

## What YOU can do...

### Support Kalayaan

Our current level of funding in no way allows us to meet the needs of the migrant domestic worker community. Although we are working hard to raise additional funds, support and donations from the public will allow more to be done. **Please help** if you can. Cheques can be made payable to Kalayaan and can be posted to the address below.

### Endorse the Charter of Rights for Migrant Domestic Workers

We are currently gathering signatures in endorsement of the Charter (see back of leaflet), please fill in the endorsement form and fax/post it back to Kalayaan (address below).

### Support the Campaign for Ratification of the UN Migrants Rights Convention

This convention lays down comprehensive rights for migrants – however, it has only been ratified by ‘sending’ countries. No European countries have ratified the convention. For more information on this campaign, please visit [www.december18.net](http://www.december18.net) or [www.migrantsrights.org](http://www.migrantsrights.org).

For further information or sending donations:

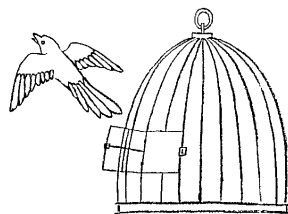
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## CHARTER OF RIGHTS FOR MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS

Domestic work in private households is important to European family life, to European economies and to European support systems. It is demanding work, which requires a variety of skills and is often done by women who have migrated to Europe. Many have left their families in an attempt to find a way out of poverty. Their dignity and their rights as people and workers must be protected.

We call for justice and equity for all migrant domestic workers; whether they are documented or undocumented; whether they are live-in or live-out; whether first or second generation; whether they are born in Africa, Asia, South America or Europe. Member states of the European Union must recognise the intrinsic dignity and crucial importance of domestic work and seek to educate their citizens accordingly. Relevant organisations in the EU have a duty to ensure that migrant domestic workers have information and the means to access the following rights:

The **right** to an immigration status that recognises that domestic work in the private house is proper work;

The **right** to an immigration status independent of any employer;

The **right** to travel both within the host country and between all countries of the EU;

The **right** to full and non-discriminatory employment rights and social protection, including minimum wage, sickness and maternity pay, and pension rights;

The **right** to change employer;

The **right** to a legally enforceable contract of employment setting out minimum wages, maximum hours and responsibilities;

The **right** to work free from fear of physical, sexual or psychological abuse;

The **right** to join a trade union;

The **right** to live and work free from racism;

The **right** to family life, including health, education and social rights for the children of migrant domestic workers;

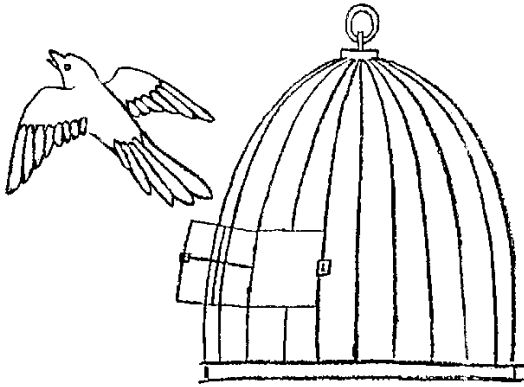
The **right** to recognition of qualifications, training and experience;

The **right** to personal and leisure time.

PLEASE ENDORSE THIS CHARTER (see overleaf)

# KALAYAAN!

## Justice for Migrant Domestic Workers



## Information Leaflet Autumn 2000

### Migrant Domestic Workers treated as slaves

Kalayaan (meaning 'freedom' in Tagalog) was established in 1987 to support MDWs in their struggle against abuse and exploitation. In particular we worked to campaign for changes in immigration practices that tied workers to their employers. MDWs could enter the UK legally with employers, but were not allowed to change their employer. If

the worker left the employer with whom they entered the UK, they could be deported on the expiry of their original visa. This system clearly violated the basic rights of MDWs. Inevitably, many workers did leave their employers, frequently after enduring severe and lengthy abuse; they were then forced to work without papers which placed them in a second highly vulnerable situation. Most experienced further abuse and exploitation.

In July 1998, with the support and solidarity of trades unions and NGOs, we achieved a substantial victory. The Government agreed to change the immigration rules so that MDWs entering the UK have the right to change employers within the same field of work. The Government also agreed to provide a time-limited Regularisation Programme, in order to regularise the status of those migrant domestic workers who had become undocumented due to fleeing from an abusive employer. This programme ended in October 1999.

During this period, Kalayaan also served as a support and advice service for MDWs and worked in close co-operation with the United Workers Association (UWA; formerly Waling-Waling) which is a self-help group run by and for MDWs. The two organisations currently have a membership of about 4,000 workers from 30 different nationalities.

### Why we need your help to continue our work...

Despite Kalayaan's victory, MDWs continue to experience serious abuse and exploitation. One worker who arrived in **July 2000** told us:

**"I worked 17 hours a day and they woke me in the night if they needed anything. The employer's wife insulted me and called me 'dog' or 'animal'. I had to sleep on the floor in the child's room and he would hit me. I got \$180 a month, but sometimes they did not pay me."**

- A number of MDWs were prevented from participating in the Regularisation Programme (either because they did not know of the programme's existence, could not meet the deadline, could not meet the detailed criteria or were unable to produce adequate evidence of their history). These workers remain without papers and continue to be in a highly vulnerable position through no fault of their own.
- Even those MDWs who have managed to benefit from the Regularisation Programme are still highly vulnerable to exploitation. MDWs are discriminated against on many levels, including race, gender, the nature of their work, as migrants, as non-fluent speakers of English etc. For this reason, many workers continue to experience abuse and exploitation, frequently because they are not aware of their rights or are too intimidated to exercise these rights.
- MDWs who have regularised their position now need further support and advice services in order to benefit from their regularisation. Services need to include information and advice on employment rights, violence, abuse and racism, family reunification, tax and NI, community support, training, ESOL classes, free legal advice etc.

## **What does Kalayaan provide for Migrant Domestic Workers?**

Kalayaan works hand in hand with the United Workers Association (self-help group for migrant domestic workers), the Transport and General Workers Union and other NGOs in the UK and in Europe in order to provide an informed and client-led service to MDWs.

At present we provide:

- Drop-in advice and support (6 days a week) covering generalist and specialised advice, offering support with finding employment, information about rights and immigration issues, writing letters, counselling, registering with a doctor or seeking legal advice etc. Our advisers also make referrals to specialist agencies etc.
- Emergency support (where possible arranging short-term accommodation, clothes, money etc)
- Liaison with other services on behalf of clients (e.g. police, solicitors, employers etc)
- Community centre (6 days a week) for picking up mail, meeting with other workers, socialising, sharing experiences etc.
- Free monthly legal surgery
- Weekly ESOL/literacy class (£5 per year)
- Workshops on particular issues (such as violence, racism etc)
- Campaigning on behalf of particular clients (e.g. if they are in danger of deportation or being held in detention)
- Trade union membership for workers and referral to other organisations
- European-level networking with MDWs and organisations involved in our RESPECT Migrant Domestic Workers European Network (see [www.solidar.org](http://www.solidar.org) for more information).