



Celebrating International Domestic Workers Day on 16th June 2016

8th June 2016

On June 16th 2016 Doras Luimní will celebrate the 5th International Domestic Workers Day. On this date in 2011 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention. The Convention lays down basic rights and principles to make decent work a reality for domestic workers. Ireland ratified the ILO Domestic Workers Convention – or C189 – in July 2014. This means that a domestic worker in Ireland is entitled to the same protections under the law as any other worker. This includes the following: a contract, sufficient daily and/or weekly rest, a salary no lower than the minimum wage, paid annual leave, compensation for overtime work as well as social security contributions.

At the time of ratification Ireland was among a small group of ILO member countries to have ratified this Convention. To date, only 14 ILO member countries out of 185 have ratified the Domestic Workers Convention and Ireland was only the third EU country to ratify. Finland has since followed suit.

In Ireland and globally it is not uncommon for domestic workers to suffer a variety of abuses, owed in part to the hidden nature of their work. The lack of labour inspections or protections under employment law, and the widespread and gendered assumptions fuel the notion that domestic work is not work. In fact, domestic work is not considered work in many countries. Of the 50 million domestic workers worldwide only 10% are protected by national employment laws, and the vast majority of these workers are female. Consequently domestic workers suffer multiple layers of discrimination. Gender inequality perpetuated in home countries and the lack of adequate educational opportunities for women can force many to migrate under inequitable circumstances only to be exploited in countries where domestic work is not recognised as work.

Domestic workers fill a much needed care deficit. Forms of domestic work include cleaning, taking care of children, nursing in the home and care of the elderly. UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Lakshmi Puri recently stated that, as the cost of child care soars and public spending on child minding decreases women migrants are increasingly being “imported to care”. Demographic shifts in ageing societies, the lack of affordable public care, health sector cut backs and gaps leave room for exploitation of vulnerable women migrants. More recently au pairs, originally considered participants in a “cultural exchange”, have filled this care deficit by providing cheap childcare alternatives.

Doras Luimní Director, Leonie Kerins said “We call for the economic empowerment of these migrant workers, mostly women, by respecting them as workers and as rights holders. This is incredibly important work. They deserve the same rights as any other worker”.

Ms Kerins added “We also know that there are good employers of domestic workers who encourage and support their workers. International Domestic Workers Day seeks to recognise this too. We call on domestic workers to get their fair employers on our ‘Fair Employers Limerick 2016’ list through our Fair Work Standards Limerick campaign which can be found on our website”.

ENDS

Notes

- Doras Luimní is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Limerick. Our mission is to promote and uphold the human rights and wellbeing of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns at the local and national level.
- Fair Work Standards Limerick is a campaign implemented by Doras Luimní that aims to highlight the positive workplaces in Limerick and the employers that strive to meet decent standards of employment. Employees can nominate their employer via a survey on our website at www.dorasluimni.org/fair-work-standards

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