

LERC Attends ILO Workshop on Migrant Domestic Workers

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In the context of the EU-funded project “Action Programme for Promoting the Rights of Women Migrant Domestic Workers/PROWD,” representative of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) attended the International Labour Organization’s Regional Office for Arab States (ILO-ROAS) three-day workshop on enhancing Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) engagement in the campaign for migrant domestic workers rights, which was held at Holiday Inn Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon from June 27 to 29 June.

Addressing several topics, the first two days of the workshop involved presentations and discussions were held. Marie Jose Tayah, the ILO representative, discussed international conventions and treaties, which deal with the rights of Migrant Domestic Workers (MDW) and most importantly Convention No. 189 concerning the decent work for domestic workers.

A lawyer from KAFA, a local NGO, presented the legal process of how a MDW should enter or leave Lebanon and how sponsors (Arabic term: *kafil*) are violating the law and the basic human rights of the MDW.

Mohammed Marsal, a media consultant drew the attention of the participants toward the challenges the media faces in reporting cases of abuse of migrant domestic workers. He emphasized that the media’s role is not to report the news at face value. The media has the power to investigate and make the public aware of all the links in the chain of events that lead to an incident by asking: Why did the abuse take place? How many others are suffering under the same conditions? Who is responsible? What is the role of government and/or civil welfare societies in intervening and playing an effective role by providing possible solutions and putting forward recommendations?

The third, and last day of the workshop, was a forum bringing together members of civil society and the media in order to develop a framework of cooperation and to discuss ways in which these institutions can further their commitment in promoting the rights of migrant domestic workers from the standpoint of international labor standards. Civil societies cannot promote their mission without the involvement of the media, and the media cannot report professionally and accurately without collecting data and expertise from those involved with the MDW on a daily basis. The workshop was adjourned in the hope of witnessing the ratification of a fair labor law in a country, which respects human rights.