

March 2016

Surveys on

# DOMESTIC WORKERS

DCR, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya



Regional report




# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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This report is the result of the concerted efforts and expertise of many organisations and institutions involved in the project **“Stopping violence against child domestic workers in the DRC and East Africa through regulation and education”**. We would like to thank all partners who have been actively involved in this large regional survey. We also show our gratitude to the many supervisors, data controllers and surveyors who have given, sometimes under challenging circumstances, the best of themselves to provide reliable information.

We also thank our donors (European Union, King Baudouin Foundation, National Development Cooperation Centre), for trusting in this project and for investing in the issue of domestic work.

Finally, our thanks go to the thousands of domestic workers and their employers who trusted us, made time to participate in this survey, and shared intense moments with us.



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# INTRODUCTION

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The issues related to the living and working conditions of domestic workers remain complex in Africa: low and at times non-existent wages, long working hours, little if any leave, violence in various forms, job insecurity, lack of written contracts, etc.

Children and young people involved in domestic work are particularly vulnerable and are exposed to many abuses. They are usually school dropouts due to poverty and their occupation. Their prospects to reintegrate the classic education system or vocational training are limited. Domestic workers, hidden behind walls, are described as “invisible workers”. They receive little if any attention from their authorities. Domestic work is considered, in some situations, as modern slavery.

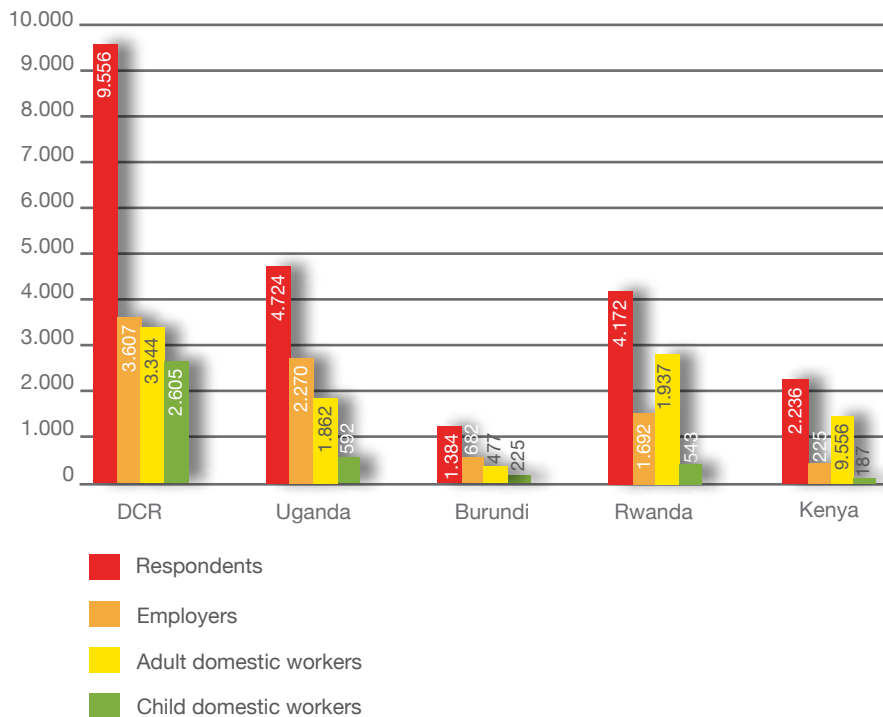
At the initiative of the IDAY coalitions in 4 East African countries and DRC large regional surveys were carried out in order to assess the real scope of domestic work and to define future actions to protect child and young domestic workers. These surveys identified the socio-economic profile of domestic workers (number, social origin, literacy level, etc) and of their employers, as well as the expectations of domestic workers in terms of training, and the employers’ professional demands.

In 2013, 2014 and 2015, the **IDAY network collected quantitative and qualitative data from more than 22.000 respondents** – child and adult domestic workers as well as employers - **in the DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya**. A harmonized questionnaire among the 5 countries was developed, to collect comparable data among the countries. Each survey team could adapt the common questionnaire to the national context. Competent Ministries, National Institute of Statistics, universities and development stakeholders in each of the countries were involved in the definition of the methodology, data collection and validation of the national reports<sup>1</sup>.

This regional report gathers the key results of the national surveys, and highlights some of the convergences and disparities among the 5 countries.

This survey’s results are unique. They are intended to convince the authorities and the public at large of the urgent need to engage strong and long term actions to protect child and young domestic workers. We hope the report will contribute to bringing the domestic workers out of the shadows and give them the necessary visibility to mobilize the authorities to uphold their rights.

<sup>1</sup> The full national reports are available on [www.invisibleworkers.eu](http://www.invisibleworkers.eu)



Samples were defined by statisticians in order to obtain nationally representative data. Only in Burundi did the survey not cover the entire country, for security reasons for the surveyors.

## DOMESTIC WORKERS ARE ESTIMATED AT **8.5 MILLION** IN THE REGION.

⇒ **Children in domestic work**: Despite numerous measures to fight against child labour and various mechanisms to achieve universal basic education, **children and young people continue to be involved on a large scale in domestic work in the 5 countries**. Important differences should be noted: while 44% of domestic workers in the DRC are under 18, only 11% are below that age in Kenya. 32% of domestic workers are under 18 in Burundi, 24% in Uganda and 22% in Rwanda. In general, children and young people aged below 30 years old account for more than 80% of the domestic workers group.

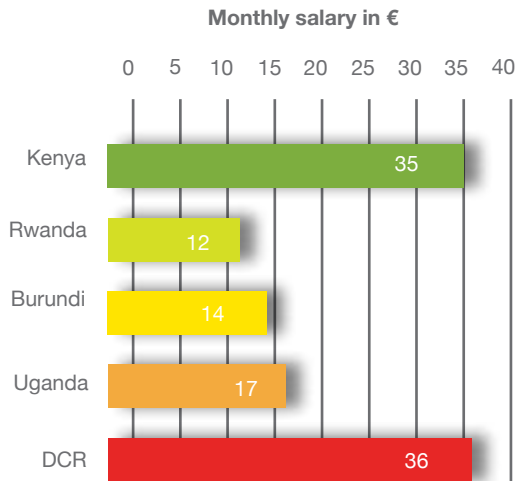
⇒ **Gender in domestic work**: **Women are slightly over-represented in domestic work**, with about 6 women for 4 men, except in Burundi where men are the majority. **This trend clearly increases among child domestic workers**, with a growing proportion of girls including in Burundi. The DRC is the only exception, with 53% of boys and 47% of girls.

⇒ **Access to education**: About 2/3 of domestic workers from the sub-region were given access to primary education. Still, **almost 1 in 5 domestic workers never went to school**: 17% in the DRC, 15% in Uganda, 25% in Burundi, 12% in Rwanda and 18% in Kenya.

The domestic workers below 18 in all 5 countries largely expressed their desire to go back to school (about 78%). The adult domestic workers were more interested in professional trainings (about 79%), including to professionalize themselves as domestic worker.



⇒ **Wages of domestic workers**: Only the Kenyan law imposes a minimum wage for domestic workers (KES 10.954, about 99 € per month). **Regulation does not exist in any of the other countries.** Domestic workers in East Africa and the DRC live predominantly below the new absolute poverty line defined in October 2015 at \$1.90 per day and per person<sup>2</sup>.



National average including average incomes of children. However, payments in nature (accommodation, food, clothes, etc) are not included in these data.

Thus a Ugandan domestic worker earning a monthly salary of 17€ lives far below the poverty line! Nonetheless, this calculation must consider that the domestic worker may partially benefit from accommodation, food, clothes or health care from his/her employer.

The data collected are very alarming, as the **average wage in each of the survey countries is below the absolute poverty line.**

⇒ **And what about employers?** 8.776 employers participated in the survey, including 55% of men and 45% of women. **Only 40%** of them **express the willingness to give some time off to their domestic workers to acquire skills.**

At regional level, **the main skills requested by employers are uniform: reading and writing, cooking, child care, first aid and hygiene.**

<sup>2</sup><http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/policy-research-note-03-ending-extreme-poverty-and-sharing-prosperity-progress-and-policies>





The national surveys on the situation of domestic workers have highlighted that the **working conditions, and broadly speaking, the living conditions of domestic workers are widely similar in the 5 countries**: poor housing in the employer's house, lack of written contracts, little if any leave, mistreatment, poor representation in professional and political organisations, etc.

On the whole, the **legal frameworks of the survey countries do not provide for special measures in relation to domestic work**. This trade is simply not recognized as a fully-fledged profession. Gaps in legal instruments are numerous. **None of the countries participating in the project has ratified the International Labour Organisation Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers**. It is noted however that Kenya stands out, as the ratification process is underway.

Currently there is no accredited training of domestic workers in these countries. There are no known efforts made by the competent governmental bodies to develop training programs adapted to the availability and the needs of domestic workers

**The IDAY network aims at supporting its members in developing, together with their government, curricula for domestic work and training programs adapted to young people involved in domestic work**. Local domestic workers training initiatives run by IDAY members already exist. They are pilot experiences that can be scaled up in the sub-region.



### PARTNERS OF THE SURVEY

IDAY-DRC and its branch IDAY-DRC/Kivu, the Comité d'appui au travail social de rue (CATSR), Women and Children Protection (WCP), General Secretariat for Youth (Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Arts), National Institute of Statistics.

### GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

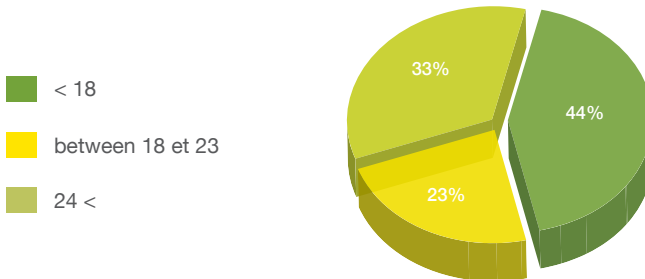
The survey covered the 11 provinces of the country: City-province of Kinshasa, Bas-Congo, Bandundu, Equateur, Kasai Oriental, Kasai Occidental, South-Kivu, North-Kivu, Katanga, Maniema and Province Orientale.

The survey targeted urban areas. Rural areas have not been surveyed.

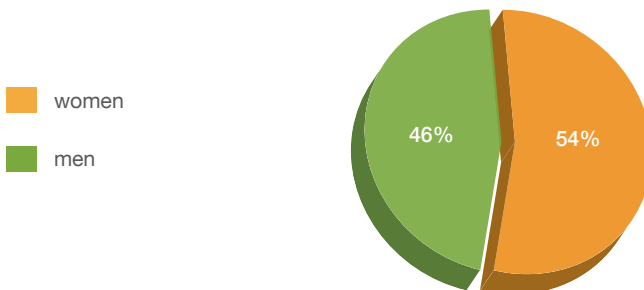
### NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

9.556 respondents: 3.607 employers and 5.949 domestic workers.

Age distribution ▀ domestic workers



Gender distribution ▀ domestic workers



**Domestic workers in the DRC are largely made of children, including children below 14 years old, and young adults.** About 37% of domestic workers have attained secondary education (without competing). Poverty is the main driver for children to abandon their education and start working as domestic helps. The survey nevertheless reveals that almost half the child domestic workers are still receiving an education while working.

Indeed, **many poor families send their child to an uncle, cousin or other relative to work in exchange for a guarantee that the child will be able to continue to attend school.** Despite the commitment of the government of the DRC to provide free education to all children, it should be noted that educating a child remains a financial challenge for many families in the country.

**Nevertheless, 95% of child domestic workers express their desire to return to school or to benefit from vocational training.** More than 7/10 of adult domestic workers express a need for vocational training. Many of them are even willing to financially contribute towards such training.

**Employers** also confirm a need to train their domestic workers, principally in skills such as cooking, reading and writing and arithmetic. However, a majority of employers (57%) are not ready to make time available for their domestic worker to attend training, nor to support them financially.

**In their place of work, domestic workers suffer many forms of abuse** from employers or relatives: verbal violence (23%), excessively low wages (20%), overwork and exhaustion (18%) or late payment of wages (17%). One adult domestic worker out of four has already been the victim of sexual harassment at work: the rate is one out of three with children.



**PARTNERS OF THE SURVEY**

IDAY-Uganda, Uganda Children Centre (UCC), ANPPCAN Uganda chapter, National Council for Children (NCC) and departments of statistics and sociology of Makerere University.

**GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE**

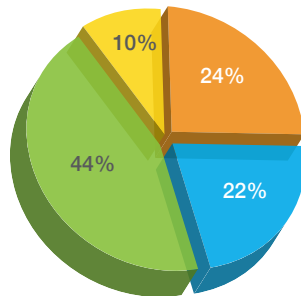
17 districts were surveyed among the 4 regions of Uganda: Kampala, Jinja, Iganga, Mbale, Soroti, Mukono, Wakiso, Masaka, Lyantonde, Masindi, Hoima, Mbarara, Bushenyi, Moroto, Gulu, Lira, Arua.

**NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS**

4.724 respondents: 2.270 employers and 2.454 domestic workers.

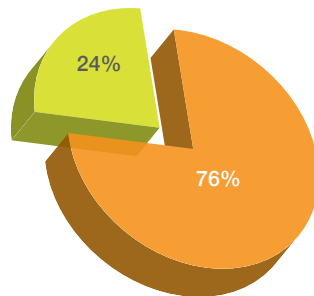
Age distribution — domestic workers

- <18
- between 18-20
- between 20-30
- 30<



Gender distribution — domestic workers

- women
- men



Among the 2.454 domestic workers interviewed, there is a **significant ratio of children (24%)** and most of them are girls. This reality has been confirmed by the employers' data, as 67% of employers prefer to employ female domestic workers.

The age distribution of domestic workers shows that **9/10 domestic worker are below 30 years old**.

The data shows that **children are more vulnerable to violence than adults**: 34% of child domestic workers have experienced emotional, sexual or physical abuses, compared with 27% of adults. 11% of children are not paid. Children (84%) are also less frequently paid in cash than adults (96%). Exploitation of children is also revealed by their salary: the youngest are less paid, some of them earning as little as UGX 30.000 (about 7€) while workers over 30 years old may earn up to UGX 100.000 (about 26€) and more. Salaries increase according to the age but also to the gender: men are more frequently granted salaries increase than women.

Due to the current Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in the country, **only 15% of the domestic workers had never gone to school**. This rate increases with the age of the workers, as the older ones did not benefit from this programme. However, despite those efforts, the main reason for dropping out of school was financial problems to pay school fees. Dropping out of school results in looking for an immediate and unskilled job. **Still 90% of child domestic workers are willing to go back to school**. Young girls have more expressed this will than the boys.

**AND THE EMPLOYERS?** Women (57%) are slightly more represented than men (43%). Employers are mainly aged between 30-39, with 76% of them married and 91% having children. The average household size is 4 to 5 persons.



## PARTNERS OF THE SURVEY

IDAY-Burundi, *Terre des Hommes*-Burundi, Ministry of Labour, National Institute of Statistic and Economics Studies, the *Centre pour l'Auto-Développement des Domestiques* (CAD), Giriyuja, Italian NGO AVSI, UNICEF.

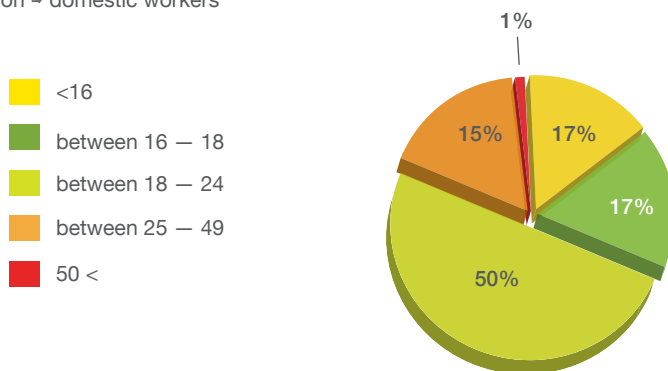
## GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

Bujumbura city and provincial capitals Gitega, Ngozi and Rumonge.

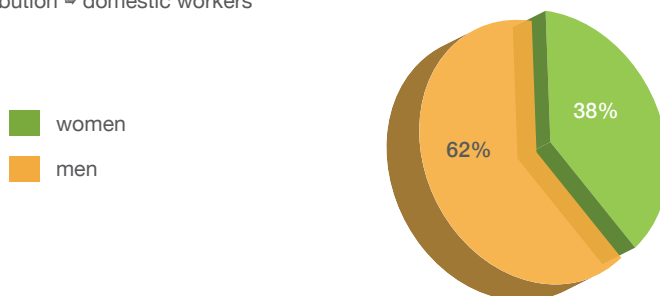
## NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

1.384 respondents, with 682 employers and 702 domestic workers.

Age distribution ⇒ domestic workers



Gender distribution ⇒ domestic workers



There is a **predominance of men** in domestic work compared to women. This trends reverses among children: 61% of girls for 39% of boys. This phenomenon even increases within the groups of 13-15 years old and below 13 years hold, where respectively 67% and 100% are girls.

**Domestic workers comprise mostly Burundian migrants:** a population coming from rural areas and poor families. They mainly come from the provinces of Ngozi (22%), Gitega (21%) and Kayanza (15%). Domestic workers are either **recruited directly by the employers** (12%) or **indirectly via an intermediary** (relative, another domestic worker, domestic workers' association, recruitment agency, etc) who negotiates the work in place of the domestic worker.

**WHAT ABOUT THE EMPLOYERS?** Employers are mainly males (61%), aged 25-45 married and monogamous (79%). 95% of employers are of Burundian nationality. They are self-employed workers (32%), middle managers and supervisors (27%), senior managers, engineer and assimilated workers (13%), employees and skilled labourers (9%), employees and semi-skilled labourers (4%), etc.

More than a quarter of them has already faced a conflicting situation with their domestic worker. Conflicts concern irresponsibility (26%), unauthorised exits (19%), thefts (15%), etc. The measures taken are advice (26%), warnings (27%) or pardon (6%). There are also punitive measures, such as dismissals (20%), non-payment of the salary (6%), repair of damage material (3%), beating (2%), reprimand (2%) or legal action (1%). **These sanctions can be unfairly imposed on domestic workers and translated into various abuses and forms of exploitation. They then become source of many frustrations.**

**95% of employers state that they do not give paid leave to their domestic workers.** They argue that on the whole they do not have the right to it and that it would represent an additional charge.



**PARTNERS OF THE SURVEY**

IDAY-Rwanda, CLADHO, the National Child Council (NCC) and the labour union CESTRAR, as well as the statistician of CDP-Rwanda (Community Development Project).

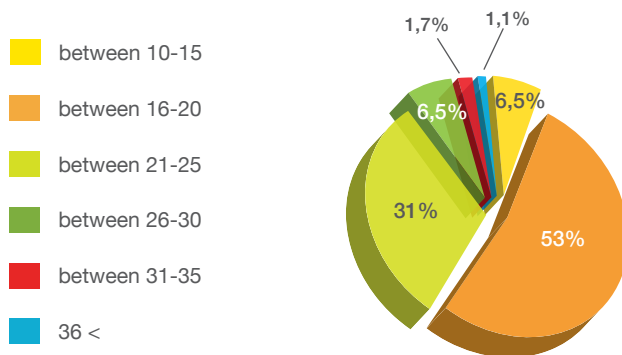
**GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE**

The survey targeted the 5 provinces of the country. 15 districts have been selected out of the 30 national districts (Kicukiro, Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Muhanga, Ruhango, Huye, Karongi, Rusizi, Rubavu, Musanze, Gicumbi, Kayonza, Nyagatare, Kirehe and Bugesera).

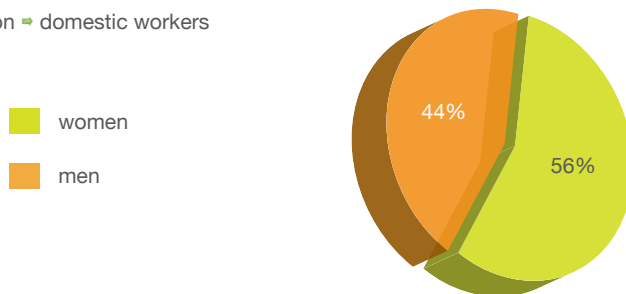
**NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS**

4.172 respondents: 1.692 employers and 2.480 domestic workers

Age distribution — domestic workers



Gender distribution — domestic workers





In Rwanda, most of domestic workers are Rwandan (99%). They are mainly (very) young people below 25, and are single (95%). 82% of domestic workers have attained primary school education and only 5% secondary school

The major reasons for entering domestic work are the **parents' extreme poverty** and/or the **orphanhood**. The qualitative findings highlighted that the **appeal of urban life, the will of building capital to launch small projects later and face unemployment constitute additional factors for young people to engage in domestic work**.

The mean salary of domestic workers is RWF 11.900 per month, equivalent to about 14€. Despite the low salary they earn, most of the domestic workers were willing to contribute to the costs of attending vocational training.

**AND THE EMPLOYERS?** They each employ 1 to 2 domestic workers. **73% of them are willing to give their employees several hours per week for training**. This is one of the highest rates of the sub-region.

However, **terms of employment for a very large majority of domestic workers are verbal**. This situation sometimes leads to some abuse either by the employer or the employee and does not promote a stable and professional employment relationship. In addition the majority of the domestic workers are working for long hours every day including Saturdays and Sundays and do not enjoy proper time off as there is no regulation for a standardized weekly or annual leave. Despite this lack of rights, no domestic worker declared belonging to a trade union.



## PARTNERS OF THE SURVEY

IDAY-Kenya, Partners in Literacy Ministries (PALM), Italian NGO European Committee for Training and Agriculture (CEFA), Kenyatta University, Directorate of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE) of the Ministry of Education

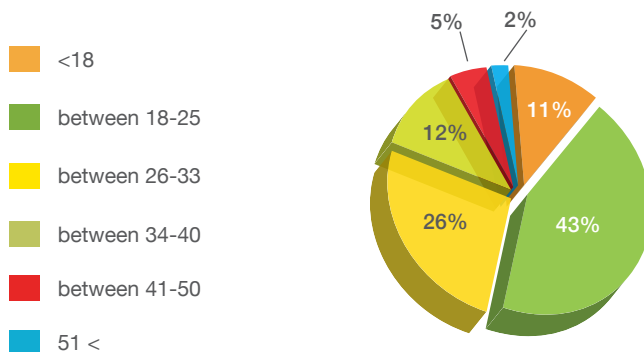
## GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

15 counties selected among the 47 counties in Kenya: Isiolo, Meru, Taita Taveta, Kilifi, Kinrinyaga, Machakos, Nairobi, Kiambu, Nakuru, Baringo, Uasin Gishu, Kakamega, Busia, Homa Bay and Kisii.

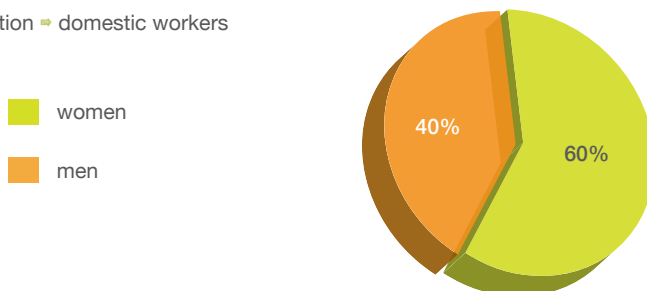
## NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

2.236 respondents: 525 employers and 1.711 domestic workers.

Age distribution = domestic workers



Gender distribution = domestic workers



The national survey in Kenya reveals that **49% of domestic workers are aged between 18-25. Kenya has the lowest percentage of child domestic workers (11%) compared to the other targeted countries.** This is attributed to the free primary education provided by the Kenyan government as well as efforts by the Kenyan labour office to end child labour. 54% of domestic workers stopped their education at primary level; 27% of them reached secondary level. The majority of the child domestic workers are in Kiambu and Meru counties. 15% of interviewed children are under 14 years old.

Cities have the highest concentration of domestic workers, which confirms the **rural exodus to the urban areas.** Nairobi County had the highest number of domestic workers, followed by Kiambu and Nakuru. This finding underlines the important role played by domestic workers as they offer the much-needed support to workers in other sectors of the economy.

**AND THE EMPLOYERS?** Most of the employers of domestic workers were women (67%), aged 30-39 (36%), married (81%) and with young families, more so, with school-going children. This group is in need of domestic work services as most of them work outside their home and need someone to mind their children while they are away.

Employers reported many challenges in dealing with domestic workers including **leaving without notice, poor quality of work, lack of basic skills, poor time management and harassment of the children** among others. A large percentage of employers (94,3%) were willing to give some time off to their domestic workers to acquire skills. 75% of employers even expressed the willingness to make financial contributions towards training their domestic employees.

**Kenya government established a minimum wage of KES 10.954, about 99€,** for all workers in cities, including domestic workers. Still, 65% of employers indicated that the monthly salary was KES 2.500-5.000 (between 22€ and 44€). This means that **even if it is a prerequisite, legislation alone may not guarantee higher remuneration to domestic workers.**



# CONTACT



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