human Rights Defender of Armenia,
- Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia,
- Republican Union of Employers of Armenia,
- Experts of National Assembly of Armenia (two interviews),
- Experts relevant to the sector (two interviews),
- Founder-director of an organization offering cleaning services.

Case studies: Case studies were conducted during the period from May 28 to June 1. Initially, cases were selected based on trends identified in semi-structured interviews, focusing on the most common types of domestic work with various challenges. However, the data revealed that these challenges are often influenced by the work environment, typically the private property of individual employers, rather than inherent to the nature of the work itself.

Based on these insights, three cases were chosen, all involving babysitters, one of the most prevalent types of domestic work. Additionally, it became evident during the research that the field of babysitting work has seen a trend towards self-regulation through private business organizations and NGOs. Furthermore, social media groups with thousands of members serve as platforms for babysitters and cleaners to share experiences and find employment opportunities.

Considering these factors, two of the selected cases involve a babysitter and an individual employer, representing a bilateral relationship. The third case is tripartite, involving a babysitter, an individual client, and a representative from a babysitting business service organization.



Ethical Considerations

This research on domestic work is guided by ethical principles to ensure the dignity, rights, and well-being of all participants involved, including domestic workers, employers, and key informants. The following ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process:

- 1. Informed Consent:** Prior to commencing any interviews or case studies, participants were provided with clear explanations regarding the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the potential uses of the data collected. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring they understood their rights and could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.
- 2. Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Confidentiality was rigorously maintained throughout the research process. Participants' identities were anonymized in all reports and publications to protect their privacy. Any identifiable information shared during interviews or case studies was kept strictly confidential, with access restricted to the research team only.
- 3. Avoidance of Harm:** Special care was taken to avoid causing harm or discomfort to participants during data collection. Given the sensitive nature of domestic work, interviewers were trained to approach topics with sensitivity and empathy. Participants were assured that their responses would not impact their employment or personal relationships.
- 4. Voluntary Participation:** Participation in the research was entirely voluntary, and participants were not coerced or incentivized to take part. Efforts were made to ensure that participants felt empowered to share their perspectives freely without external pressures.

Limitations

Sampling Bias: During the data collection process, not all domestic workers and employers were willing to share contact details of their acquaintances. Consequently, alongside employing the snowball method, the team also utilized alternative approaches: participants were sourced through social media groups and the personal networks of the research team.

Self-Reporting Bias: In society, domestic work is often perceived as “humiliating,” leading parties to frame the employee-employer relationship as akin to being accepted as a “member of the family” to mitigate public embarrassment. This sensitive dynamic can influence participants' responses during interviews and case studies, potentially introducing social desirability bias—the tendency to present oneself favorably.

Despite efforts to foster a secure and confidential environment, participants may underreport sensitive issues or exaggerate socially acceptable behaviors and practices within the domestic work sector.

Limited Quantitative Data: During the secondary analysis of the quantitative data, the research team focused exclusively on verbally contracted domestic workers identified in the Labor Force 2022 survey database. As a result, all quantitative descriptions in the report pertain solely to this group and do not encompass workers with written agreements, including those employed by private businesses offering domestic services.

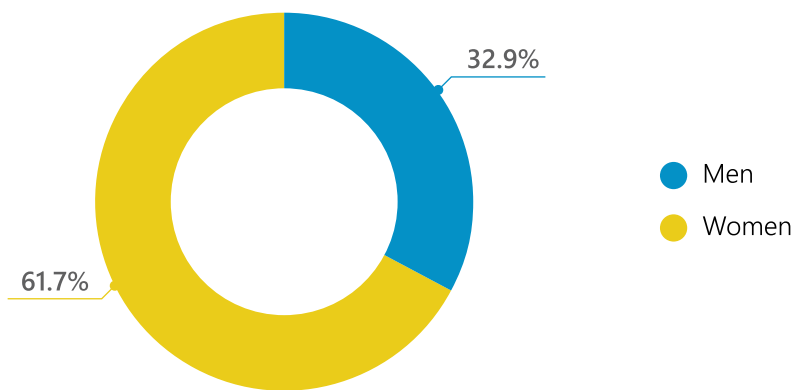
Findings

General Profile of Domestic Workers in Armenia

In this section, we explore the gender dynamics, age distribution, education levels, and motivations within the domestic work sector in Armenia, drawing comparisons to global trends. We analyze both quantitative data and qualitative interviews to understand the roles and responsibilities assigned to male and female domestic workers, the demographic profile of employers, and the societal perceptions of domestic work.

Like global trends, the domestic work sector in Armenia is largely female dominated. According to ILO data, women represent 76.2% of domestic workers worldwide¹³. In Armenia, 67.1% of domestic workers are women (see Figure 1)¹⁴. Women also predominate among the domestic workers who participated in the qualitative interviews: 57 of the 66 participants were women. Interestingly, women also make up the majority of the employers interviewed. Out of 46 employers, 41 were women.

Figure 1. Distribution of domestic workers by gender



It is noteworthy to mention that, as in many other fields, “masculine” and “feminine” roles are visible in domestic work as well. These roles are often divided based on traditional gender roles, with women typically assigned in-house tasks like household chores or caregiving, and men handling outside tasks like driving or gardening¹⁵. According to labor force survey data, female domestic workers constitute 100% of caregivers and domestic cleaners and helpers handling tasks such as cleaning, cooking, and ironing. Meanwhile, male domestic workers make up 100% of gardeners, drivers, and guards¹⁶. ILO statistics also show that 94% of domestic cleaners and helpers, as well as

13. ILO, The Road to Decent Work for Domestic Workers, 2023, Switzerland, p. 6, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@travail/documents/publication/wcms_883181.pdf.

14. ARMSTAT, LFS database, 2022.

15. THE INVISIBLE SIDE OF EVERYDAY LIFE: GENDER STEREOTYPES IN DAILY ROUTINE, AM Partners Consulting Company, Yerevan, Asoghik, 2018, <https://test.wvi.org/sites/default/files/AM%20Partners%20research%20English.pdf>.

16. For the analysis, a non-anonymized database from the 2022 LFS survey, provided by the RA Statistical Committee, was utilized.

90% of home-based personal care workers are women. In contrast, only 29% of gardeners, 9% of guards, and 2% of car drivers in the domestic sector are women¹⁷.

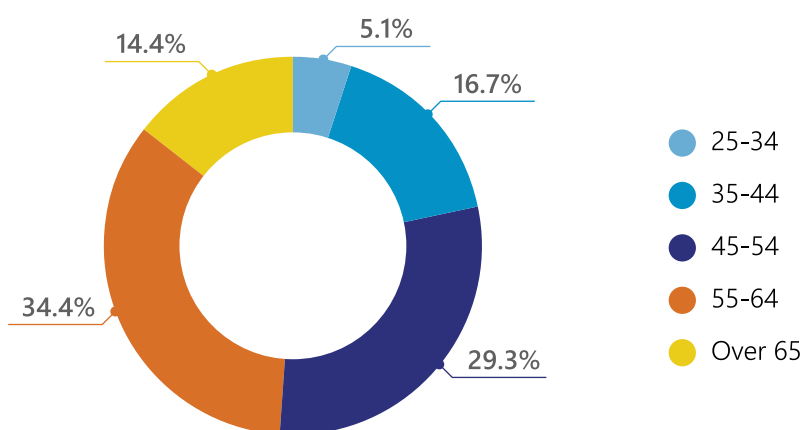
Notably, according to the LFS, 50% of domestic workers are caregivers for people with health problems or disabilities, and all of them are women¹⁸. This is particularly interesting because caring for these individuals involves responsibilities such as helping patients move around, which requires physical strength. Yet, this work is done exclusively by women and is traditionally attributed to them. Qualitative data complement these statistics. The interviews reveal that male domestic workers are mostly gardeners and drivers, while women are primarily cleaners, babysitters, and caregivers.

Looking at the age distribution, both statistics (78.1%, see Figure 2) and qualitative data (35 out of 57 participants¹⁹) indicate that the domestic work sector is not dominated by the young; rather, the overwhelming majority of workers belong to the age group over 45 years old. One reason for this trend might be that young women, burdened with family and childcare responsibilities, may not enter the workforce. Without prior work experience or a profession, they may struggle to integrate into the job market later in life. Consequently, upon being relieved of most family care duties as they age, they may turn to domestic work to secure employment and financial stability.

Moreover, domestic work is often viewed as dishonorable or inferior by society and the workers themselves. This perception is echoed in the stories of both employers and domestic workers, who frequently emphasize feeling “forced” into this line of work due to financial insecurity and a lack of alternative opportunities.

Unlike the demographic profile of domestic workers, the majority of employers who took part in the qualitative interviews are in the 20-45 age bracket and predominantly consist of women who are employees engaged in various other fields. This highlights the significant contribution of domestic workers in facilitating employment opportunities for other individuals, particularly women, involved in the state’s economy. By assuming household responsibilities and caring for family members in need of constant assistance, domestic workers enable these individuals to pursue their careers and contribute to the economy.

Figure 2. Distribution of domestic workers by age



17. Where women work: female-dominated occupations and sectors, 2023, <https://ilostat ilo.org/blog/where-women-work-female-dominated-occupations-and-sectors/>.

18. For the analysis, a non-anonymized database from the 2022 LFS survey, provided by the RA Statistical Committee, was utilized.

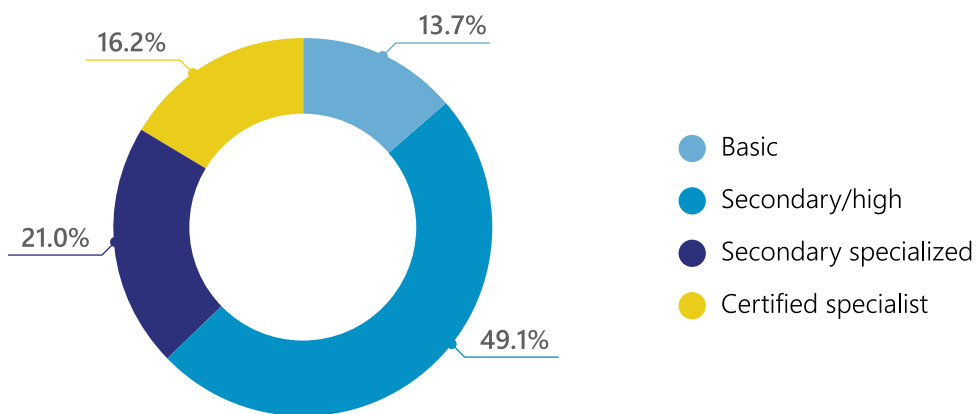
19. Nine participants refused to answer.

The overwhelming majority of domestic workers have attained primary or secondary education, comprising 13.7% and 49.1%, respectively. Additionally, 21% possess secondary specialized education (see Figure 3). Notably, women represent a significantly larger proportion among domestic workers with secondary specialized education and among certified specialists, accounting for 77.8% and 66.7%, respectively. This trend suggests that women with professional qualifications may encounter challenges in securing employment within their field, leading them to pursue work as domestic workers. Among respondents with professional education, 73.3% indicated that their profession had been relatively beneficial in either securing a job or while on the job (see Figure 4)²⁰. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that 67.3% of respondents believe that their education or qualification corresponds to their current occupation (see Figure 5). While, interestingly enough, two-thirds of the domestic workers who took part in the qualitative interviews have a profession or specialization that is generally unrelated to their current job.

Despite the challenges mentioned, participants in the IDIs highlighted the flexible schedule and relatively high salary as the primary reasons for choosing the field of domestic work. Absence of profession was also highlighted as a motivation for choosing that field. Interestingly, the conservative masculine stance of husbands, not allowing their wives to have a career (especially at a young age), was also a reason for choosing this job. Thus, one of the participants mentioned that her husband restricted her from pursuing work, especially in the crowded environments, leaving her with no choice but to go for domestic work.

In justifying their choice of domestic work, a socially desirable, romanticized observation was also noted: a *"genuine passion for working with children"*. This also indicates the negative perception of this work as being publicly *"dishonorable."* The informant is attempting to raise her social status in the eyes of the interviewer, reflecting traditional-patriarchal views where childcare, seen as a woman's role, is considered honorable.

Figure 3. Distribution of domestic workers by education



20. It is important to highlight that the labor force survey does not provide insights into the specific professions held by domestic workers or the extent to which those professions align with the nature of their current work.

Figure 4. The usefulness of the profession in job/finding a job²¹

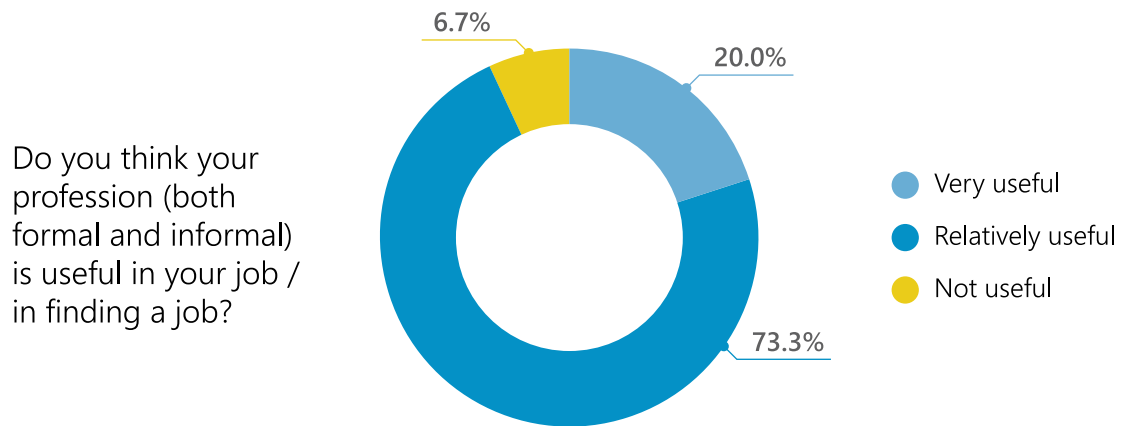
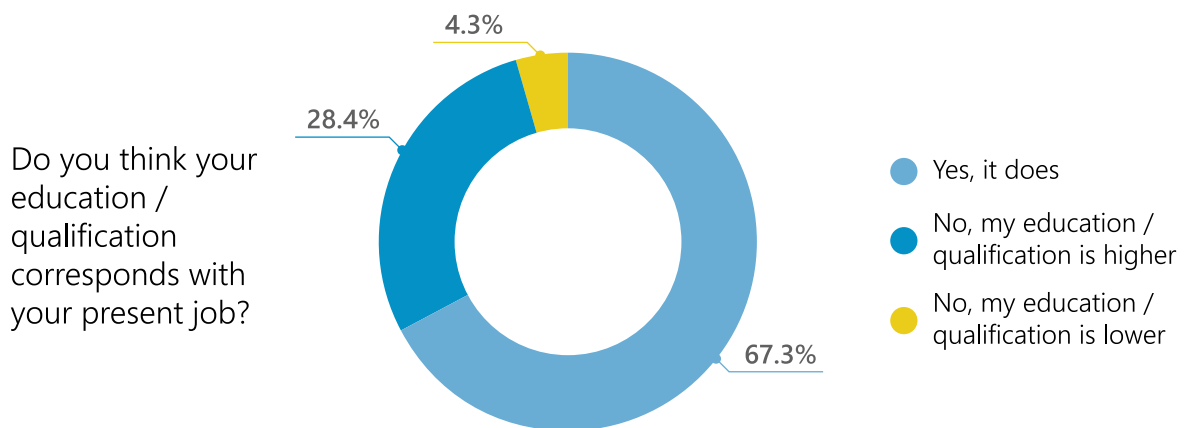


Figure 5. Education/qualification correspondence with present job



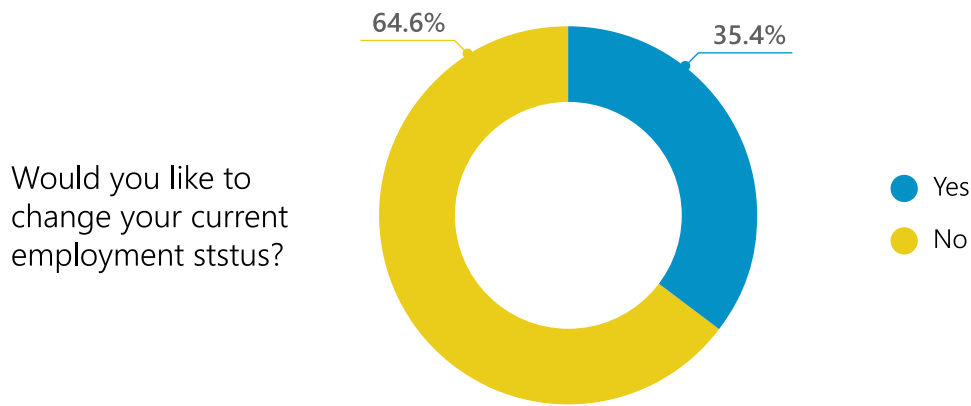
The results of the LFS indicate that none of the domestic workers have attended any training related to their work or possess any certification. Additionally, they expressed no need for training in their current role. This sentiment was mirrored in the qualitative interviews, where most participants lacked qualifications or certifications and showed no inclination towards participating in courses or seeking qualifications. In contrast, they are ready to take training on how to protect their rights.

Half of the IDI participants expressed openness to considering another field if presented with a favorable opportunity, although they did not specify which field. Only one participant mentioned a preference for working in a "more intellectual" domain. The remaining half showed no inclination to change their current field of work.

Similarly, the results of the LFS indicate that the majority of respondents (64.6%) do not wish to change their current employment status (see Figure 6).

21. The responses to this question are calculated solely from the number of respondents who selected the options "secondary specialized" and "certified specialist" in response to the question "Last and highest level of education."

Figure 6. Change of current employment status



Circumstances of hiring domestic workers

This section delves into the recruitment and employment practices within the domestic work sector in Armenia, highlighting the significant role of social connections.

Qualitative data indicate that domestic workers are primarily recruited and find employment through social connections. Notably, employers prioritize recommendations and assurances from their acquaintances and relatives over the professional training and experience of the workers. This trend is evident in the criteria employers cite, where personal qualities such as honesty and reliability are consistently emphasized. Additionally, employers value traits like cleanliness, agility, responsibility, relevant work experience, knowledge (especially for babysitters), and education.



“Human qualities are the most important to me: honesty, discipline, cleanliness, and tidiness. It’s essential to feel confident in trusting someone with my home and children when I need to go out”.

IDI, female employer



*“**[I value]** the experience of working with children, knowledge related to children’s nutrition and entertainment, and the ability to listen to parents’ opinions. Sometimes, however, it can be problematic when babysitters come with preconceived notions and are unwilling to accept the parents’ approach”.*

IDI, female employer

The same mechanism applies to domestic workers when choosing an employer. They prefer to work with acquaintances or with employers recommended through their social circles. Both sides attribute this to the importance of mutual trust, which is paramount when working in someone’s personal space, even surpassing the quality of the work itself. Many have noted that hiring through social networks often fails, likely because social connections provide a way to find individuals who meet certain standards and whose work is vouched for by trusted sources, a guarantee that is lacking when hiring through social networks.

Interestingly, this perspective is also evident from conversations with domestic workers. According to them, employers prioritize the following criteria when selecting and continuing to work with them:

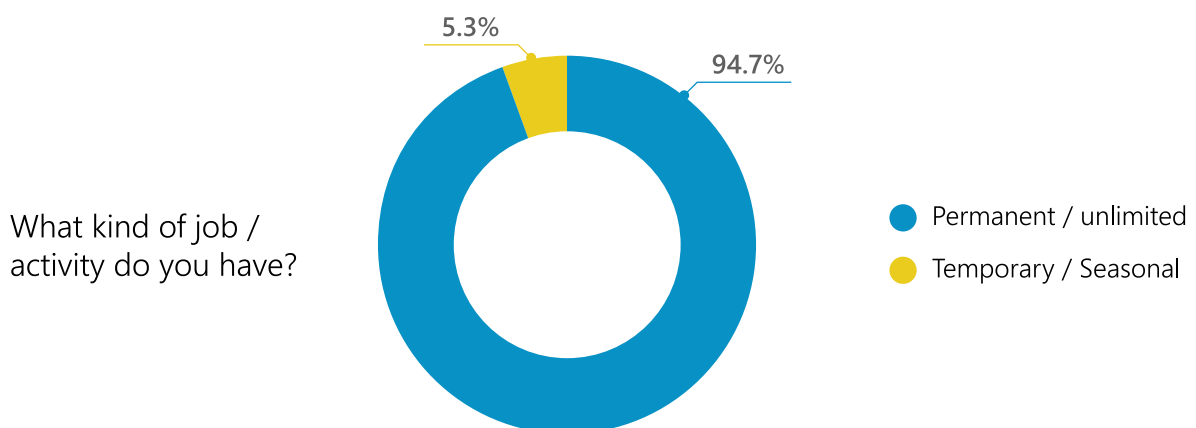
- Conscientiousness,
- Quality of work,
- Relevant education (not necessarily formal educational level),
- Willingness to compromise,
- Neighborly relations,
- Trust (particularly regarding security and theft prevention),
- Honesty, sincerity, and compassion.

As notable, positive personal qualities are frequently emphasized by both employers and domestic workers, while work quality is the only job-related criterion mentioned.

The preference for finding jobs and employees through social capital might also be influenced by the informal nature of these arrangements. This informal regulatory institution provides a pragmatic mechanism for managing relationships in the sector, although not being able to prevent many risks²². Domestic workers and employers often do not formally agree on trial periods or contract durations. Typically, either party can terminate the cooperation at any time without providing a reason. Agreements are usually for an indefinite period, and neither side typically commits to giving prior notice before ending the arrangement. It is also noteworthy that, according to both employers and employees, domestic workers receive the same pay during the informal trial period as they do during regular employment.

According to the LFS, a significant majority of domestic workers (94.7%) have permanent jobs. Among them, 38.3% have 3 or more years of experience, and 24.4% have 2-3 years of experience. Notably, the duration of employment tends to increase with the length of the agreement. For instance, 45.9% of respondents have over 3 years of experience, and all of them have agreements lasting 3 or more years. Conversely, 36.9% of workers reported having agreements for up to 1 year, with all of them having 6-9 months of work experience. This suggests that domestic workers and employers typically do not set a fixed duration for their agreements, opting instead for indefinite arrangements.

Figure 7. The type of job/activity



22. Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." In Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, edited by J.G. Richardson, 241-258. Greenwood, 1986;

<https://www.socialcapitalgateway.org/sites/socialcapitalgateway.org/files/data/paper/2016/10/18/rbasicsbourdieu1986-theformsofcapital.pdf>

Coleman, James S. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." American Journal of Sociology 94 (1988): S95-S120;

<https://www.econ.msu.ru/cmt2/lib/c/477/File/Social%20Capital%20in%20the%20Creation%20of%20Human%20Capital.pdf>

Lin, Nan. "Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action." Cambridge University Press, 2001,

https://assets.cambridge.org/97805214/74313/frontmatter/9780521474313_frontmatter.pdf

Figure 8. Current Job Tenure

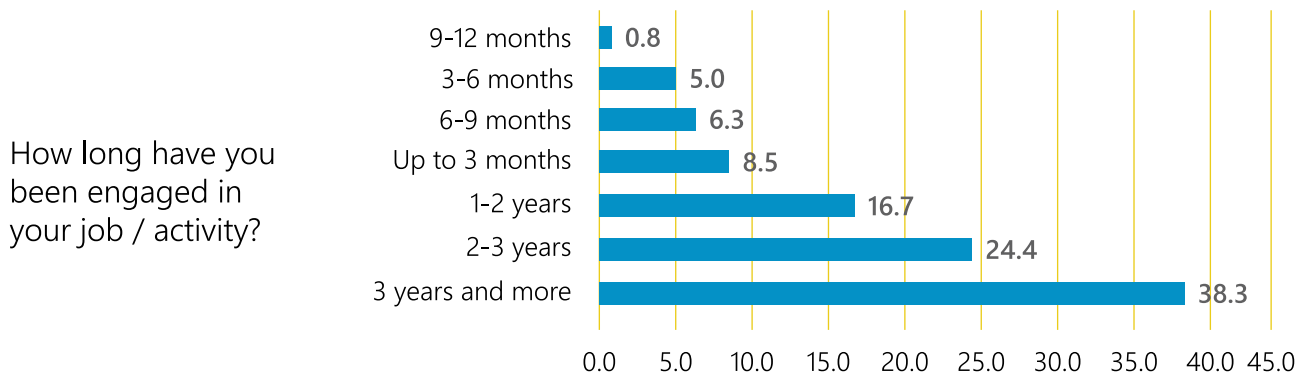
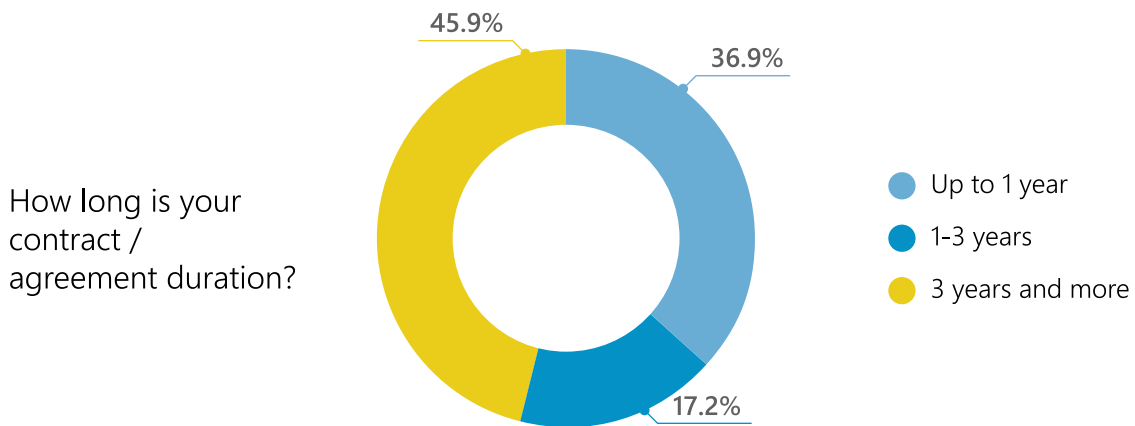


Figure 9. The length of the contract/agreement



Working conditions and environment of domestic workers

This subsection examines the pros and cons of domestic work from the perspective of domestic workers. It explores key working conditions, emphasizing essential criteria for ensuring decent work, and provides an overview of the working environment.

Qualitative data indicates that the majority of domestic workers operate under oral agreements. This absence of a written agreement is largely due to their employment being with acquaintances or familiar individuals, fostering a relationship built on trust. Interestingly, participants perceive that formalizing contracts could introduce an atmosphere of mistrust between employers and employees. From their perspective, a written contract is seen as a safeguard against potential issues. However, since they typically find work through acquaintances, they assume that no problems will arise, and therefore believe there is no need to sign a contract. Additionally, insights from both domestic workers and employers reveal that one of the main barriers to contract formalization is the complexity and perceived burden of tax obligations²³.

23. Domestic workers in Armenia do not have any tax privileges, and no special tax provisions are defined for them. If they sign an employment contract, they are subject to an income tax and other government fees totaling approximately 25%. Alternatively, if they register as individual entrepreneurs, they pay around 5%.

It is also notable that some domestic workers indicate that the topic of signing a contract is often not discussed, as working under verbal agreements is considered standard in the field. Many domestic workers do not even consider the need for a written contract. In their view, a written contract is seen as a precautionary measure to prevent issues, and since they secure jobs through acquaintances, they assume there will be no problems that necessitate formal documentation. Responses such as *“I don't have a written contract because I don't work with agencies”* suggest that agencies typically register their workers and formalize contracts with them. Only two participants in the interviews stated they have a written contract signed by both parties, with one emphasizing it was done to preemptively address potential issues.



“Because if I have a written contract, it could disadvantage me, and I would have to pay taxes.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 50+ y/o



“They mentioned that nannies who are registered receive some support from the state. We were curious about such matters, but we didn't find any information. We agreed verbally.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 49 y/o



“There was no such conversation whether to sign a contract or not. We have verbally agreed on that. And because we are acquaintances, that's why.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 52 y/o

LFS data indicate that nearly half of domestic workers work part-time, while the other half work overtime²⁴. Among part-time domestic workers, 42,4% cited inability to find full-time employment as the reason, and 36,1% work part-time at the employer's request. However, despite this, the majority of respondents (70,4%) do not wish to work extra hours for additional pay.

24. According to the Labor Code, the normal weekly working hours are 40 hours, with a maximum of 48 additional hours allowed as overtime, making the total allowable working hours up to 88 hours per week.
See Labour code od RA, Chapter 17, <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=2131&lang=arm&enc=utf8>.

Figure 10. Hours worked per week

How many hours did you usually work per week during the last worked month?

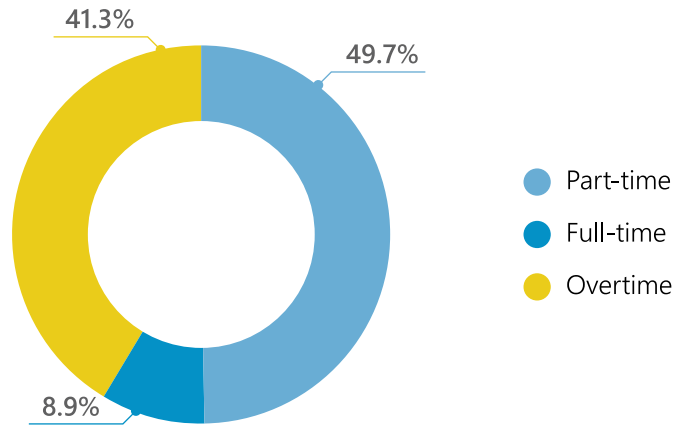


Figure 11. The reasons for working part-time²⁵

Why do you work part-time?

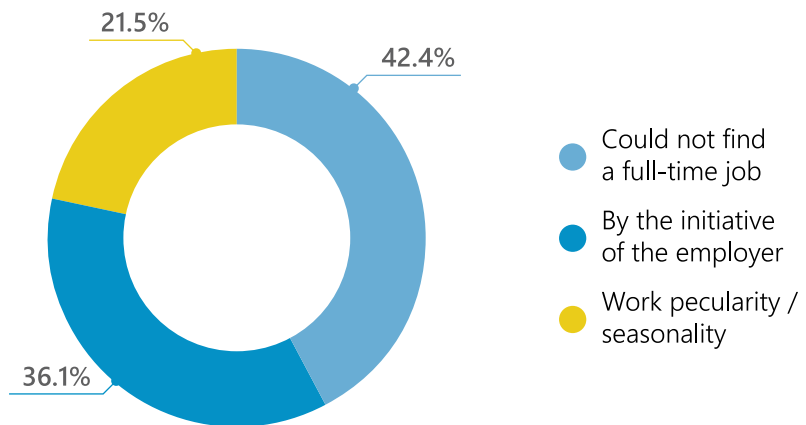
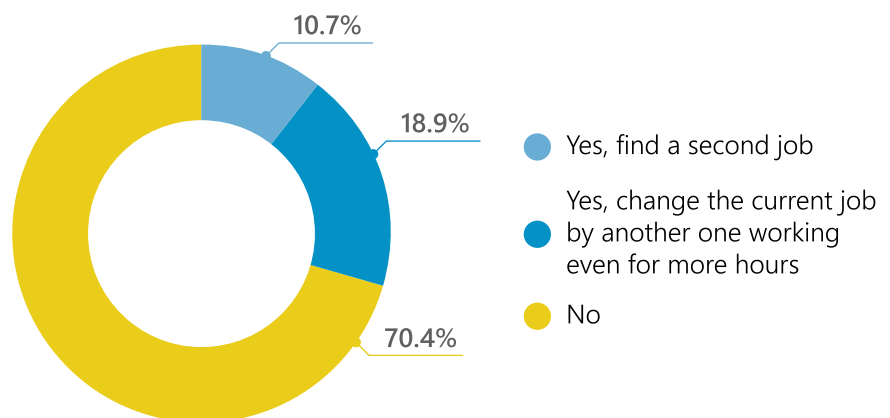


Figure 12. Desire to work more hours (for additional payment)

Would you have liked to work more hours (for additional payment)?



25. This figure was calculated based on the percentage of domestic workers who answered "part-time" to the question "In your job/ independent, personal/family business/farming you usually work: Full-time/Overtime, Part-time?" This group constitutes 44.8 percent of all domestic workers.

During in-depth interviews with domestic workers, they highlighted both positive and negative aspects of their work. The positive aspects mentioned by the participants included:

- Flexible schedule,
- Ability to choose their employer,
- Ability to set their remuneration,
- Trust and respect from the employer and household members.

The following were mentioned as negative aspects of work:

- Physical strain,
- Hazardous conditions for life and health,
- Long working hours (noted by one participant),

The participants of IDIs and SSIs also identified several critical conditions that, if not met, usually lead them to refuse work. These conditions are:

- A clear schedule and remuneration amount,
- Additional compensation for extra work,
- Absence of disturbing persons at home,
- Provision of necessary materials and tools,
- Positive attitude and respect from the employer and household members.

It is noteworthy that in this list, a positive attitude and respect from the employer and household members were the most frequently mentioned by the participants. One participant openly stated that it is important to be respected and not treated merely as a domestic worker.



“[I value] mutual respect so that you are not treated as a domestic worker.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 48 y/o



“[It is important] that the homeowner behaves like a normal person. If we go to the area and while working we understand that the owner of the house is not a normal person, he thinks that we were born to come and beautify his area and that he would lord over us, for the first time we give a normal answer but if it is continuous we are not going directly to the territory for the second time. If you bring people to work in your house it doesn't mean that they are not slaves.”

IDI male domestic worker, 29 y/o

According to employers who participated in the IDIs, domestic workers prioritize the employer's positive attitude foremost. Additionally, they value factors such as the amount and regularity of remuneration, opportunities for rest and meals, and reasonable working hours.



"[The domestic worker values] the pay and the attitude of the household members. She checked with the previous babysitter about the conditions, whether she could eat here? I understood that she had not worked in good conditions, so I assured her to feel free and relaxed because she will be working here most of the day. I always strive to pay more than the market rate so that they don't feel like strangers or workers."

IDI, female employer

At the same time, domestic workers participating in the IDIs tend to give up or commonly forego the following conditions:

- Amount of remuneration,
- Additional working hours,
- Additional duties.

It is noteworthy that most participants are willing to forgo the mentioned conditions under specific circumstances, such as working with an employer being in socially disadvantaged circumstances or having close relations with the employer. Some of the participants even stated that they are prepared to compromise on everything if the concessions are mutual.



"Depending on the employer's social status, I may be willing to compromise on pay, especially for pensioners. Occasionally, I can also be flexible with working hours, willing to work up to an additional 30-60 minutes at most."

IDI, female domestic worker, 31 y/o



"I am patient and treat older people like my parents, following their instructions willingly. If, for instance, they request delayed payment, I will agree. Similarly, if there's a patient at home and they ask me to keep a close watch on them, I will comply."

IDI, female domestic worker, 50 y/o

The participants have not compromised, nor are they inclined to compromise, on the following conditions in their relations with employers:

- Contempt from the employer,
- Exploitation (continuously increasing tasks with the same salary),
- Dangerous working conditions,
- Lack of necessary materials and tools.



"I will not tolerate being exploited. I am willing to go beyond my job duties in a humane way to feel appreciated, even without extra pay. However, if I sense that my dignity is being exploited, I will absolutely not tolerate it. While this is my first job in a household, I've heard about mistreatment or bad behavior by employers or by male members of households, but I haven't experienced it here. If I ever feel differently, I will not stay, I simply won't continue if I feel they treat me unfairly."

IDI, female domestic worker, 48 y/o

Most domestic workers participating in qualitative interviews also work part-time, typically 1-3 days a week for 3-8 hours per day. It is noteworthy that their workdays are often not fixed, and they adjust their schedules according to the employer's needs. This flexibility often leads to deviations from initially agreed-upon days and hours, which are adjusted based on mutual agreement and the employer's requirements.

Both employers and domestic workers report that domestic workers are typically paid for each day actually worked. In most cases, the wage is calculated based on an hourly rate. According to data collected from domestic workers, the most common hourly rate is 1000 AMD, with rates ranging between 200 and 3000 AMD. The average hourly wage among domestic workers is approximately 1200 AMD.

Qualitative interviews with employers reveal that hourly wages for domestic workers vary between 300 and 4000 AMD, with an average hourly rate of 1500 AMD. Notably, those who indicated that their salary is determined by the employer's proposal are paid between 800 and 1500 AMD per hour, while those who negotiate their own rates are paid between 1000 and 3000 AMD. Those who set their remuneration through mutual agreement receive between 1000 and 1600 AMD per hour.

A small minority of domestic workers are paid on a monthly or weekly basis. Importantly, participants note that they are compensated for prearranged absences, meaning deductions are not made from their monthly or weekly pay for days not actually worked. Cash payments are predominant among the vast majority of workers.

Analyzing the qualitative data, despite the informal nature of the sector and the absence of trade unions or similar structures, domestic workers actively communicate and share experiences through social connections and social networks. Their responses indicate that there are typically pre-agreed lists of duties negotiated with employers, depending on the specific nature of the domestic work. For instance, typical duties for house cleaners may not include tasks like washing and ironing clothes, for which additional charges may apply if requested by the employer.

Despite this, there have been documented cases where domestic workers perform tasks that are not initially part of their agreed-upon duties. They sometimes do so voluntarily or at the "request" of the employer. Workers appreciate the opportunity to undertake additional tasks during their working hours, noting that regardless of the tasks performed, their hours are still counted. Employers assert that there are no dangerous conditions for domestic workers, as they work where the employers live, and these areas are deemed safe and secure. This underscores the dangers domestic workers may encounter, which are compounded when employers fail to acknowledge these risks and, consequently, neglect their responsibility to ensure safe and healthy working conditions.

However, upon further inquiry, they acknowledged instances such as workers using ladders to lower curtains, moving beds for cleaning, or handling chemicals. When questioned about ensuring healthy and safe conditions for domestic workers, most employers mentioned efforts such as being present when workers use stairs, providing any necessary protective equipment upon request, and in an exceptional case, teaching the worker how to use household equipment safely.

A representative from the participating business organizations stated that they provide domestic workers with training on health and safety practices. During the training, they are typically taught how to handle chemicals safely and how to correctly and safely use the tools and equipment required for their work. Another organization's representative noted that such conditions are outlined in employee contracts, obligating employers to ensure them.



“The workplace of the domestic worker is your home, where you also reside. Since it is your residence, it is considered inherently healthy and safe, and no special provisions are made specifically for the worker.”

IDI, female employer

Most participants in qualitative interviews reported performing duties such as climbing to high places, moving heavy objects, and working with chemicals and other potentially harmful substances. Additionally, two participants mentioned occasionally running errands to the store at the employer’s request, particularly when the employer is a pensioner or has other special needs²⁶.

Most participants do not perceive significant health risks in their work. However, those who do mention concerns primarily relate them to working with chemicals and other harmful substances, especially among cleaners and gardeners. These substances can potentially damage the skin, eyes, and respiratory system. Gardeners also highlight the risks of falling from trees and exposure to toxins, while cleaners' express concerns about falling from heights when washing windows in tall buildings and encountering problems while handling hazardous substances (e.g., one of the participants reported experiencing health issues and undergoing treatment for about two months). Participants generally acknowledged that employers try to ensure healthy and safe conditions as much as possible, however as employers they do not take comprehensive responsible safety measures.

Some of the participants also emphasized the importance of health insurance in their line of work, viewing it as crucial for addressing potential risks to life and health. The only case when the employer proactively provided an employee with a medical examination package was in a private business case.



“Physical strain, prolonged standing, and exposure to hazardous substances can lead to conditions like varicose veins, eye and skin damage, and spine problems.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 31 y/o

The majority of domestic workers reported that employers typically provide necessary materials and tools, and they generally find them satisfactory in terms of quality and effectiveness. Gardeners, however, often use their own tools and materials and prefer working with them. Additionally, workers usually inform employers in advance about the materials they need and their preferences for working with specific items. In those cases, when workers are provided substances which are not preferable for them, they decline to use these hazardous and harmful substances, ensuring their safety and health.



“At times, achieving a perfect result isn’t feasible with the materials provided, which I communicate to the employer. I choose not to work with more dangerous and harmful substances to safeguard both my health and the property involved.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 31 y/o

26. These risks align with the health and safety challenges documented in several ILO publications that domestic workers encounter in their daily work routines. One such example is the ILO’s “The Road to Decent Work for Domestic Workers”, 2023 printed in Switzerland, p. 20.

Majority of domestic workers interviewed within the IDIs, and SSIs have mentioned that they are not ensured any of the guarantees that formal employees do (such as paid leave or paid sick leave, premium pay for holiday work, maternity paid leave, etc.).

Employers do not participate in the social contributions of the workers, and they mentioned that domestic workers have never raised this issue with them. Only one employer mentioned that on a holiday occasion, they gave their domestic worker a gift package including medical check-ups.



“They never raised the issue with me, but I took it upon myself to contribute. For instance, I gave them a package including medical check-ups, which covered the examinations they required due to a known health issue. This package included examinations, doctor consultations, and treatment.”

IDI, female employer

Issues of domestic work

In this section, we discuss the challenges faced by domestic workers in Armenia and how they navigate their work environments. We explore the difficulties reported by both domestic workers and employers, highlighting the informal nature of their employment agreements.

Most IDI participants found it difficult to identify problems related to their current job. This is largely due to their experience; with each new job, they apply lessons learned from previous ones and clearly define the conditions important to them. However, they recall from their acquaintances' experiences that some employers speak rudely and exploit workers by assigning additional duties. Notably, these issues mostly arise during short-term employment, when domestic workers do not have ongoing cooperation with the same employer.

According to employers, there are usually no significant problems with employees with whom they decide to continue working. Minor issues that arise are typically resolved promptly. Two employers mentioned instances where a domestic worker unintentionally damaged household property or equipment. In these cases, they did not demand compensation but simply asked the worker to be more careful.

According to the employers, ethical circumstances also arise in relationships with domestic workers, e.g., informants noted that some domestic workers *“feel like they are at home during their duties: they open the refrigerator and eat food from closed containers”,* or *“they often bring personal issues to work, frequently expressing that they do cleaning because they have no other choice”.*

Nearly half of the SSI participants stated that they do not face any problems during their work. The rest half of the participants mainly mentioned issues related to salary (low pay, salary delays), the distance from the workplace (traveling 1.5-2 hours, causing fatigue), and working hours (employers returning later than agreed or requesting extended hours, which one participant described as exploitation). Additionally, some participants reported problems with increasing responsibilities over time without prior agreement or additional pay.

Due to the unregulated nature of the field, employers may also face unfounded accusations by their employees, which can impact their reputation in the market, e.g., when one of the informants refused to

continue working for an exploitative employer, the latter spread negative information about her in social network groups to prevent her from finding another job. Another domestic worker recounted experiencing a negative attitude from an employer when she attended friendly gatherings to watch the children but was not provided a place to sit when the children were with others.



"I once had a conflict with a woman who didn't want me working in my field. She offered me 10,000 AMD to clean her four-room apartment daily from 10 AM to 6 PM. Needing the job, I agreed. After the first day, she was pleased with my work, but the next day, she demanded much more, making the job unreasonable for the pay. When I quit, she harassed me on Facebook, claiming I didn't know how to work. However, my regular clients, including an actress, left positive comments on my posts, which helped me gain more clients and eventually, the troublemaker backed off".

SSI, female domestic worker, 34 y/o

One representative of an organization noted that the problems stem from clients, who often view domestic workers as lower-class and treat them like slaves. The representative added that, if the work is not closely monitored, the clients tend to exploit them.

It is important to note that, according to both employees and employers, the main way to resolve problems in business relationships is to cease work. This is one reason the sector operates mainly informally, as formal employment contracts impose certain obligations that prevent either party from ending the cooperation without consequences.

It can be inferred that the problems arise from the low awareness of both employees and employers. Qualitative data indicate that domestic workers are generally uninformed about workers' rights and labor laws. According to them, there has been no perceived need to protect their interests so far. However, they noted that they would contact the relevant authorities if a serious problem arose, although most do not currently know which authorities to approach. Only three participants mentioned that they would turn to the police, the court, or a lawyer.

Very few domestic workers who participated in the semi-structured interviews stated that they were aware of their rights. They emphasized the following points:

- The employee chooses their working hours,
- The employee cannot be abused,
- The employee must be paid on time,
- The employee must not work more than 8 hours a day,
- Must have a working holiday.

To conclude this section, it is important to acknowledge that the Internet serves as the primary source of information regarding the rights.

Perspectives of domestic work regulation

This sub-section begins by presenting the perceptions of domestic workers and employers regarding the improvement and regulation of the domestic work sector. It then identifies possible ways to regulate the field of domestic work, based on data from qualitative interviews, case studies, and interviews with key informants.

Awareness raising

As previously mentioned, qualitative data reveal that both domestic workers and employers have very low awareness of their rights. This lack of awareness often leads to exploitation and other rights violations. Despite this, more than half of the interviewed domestic workers do not feel the need for advice about their rights. This is likely because many of them, due to their age and accumulated experience in dealing with various issues, are able to avoid similar problems. However, they are informal ways and full of risks.

However, some participants expressed interest in attending events that inform them about their rights. Most of these participants prefer to receive advice online or by phone. A smaller number indicated a need for seminars and consultations, highlighting the opportunity to ask questions directly to the seminar leader. Others prefer learning about their rights through printed materials such as brochures and books. Additionally, one participant suggested broadcasting short and accessible informative videos on television and social media.

Despite these challenges, domestic workers often share their experiences with acquaintances. In this context, half of them consider joining a workers' union as a possibility. However, it is important to note that their awareness of unions is very low, and they generally have no idea about what these unions are or how they operate.

On the other hand, employers are somewhat more informed about union activities. Half of them see the possibility of joining an employers' union and are interested in contributing to "*changing the culture*". For employers, several key points are considered important for a successful union:

- Independence,
- Involvement of experienced individuals,
- Contribution to legislative changes,
- Viability.

Willingness to sign a contract

More than half of the domestic workers who participated in the qualitative interviews expressed a willingness to sign a contract with their employer. However, many do not consider it realistic or practical. This is especially true for workers without a clear schedule who work part-time or for those who cooperate with multiple employers simultaneously. Conversely, participants who work full-time show a greater willingness and desire to sign a contract.

However, they emphasized several important points that are necessary to make a decision to conclude a contract. These include:

- Simplified paperwork,
- Agreement on terms with them,
- Health insurance.

Those participants who are inclined to sign a contract explain their decision by highlighting that it allows for clear documentation of conditions, thereby helping to avoid violations and exploitation. Additionally, the possibility of receiving a higher pension was mentioned.



“If there’s [an opportunity], why wouldn’t I take it? Both the state and the worker benefit from it. The worker gets a regular salary, ensures a stable pension, and contributes taxes to the state.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 50 y/o

It should be noted that the vast majority of participants found it challenging to articulate the conditions they would prefer in their contracts. However, it is noteworthy that only a few of them specifically mentioned respect and humane treatment by the employer as crucial points they would like to see addressed in their contracts.

It is important to emphasize that when discussing their readiness to sign a contract, participants do not consider the issue of tax obligations. It appears that in their understanding, entering into a contract does not entail them being responsible for taxes and duties. This perception may stem from the belief that employers cover taxes and duties, and employees are often unaware of their gross salary amount. This is evident from the participants’ surprise when asked whether they should be responsible for taxes.

Notably, those participants who initially expressed willingness to sign a contract and acknowledged its benefits mostly changed their stance upon learning about tax obligations. They indicated that they would not be prepared to sign a contract under those conditions.

Some significant part of the participants stated that they do not want to sign a contract for various reasons. Some of them aim to avoid tax obligations, while others believe that signing a contract implies committing to long-term cooperation. They fear that if problems arise, the contract might prevent them from easily leaving their jobs, thereby obligating them to continue working despite any issues.



“I go to work; they pay me regularly. Why bother with a contract? Today they might want me, tomorrow they might want someone else.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 46 y/o

Most of them are reluctant to reconsider their decision, and, among those who might consider agreeing to sign a contract under certain conditions, a higher salary is frequently mentioned. In other words, they are not willing to sign a contract at their current salary level.

More than half of the employers are willing to sign a contract with a domestic worker, provided the process is not overly complicated and they are not burdened with fulfilling tax obligations themselves. They also emphasize the importance of the employee’s agreement, as well as the need for the employee’s consistent presence, indicating a preference for long-term cooperation and a predictable schedule.

One of the reasons employers are inclined to sign contracts is to ensure security and increase the domestic worker's accountability. In contrast to domestic workers, employers have identified specific conditions they deem essential to include in contracts. These include:

- Ensuring safe working conditions for the employee,
- Fixing wages,
- Ensuring the domestic worker respects the employer's privacy regarding personal data,
- Establishing a fixed schedule,
- Clearly defining duties,
- Providing leave entitlement.

Employers who are reluctant to sign a contract state concerns such as the domestic worker's part-time status, tax implications, and the frequent turnover of workers.

However, many of these employers expressed openness to reconsidering their decision if specific conditions were met. For private organizations, this often involves providing business support. For individual employers, conditions may include offering full or partial compensation of the domestic worker's salary and providing health insurance coverage.

Attitude towards tax obligations

Most domestic workers exhibit a negative attitude towards registering their work for tax purposes, primarily citing low salaries as justification. Qualitative data indicate that household chores are predominantly performed by women, many of whom are financially responsible for themselves or their families. They often express doing this work out of necessity, as they struggle to find employment in other fields. The income they earn is often insufficient to meet their basic needs, let alone support their families, which leads them to resist paying taxes on their earnings.

A minority of participants indicated they might accept a tax rate between 1-5% if required, and up to 10% for full-time employees. However, they perceive a tax burden exceeding 5% as "inhumane". Almost unanimously, participants expressed a willingness to pay taxes once their incomes increase sufficiently to cover their basic needs and provide surplus income to tax.

Employers generally have a positive attitude towards formalizing work arrangements within the tax system, but they often find it impractical in the context of domestic work. One major reason is the low incomes of both domestic workers and employers themselves. Another significant concern is a perceived sense of injustice, as employers feel they are taxed twice — once as employees in their main job and again as employers hiring domestic workers. Employers justify their reluctance to formalize tax arrangements by arguing that domestic workers are unlikely to agree to pay taxes on their income, preferring to work for net salaries, leaving the burden of tax payment solely on the employer. Besides this, they argue that formalizing domestic work could significantly increase costs, which they feel they cannot afford as middle-class individuals. Some employers view domestic workers as individual entrepreneurs earning significant income if they work every day of the month, suggesting that a modest tax, such as 5%, would be fair in such cases.

Alternatively, there are employers who believe that the state should subsidize or support domestic workers' tax obligations to encourage formalization and compliance within the tax system. These viewpoints illustrate the complex attitudes and challenges surrounding tax responsibilities in domestic work arrangements.



“The domestic worker will not pay that tax, that’s clear; the employer will pay it. In my opinion, the employer shouldn’t have to pay it because consider this: the employer is already sharing a portion of their personal income, on which taxes have already been paid, with someone else so that they can continue working and pay taxes... the state should cover it.”

IDI, female employer



“I agree from a standpoint of fairness, considering their seniority, etc., but I can’t envision it in our country’s current situation. If domestic work becomes formalized, rates could rise from 15,000 to, say, 25,000. As someone who considers themselves middle class, I couldn’t afford that increase. I would propose that these women be considered individual entrepreneurs, to be honest, where a percentage could be applied, if I’m not mistaken...”

IDI, female employer

Attitudes towards inspections in households

Most participants hold a negative attitude towards inspections by regulatory bodies in domestic work settings. They argue that it intrudes into personal space, and as long as the worker continues their duties, everything should be considered in order; otherwise, cooperation would naturally cease. Additionally, many domestic workers perceive themselves as part of the employer’s family, viewing the employer’s home as their “second home,” which further complicates acceptance of inspections.

However, a minority of participants express a positive view towards inspections, primarily citing the potential to prevent worker exploitation and encourage adherence to standards, thus ensuring a safer work environment. Nonetheless, there are concerns that such inspections might not yield desired outcomes if employers behave respectfully only in the presence of inspectors.

Some participants suggest that raising awareness among domestic workers about their rights could mitigate workplace problems, reducing the need for invasive inspections that violate employer privacy. Interestingly, nearly half of the participants indicate they will involve inspection bodies if issues arise, viewing inspections at the employer’s house as justified in such cases.



“I believe that raising awareness and educating workers about their rights can prevent such issues from arising and help resolve them. After all, entering a private area and conducting inspections is uncomfortable for everyone involved.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 31 y/o



“In Armenia, we become close to each other; domestic workers become like family members. It’s uncomfortable to conduct inspections in someone’s home. If you don’t like it, you can leave; there’s no need for complaints or inspections.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 72 y/o



“It would be beneficial, but not every household would welcome such inspections. Even if inspections occur, homeowners will likely show great respect and uphold the rights of their employees.”

IDI, female domestic worker, 34 y/o

Regarding employers’ perspectives, half of those who participated in the qualitative interviews expressed willingness to accept inspections by regulatory bodies at their homes, provided certain conditions are met. These include that they serve a specific purpose and respect the rules of their personal space. Two of them noted that inspections would be reasonable for a babysitter’s service but not for a cleaning service, while another mentioned they would permit inspections in response to a domestic worker’s complaint. One employer suggested they would agree to inspections under modified conditions, such as conducting separate interviews with the domestic worker and themselves.

In contrast, the other half of employers expressed strong reservations about inspections, firmly viewing their homes as private spaces that should remain free from external scrutiny.



“It’s not an ordinary workplace, it’s a house, and if that person lives there, then the conditions are normal.”

IDI, female employer

Expectations of State Support

Employers generally express positive attitudes towards potential state support. One employer highlighted an international practice where employers of domestic workers receive a tax exemption at the end of the year for paying taxes on behalf of their employees. This incentive encourages compliance and provides financial relief.

However, opinions regarding potential state support vary. Some of them believe that while the state is not obligated to provide such tax exemptions, it should prioritize protecting domestic workers’ interests. This includes offering additional guarantees, with health insurance being the most critical. Others suggest that the state should establish institutes to train domestic workers, ensuring they become qualified specialists. In such a scenario, the employer would be open to signing contracts and paying the appropriate taxes.

Overall, employers show a willingness to engage with state support mechanisms, provided they align with enhancing the welfare and professional standards of domestic workers.



“I would like to see state-funded institutes established to train domestic workers. These institutes should provide comprehensive training, covering everything from work ethics and proper communication to specific job-related skills. Once trained, the state could facilitate employment by matching these qualified specialists with employers. In this scenario, it would be reasonable for the state to set expectations and demand compliance from employers. However, under the current system, where there is little to no support or structure provided, I find it unfair to pay additional taxes from my already taxed income.”

IDI, female employer

Additionally, representatives from businesses that participated in the qualitative interviews expressed the need for both skilled specialists and financial resources to establish and grow their enterprises.

From the qualitative interviews and case studies with domestic workers and employers, it is evident that domestic workers face similar challenges and needs, irrespective of their specific duties. This indicates that the regulation of the domestic work sector should be tailored to its unique nature. A crucial aspect of this is that domestic workers operate within private households, which serve as both personal spaces for the employers and workplaces for the employees. This dual nature of the setting brings inherent characteristics and challenges that must be considered in any regulatory framework.

As previously discussed, there are several reasons why domestic work often remains in the informal sector. The most common reasons include:

- low awareness among domestic workers about formalization pathways and opportunities,
- complex paperwork and tax liabilities for individual employers,
- high tax rates,
- employment through social connections and relationships based on mutual trust.

By comparing the data from interviews with key informants, domestic workers, and employers, the following methods for regulating domestic work can be identified:

- raising awareness and enhancing the perceived value of domestic work,
- simplifying labor registration procedures and streamlining tax obligations,
- formalizing domestic work through private business initiatives,
- Implementing state subsidization for domestic workers engaged in the care of special groups.

Raising awareness and enhancing the perceived value domestic work

Qualitative data reveal that domestic workers often do not consider signing contracts or formalizing their working relationships in writing. This is largely because the sector operates informally, and this practice is widely accepted. Addressing this requires comprehensive awareness campaigns that not only inform workers of their rights but also elevate the perceived value of domestic work in society. Such initiatives should promote the formation of unions and support networks, enabling workers to better advocate for their interests. Information campaigns can help improve the public perception of domestic work and domestic workers within the labor market.

Moreover, domestic workers can advocate for their interests by forming online and offline groups to share experiences. Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a significant role in this process. For example, one CSO mentioned in the report has successfully created clubs for domestic workers, offering training, job placement support, and rights protection. Such initiatives can be instrumental in raising awareness, enhancing the perceived value of domestic work, and promoting their collective protection.

Encouraging domestic workers to formalize their employment relationships and sign contracts should be a core part of awareness-raising efforts. It is important to emphasize the various types of contracts available and the guarantees provided by the state to employees, as well as the obligations that come with registering as self-employed.

Effective implementation of awareness measures requires the involvement and close cooperation of state and non-state actors. Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Labor Inspection Authority, the Institute of the Defender of Human Rights, the Confederation of Civil Rights, and CSOs.

○ *Simplifying labor registration procedures and streamlining tax obligations*

In addition to raising awareness among domestic workers and encouraging them to formalize their employment relationships, it is essential to create a conducive environment that brings domestic work into legal compliance. A critical step is to simplify the mechanisms for registering labor relations, particularly since most employers of domestic workers are individuals who may find legal formalities and contract drafting challenging. One effective solution could involve developing and disseminating model contracts tailored to various types of domestic work, in collaboration with stakeholders. Streamlining state procedures for labor registration would further facilitate willingness among employers and domestic workers to enter into formal agreements.

Furthermore, corresponding adjustments are needed in the tax sector. Simplifying tax payment procedures and providing tax incentives would enable both employers and domestic workers to fulfill their obligations seamlessly without hindering the formalization of employment relationships. Regarding tax benefits, a phased approach could be implemented, starting with a fixed tax rate that transitions into a percentage-based system as circumstances are assessed. Qualitative data suggest that an acceptable starting point could be a fixed tax threshold of AMD 5,000 per month, escalating to a maximum threshold of 5% of income.

It is important to note that tax benefits and simplified procedures should also consider the option of registering domestic workers as self-employed. This approach can particularly incentivize those with irregular schedules or multiple employers. Overall, these measures aim to create an environment where domestic work is recognized, legally protected, and contributes positively to the formal economy.

○ *Formalizing domestic work through private business initiatives*

An alternative solution to simplify administrative and tax obligations for individual employers and domestic workers, while also safeguarding workers' rights and formalizing domestic work, could be the establishment of private businesses. This approach has been increasingly self-regulating in recent years, with both established and new organizations emerging in the labor market. These entities primarily offer services such as cleaning, babysitting, gardening, household appliance maintenance, and other home-related tasks.

Qualitative interviews with representatives of these organizations offering domestic services reveal that they typically enter employment contracts with their workers, and, in some cases, agreements are also signed with the client (who represents a private household). Such arrangements address the registration of workers and the realization of their labor rights, while encompassing their education and training. These organizations often provide training ranging from ethical guidelines to professional skill enhancement.

Moreover, these private businesses play a crucial role in protecting workers' interests. According to the representatives of these businesses, the attitude of household representatives towards qualified professionals is more positive within these structured organizations, thereby reducing the risk of exploitation and other rights violations. Employment within these organizations addresses another critical issue: ensuring occupational health and safety for domestic workers. They commit to providing necessary protective measures and may undertake health insurance coverage or advocate for free scheduled medical examinations through regional medical facilities.

In summary, organizations are responsible for upholding their employees' rights and ensuring oversight. It is important to emphasize that the focus is not on organizations violating employee rights, but rather on preventing violations by household members. Regarding business organizations, the Inspection Body (HLIB) has access to these entities as they operate legally.

In summary, the establishment of private businesses specializing in domestic services not only streamline administrative and tax complexities, but also may enhance workers' rights protection, provide ongoing education and training, and ensure health and safety standards are met if necessary national regulations are set for regulating the work of private business organizations in terms of responsibilities and obligations. This approach represents a significant step towards legitimizing domestic work and integrating it more fully into the formal economy.

○ *Implementing state subsidization for domestic workers engaged in the care of special groups*

Implementing state subsidization for domestic workers engaged in the care of special groups, such as individuals with disabilities, can draw lessons from existing initiatives. For instance, starting from January 1, 2024, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia has implemented a program offering personal assistant services to persons with disabilities²⁷. This program includes specific eligibility criteria, restricting access to citizens who are studying, working, or preparing for these activities. The Ministry oversees assistant training, conducts assessments, and issues certificates to qualified individuals who can provide personal assistant services.

If the program is successfully tested and implemented, this model could be expanded and adapted to other forms of domestic work. For instance, it could be applied to child care for working mothers or to provide assistance for elderly individuals living alone. By leveraging this experience, similar training and certification programs could be developed to ensure high-quality care and support for these vulnerable groups while formalizing and professionalizing domestic work in these areas. This approach not only enhances the quality of care provided, but also supports the rights and well-being of both domestic workers and the individuals they assist. While implementing these programs, it is essential to ensure that the rights of care providers are thoroughly developed, and that effective mechanisms for their protection are put in place.

27. PROCEDURE AND TERMS OF PROVIDING PERSONAL ASSISTANT SERVICE,
<https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=188337>



Conclusion

In conclusion, domestic work in Armenia reflects global patterns where a predominantly female workforce undertakes caregiving and household roles while facing significant challenges and operating within informal employment arrangements. Women constitute a substantial majority among both domestic workers and employers, perpetuating gender stereotypes that assign caregiving and household duties to women and tasks out of household to men.

The sector serves as a crucial source of employment for women who lack sufficient work experience or education to find employment in other sectors, offering opportunities amidst limited alternatives and familial responsibilities. Additionally, there are cultural implications: some domestic workers reported that their husbands did not allow them to work in environments where they would interact with many people.

Despite the informal nature of employment, domestic workers and employers prioritize personal qualities such as trustworthiness, reliability, and respect, underscoring the importance of mutual trust in forming and maintaining work relationships. While formal contracts are rare, these informal agreements facilitate flexibility but also expose workers to risks such as low pay, irregular hours, and sometimes hazardous and unsafe working conditions.

There is growing recognition among workers of the need for formal training to enhance job prospects and justify higher salaries, although current educational and training opportunities remain limited. Health and safety concerns including violence and harassment, particularly when handling chemicals or engaging in physically demanding tasks, highlight the need for improved workplace protections and awareness among both employers and workers.

Moving forward, addressing the challenges within Armenia's domestic work sector requires concerted efforts to promote awareness of labor rights, establish formalized contracts that protect workers' interests, and enhance training opportunities to improve job quality and safety. Emphasizing respect, fairness, and dignity in these work relationships are essential to foster a supportive and sustainable domestic work environment that benefits both workers and employers.

Based on the findings and challenges identified in Armenia's domestic work sector, several recommendations for improvement are proposed:

- Align RA legislation (Labour Code, RA law on Labour Unions) with ILO standards,
- Regulating the status of domestic workers as formal workers with full labour and social protection,
- Provide tax benefits and simplifying tax obligations,

- Raise awareness on labor rights,
- Promote collective action and advocacy,
- Promote training of qualified professionals,
- Promote the formalization of employment contracts,
- Ensure occupational health and safety,
- Facilitate access to social benefits and support,
- Strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

First, increasing compliance with ILO standards is essential to improving the domestic work sector in Armenia. This can be achieved by conducting a comprehensive review of existing labor laws to align them with ILO standards, ensuring they provide clear and enforceable protections for domestic workers. Engaging stakeholders, including workers, employers, unions, and civil society, in the legislative process is crucial to address the specific needs and challenges of the sector.

Providing tax benefits and simplifying tax obligations is another crucial step. Implementing a phased approach to taxation, starting with a fixed tax threshold of AMD 5,000 per month and transitioning to a percentage-based system, will help in assessing circumstances better. Setting lower tax rates for domestic workers, such as 1-5% of income, will make tax obligations more manageable and encourage formalization. Offering tax incentives to employers who formalize employment relationships, such as tax deductions or credits, will also promote this transition.

Raising awareness and education on labor rights is vital. Launching comprehensive campaigns to inform domestic workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities under labor laws is necessary. These campaigns should utilize various mediums such as online platforms, seminars, short informative videos on television and social media, and community outreach programs. Fostering awareness about unions and their benefits will encourage domestic workers and employers to consider unionization to advocate for their rights collectively.

Promoting collective action and advocacy is important. Supporting the formation of domestic workers' associations or unions and encouraging dialogue between government officials, employers, and workers' representatives can help address sector-specific challenges. This collective action will foster a collaborative environment to seek solutions together.

Enhancing training and skill development is crucial for professionalizing the domestic work sector. Developing tailored training programs focusing on job-specific skills, health and safety practices, and career advancement opportunities will equip domestic workers with the necessary skills. Incorporating hands-on training sessions that address common tasks and challenges faced by domestic workers will ensure practical and effective learning.

Promoting the formalization of employment contracts is necessary to protect both workers and employers. Encouraging the adoption of written contracts that clearly define employment terms, including wages, working hours, duties, and termination procedures, will provide clarity and security. Simplifying paperwork and tax obligations will alleviate concerns that deter formalization. Emphasizing the importance of health insurance and other benefits in employment contracts will ensure that workers receive essential protections.

Ensuring occupational health and safety is vital. Developing and implementing specific regulations or guidelines to protect workers from hazardous and unsafe conditions including violence and harassment, providing necessary protective equipment, and offering training on safe practices will create safer work environments. Conducting regular inspections or assessments to identify and mitigate potential risks in domestic work settings will ensure compliance and safety.

Facilitating access to social benefits and support is important for the well-being of domestic workers. Exploring options to extend social security benefits, considering the unique employment circumstances of domestic workers, will provide essential support. Encouraging employers to provide additional benefits, such as medical insurance, will further support workers' well-being.

Strengthening monitoring and enforcement mechanisms is necessary to ensure compliance with labor laws and standards. Enhancing oversight mechanisms to monitor compliance within the domestic work sector and establishing avenues for reporting grievances or violations will protect workers. Ensuring protection against retaliation for whistleblowers will encourage the reporting of abuses and violations.

Lastly, expanding and adapting state subsidization programs for special care workers will support those engaged in the care of vulnerable groups, such as individuals with disabilities, children, and the elderly. Developing training and certification programs will ensure high-quality care and formalize and professionalize domestic work in these areas. This approach will create a more robust and respected domestic work sector, benefiting both workers and those they care for.

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Annex 1.

IDI guide to interview domestic workers

Hello! My name is _____. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Your feedback is very valuable to us. I represent the Caucasian Research Resources Center (CRRC)-Armenia, which is an independent research organization. You can find more about our organization on the website www.crrc.am.

Today's interview concerns Armenia's ratification of ILO Convention C189 (On the Protection of the Rights of Domestic Workers). It aims to study the situation and existing problems related to the safeguards of the labor rights of domestic workers in Armenia, and then present certain proposals aimed at the protection of these rights.

This study is carried out in cooperation with the Armenian Office of the UN Women's Affairs and the Center for Human Rights Research. Our interview will last about 1.5 hours. With your permission, the interview will be recorded. It is for our internal reporting and will not be shared with any third party. The results of the study will be generalized without using the personal data of any participant.

Before starting the interview, I would like to get your written (orally in the case of an online meeting) agreement that you are aware of the confidentiality of the conversation and that any information that could reveal your identity is not to be published.

If there are no questions, let's move on.

Acquaintance

- Main activity
- Education
 - profession
- Age
- Marital Status
- Presence of children
 - age of children
- Presence of elderly or family member with disability requiring care

To the moderator: *If he/she has children, elderly or family member with disability ask:*

Who generally takes care of them?

- The place of work
 - urban
 - rural

Field of domestic work, experience, motivation

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

1. What services or work do you mainly perform?
2. How long have you been doing these jobs?
3. Why did you choose that field/occupation?
4. How did you choose that field?
5. Would you choose other fields with the same salary?

If yes,

- 5.1. Which fields or jobs are we talking about?
6. What are the positive aspects of your work?
7. What are the negative aspects of your work?
8. Apart from the work you mentioned, do you have any other occupation?
9. Do you have any qualifications or certifications related to your current job?

If yes,

- 9.1. Could you elaborate on what qualification or certification you are talking about?
- 9.2. Which organization was responsible for organizing it?

To the moderator: *if necessary, specify what other knowledge or skills they would like to acquire.*

If not,

- 9.3. Are you interested in attending courses related to your work?
 - 9.3.1. Why?

Circumstances of finding a job and being hired

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

10. How did you find or search work in this field?
11. What employers do you work with?
 - Agency.
 - Do you have to pay additional fees (once or on a regular basis)?
 - Household.
 - Other:
 - 11.1. Why do you prefer to work with these employers?
12. Would you please tell me about the frequency of your work?
13. Do you work live-in or live-out?
14. How was the service provision and remuneration agreement with the employer?

To the moderator: *if they work with several employers, check for all separately.*

- 14.1. Written contract

To the moderator: *specify what type of written contract it is.*

- Service delivery agreement.
- Work contract.
- Other.

To the moderator: *Verify*

- 14.2. Confirmed by the notary or a contract signed by both parties?

14.2.1. Why did you choose that arrangement option?

14.3. Oral agreement

14.3.1. Why did you choose that arrangement option?

15. When agreeing on the terms of your employment with the employer, do you negotiate on trial period?

If yes

15.1. How long is the trial period?

15.2. How is it paid?

16. What conditions do you particularly value when reaching an agreement with the employer?

- List of duties,
- the amount of salary,
 - in cash
 - via bank transfer
- periodicity of discharge,
- transportation costs,
- working hours,
- payment for overtime work
- rest time,
- rest room,
- meals during the working day at the expense of the employer,
- working days,
- provision of necessary materials for work,
- ensuring a safe and secure environment,
- remuneration for the period of absence due to a valid reason (illness, emergency, etc.),
- paid vocation,
- self-funded vacation,
- duration of an agreement/contract,
- medical care for work-related sickness and sickness benefits,
- pension rights,
- maternity leave,
- other.

16.1. Why?

17. What responsibilities does your job(s) entail?

17.1. Does it imply the following?

- Moving or lifting heavy objects,
- climbing high places,
- working with chemicals or other harmful substances,
- using special equipment (we are not talking about an iron or a washing machine),
- to be outside the house while doing the work (for example, take the child to school or another place, go to the store, or go with the family to the village etc.).

18. What potential risks are associated with conducting the activities you've outlined?

19. How do you find out about the conditions that should ensure the safety of your work and not harm your health?

19.1. What tools and resources do you need to carry out your work?

19.2. Are you provided with all the necessary means and tools to carry out the work?

19.3. How satisfied are you with the tools and resources provided to you?

20. Do you agree with the employer on guarantees to fulfill those conditions?

If yes,

20.1. What steps are planned in case of non-fulfillment or incomplete fulfillment?

If not,

20.2. What steps do you take when a problem arises?

21. How much pay do you usually agree to work for?

21.1. How wages are paid (in cash, bank transfer or in-kind)?

21.2. Is there any in-kind payment such as food, housing or training?

22. And at what intervals are you usually paid (hourly wage, daily wage, monthly wage, etc.)?

23. What are the average working hours per day?

23.1. What do you usually do in your leisure time?

24. What do employers value most when choosing you for a given job?

25. What do they value to continue cooperation with you?

26. For what working period you were hired?

26.1. What circumstances were considered for choosing that period?

26.2. What conditions you can hand in to agree to the job?

26.2.1. Why?

26.3. What conditions will you never hand in under any circumstances?

26.3.1. Why?

27. Have there been cases when you fulfilled the conditions better than required?

If yes,

27.1. What kind of activities were those?

27.2. How were you treated?

If encouraged,

27.2.1. How have you been encouraged?

28. How does the employer call you (by name or otherwise)?

28.1. How do you call the employer?

About problems arising in business relations with the employer

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

Let's talk a little about the problems that arise in the implementation of your work.

29. What problems do you face during your work?

- Related to salary,
- distance to workplace,
- working time,
- additional (over) work,
- personal problems,
- other

To the moderator: *if the flow of the conversation allows, try to find out examples of personal problems, including*

- cases of sexual harassment,
- disrespect, bullying,
- lack of personal and protective equipment,
- economic abuse,
- psychological abuse,
- verbal abuse,
- lack of access to appropriate food,
- violations of privacy and withholding of wages and ID cards/passports,
- etc.

30. According to you, what are the causes of those problems?

- Incomplete negotiations during hiring,
- failure to ratify agreements in written form,
- other.

31. What terms are usually followed during your work?

32. What happens if either party violates the terms?

32.1. Can you remember specific cases from your or your acquaintances' experience?

33. How were the problems solved?

33.1. Why were that method of solution chosen?

34. In your opinion, is it possible to avoid problems arising in working relations with employers?

If yes,

34.1. How?

If not,

34.2. Why?

35. Does your employer or employers monitor your work in any way?

If yes,

35.1. How?

Awareness of their rights and the laws governing the sector

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

36. What do you know about your rights related to this work?

36.1. From where did you receive information about them?

36.2. Did you ever need to protect your interests?

If yes,

36.3. Please elaborate on that.

37. What do you know about the laws regulating your field of work?

37.1. To what extent do you feel protected within the framework of these laws?

37.2. Do you know if there is any dispute settlement and accessible complaint mechanism?

37.3. Did you ever need to put the laws you know into practice?

If yes,

37.4. Please elaborate on that.

If they don't know anything,

37.5. Have you ever had the opportunity or desire to know about the laws?

If yes,

37.5.1. What was the occasion?

37.5.2. Would you like to receive advice about the law and your rights?

37.5.3. What would be the most practical way of receiving advice on your rights?

38. Are you aware of ILO Convention C189 on decent work for domestic workers?

If yes,

38.1. Where did you find out about it?

38.2. What is it about?

38.3. What are its main conditions?

38.4. How do you feel about those conditions?

Alternatives for contracting with employers

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

To the moderator: *ask the questions only to the domestic worker who does not have a contract.*

39. Are you ready to sign an employment contract with the employer?

If yes,

39.1. Why?

39.2. Under what conditions?

If not, then

39.3. Why?

39.4. Under what conditions would you change your position?

To the moderator: *if necessary, suggest the main benefits provided by the registered employment relationship, for example, annual leave, etc.*

40. Entering an employment contract in Armenia implies the payment of taxes and duties. What part of your income are you willing to pay as taxes?

40.1. Why?

To the moderator: *If they do not want to pay taxes ask:*

41. What can motivate you to change your decision?

42. There is an RA inspection body in Armenia, which carries out inspections of the working conditions of the employee at the workplace. It can contribute to the creation of more favorable conditions in the workplace by identifying and preventing cases of rights violations. What do you think about such inspections?

42.1. Why?

42.2. Would you (like to) contact the inspection body yourself in case of problems?

43. Now, the inspection body has the authority to carry out inspections only if there is an employment contract or if there is a complaint to the inspection. How important do you consider this circumstance when deciding whether to sign an employment contract?

To the moderator: *try to clarify the opinion and priorities about the co-existence of this and other conditions in the employment contract.*

44. Do you have communication with other domestic workers?

44.1. Do you share information, challenges, and problems among yourself?

To the moderator: *Please clarify: Is he acquainted with any migrants? If so, ask what he knows about them?*

45. In some countries, domestic workers have formed or joined unions to share their experiences and defend their interests. Do you consider it possible to join such a union in Armenia?

If yes,

45.1. Why?

45.2. What conditions do you particularly value?

If not,

45.3. Why?

45.4. What can motivate you to change your decision?

Those were all my questions. Summing up the conversation, are there any other issues that we did not talk about, but you would like to address?

Thank you

Anex 2.

IDI guide to interview employers

A guide to interview employers

Hello! My name is _____. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Your feedback is very valuable to us. I represent the Caucasian Research Resources Center (CRRC)-Armenia, which is an independent research organization. You can find more about our organization on the website www.crrc.am.

Today's interview concerns Armenia's ratification of ILO Convention C189 (On the Protection of the Rights of Domestic Workers). It aims to study the situation and existing problems related to the safeguards of the labor rights of domestic workers in Armenia, and then present certain proposals aimed at the protection of these rights.

This study is carried out in cooperation with the Armenian Office of the UN Women's Affairs and the Center for Human Rights Research. Our interview will last about 1.5 hours. With your permission, the interview will be recorded. It is for our internal reporting and will not be shared with any third party. The results of the study will be generalized without using the personal data of any participant.

Before starting the interview, I would like to get your written (orally in the case of an online meeting) agreement that you are aware of the confidentiality of the conversation and that any information that could reveal your identity is not to be published.

If there are no questions, let's move on.

Acquaintance

- Main activity
- Education
 - profession
- Age
- Marital Status
- Presence of children
 - age of children
- The place of work
 - urban
 - rural

Circumstances for applying to the service of domestic workers

1. Let's talk a little about the circumstances of applying for the domestic worker service. Is the domestic worker whose service you applied for, a representative of an organization or an individual?

2. How did you find out about them?

To the moderator: *if it is about hiring more than one domestic worker, then specify the circumstances of getting information about each one.*

3. What are the main criteria for hiring a domestic worker for the job(s) you mentioned?

To the moderator: *If the participant does not respond, elaborate on how important the training certifications of domestic workers are.*

3.1. Mainly, what standards should the domestic worker meet?

4. Do you employ live-in or live-out domestic workers?

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

5. For what job(s) did you apply to the domestic worker(s) service?

To the moderator: *if it is about hiring more than one domestic worker, specify the circumstances regarding the hiring and responsibilities of each one.*

5.1. What kind of work does that service entail? Please elaborate.

5.1.1. Does it assume the following?

- Moving or lifting heavy objects,
- climbing high places,
- working with chemicals or other harmful substances,
- using special equipment (we are not talking about an iron or a washing machine),
- to be outside the house while doing the work (for example, take the child to school or another place, go to the store, etc.).

6. How do you inform the domestic worker about safe and secure working conditions?

7. How do you ensure safe and healthy working condition for your domestic worker?

8. How was the service provision and payment agreement made?

To the moderator: *if you applied for the services of several domestic workers, specify for all of them separately.*

8.1. Written contract

To the moderator: *specify what type of written contract it is.*

- Service delivery agreement.
- Work contract.
- Other.

To the moderator: *Verify*

- Confirmed by the notary or
- A contract signed by both parties.

8.1.1. Why did you choose that arrangement option?

8.2. Oral agreement

8.2.1. Why did you choose this arrangement option?

9. How do you call the domestic worker working in your home?

9.1. Why?

10. And how do they address you?

Working conditions of domestic workers

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

11. What conditions do domestic workers consider most during the service provision arrangement?

To the moderator: *if you applied for the services of several domestic workers, specify for all of them separately.*

- List of duties,
- the amount of salary,
- periodicity of discharge,
- transportation costs,
- working hours,
- rest time,
- rest room,
- meals during the working day at the expense of the employer,
- working days,
- provision of necessary materials for work,
- ensuring a safe and secure environment,
- remuneration for the period of absence due to a valid reason (illness, emergency, etc.),
- paid vocation,
- self-funded vacation,
- duration of an agreement/contract,
- medical care for work-related sickness and sickness benefits,
- pension rights,
- maternity leave,
- other.

11.1. Why?

12. Which conditions required by domestic workers are the most challenging for you to satisfy?

13. What conditions are you negotiating in particular?

13.1. Why specifically those conditions?

14. Do you contribute to social security premiums of your domestic worker?

15. Do you provide paid leave rights (annual leave)?

16. Do you agree with the domestic worker on the guarantees of fulfilling those conditions?

If yes,

16.1. What steps are planned in case of non-fulfillment or incomplete fulfillment of the conditions?

If not,

16.2. What steps do you take when a problem arises?

17. Have there been cases when the mentioned conditions have been fulfilled better than expected?

If yes,

17.1. Can you please specify?

17.2. What were your actions?

17.3. Has the domestic worker been encouraged in any way?

17.3.1. Can you describe how?

18. Have you ever had to change your arrangement with domestic worker(s) for any reason?

If yes,

18.1. Why?

18.2. What arrangement(s) are we talking about?

18.3. What followed after that?

19. What are the typical daily or weekly working hours for domestic workers in your household?

To the moderator: *If their daily working hours are specified, inquire about the number of days per week they typically work.*

20. What is their typical work schedule?

To the moderator: *Please verify specifically whether they work during the evening or at night, on weekends, holidays, etc.*

21. How much do you usually pay a domestic worker for the work they do?

21.1. What is the basis of that calculation?

- working hours,
- working day,
- scope of work,
- domestic worker qualification,
- the amount of remuneration accepted in the market,
- market demand.

22. What is the payment modality?

- cash,
- via bank transfer,
- in-kind,
- etc.

23. At what intervals (hourly wage, daily wage, monthly wage, etc.) do you usually pay the domestic worker?

24. Are there cases when the prior agreement regarding the amount of payment is violated due to various factors?

If yes, then

24.1. Would you elaborate on which cases?

25. When agreeing on work dates with domestic workers, do you negotiate on trial and main work dates?

If yes,

25.1. How long is the trial period?

25.2. How is it paid?

26. For what period do you usually hire a domestic worker for?

26.1. What circumstances do you take into account for hiring for that period?

About the problems arising in business relations with the domestic workers

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

We talked very general about the consequences of poor or good performance of the working conditions of domestic work. Let's talk more specifically about what kind of problems arose with domestic work in your case and how you solve(d) them?

27. What problems arose in your relationship with the domestic worker?

- Related to salary,
- distance to workplace,
- working time,
- additional (over) work,
- personal problems,
- other.

27.1. According to you, what are the causes of those problems?

- Incomplete negotiations during hiring,
- failure to ratify agreements in written form,
- other.

28. What happens if either party violates the terms?

28.1. Can you remember specific cases from your or your acquaintances's experience?

29. How did you solve the problems?

29.1. Why did you choose that method of solution?

30. In your opinion, is it possible to avoid the problems arising in the hiring relations with the domestic workers?

If yes,

30.1. How?

If not,

30.2. Why?

31. How do you make sure or know that the domestic worker fulfills their duties with quality and conscientiousness?

Awareness of laws governing the industry

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

32. Are you aware of ILO Convention C189 on decent work for domestic workers?

If yes,

32.1. Where did you find out about it?

32.2. What is it about?

32.3. What are its main conditions?

32.4. How do you feel about those conditions?

If no, brief him about main responsibilities of employers.

33. Are you aware of the obligations and guarantees provided by RA legislation?

- for domestic workers,
- for employers.

34. What are your thoughts on incorporating domestic work into the tax system?

34.1. How much of domestic workers' income do you think can be taxed?

34.1.1. Why do you think so?

35. Have you ever felt the need to protect your rights while using the service of a domestic worker?

If yes,

35.1. In which situation?

35.2. Please specify?

35.2.1. What was the occasion?

35.2.2. Would you like to receive advice about the law and your rights?

Alternative perspectives on contracting domestic workers

To the moderator: *If the domestic worker resides in the employer's house, please ensure that all questions explicitly address the living arrangements within the household separately.*

36. Are you ready to sign a contract with a domestic worker?

If yes,

36.1. Why?

36.1.1. Under what conditions?

To the moderator: *if necessary, inform about the obligations arising from the registered employment relationship, for example, annual vacation pay, etc.*

If not,

36.2. Why?

36.2.1. Under what conditions would you change your position?

37. The conclusion of such a contract implies an inspection visit of the RA inspection body to your house to study the working conditions of the employee. How do you feel about that situation?

37.1. Why?

37.2. Under what conditions would you be more willing to agree to such visits?

38. If you were given such special conditions as subsidies, benefits, etc., to fulfill your obligations defined by the law, would you agree to sign an employment contract?

38.1. Why?

38.2. What benefits, subsidies, special conditions do you need?

39. Are you willing to contribute to social security coverage of domestic workers in case simplified regulations and incentives are in place?

39.1. Why?

40. In some countries, employers have formed unions to share their experiences and protect their interests.

40.1. Do you consider it possible to join such a union in Armenia?

If yes,

41. Why?

41.1. What conditions do you particularly value?

If not,

42. Why?

42.1. What can motivate you to change your decision?

That was all my questions. Summing up the conversation, are there any other issues that we did not talk about, but you would like to address?

Thank you

