

MIGRANT RIGHTS



PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

Changing the narrative on domestic workers through employer advocacy
and recruitment reform in Qatar

A Qualitative Study

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The Shelter Me Project
By



in partnership with



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Shelter ME aims to break the isolation of migrant domestic workers, reform recruitment, improve relationships between employers and migrant domestic workers (MDWs), and make governments in countries of origin act responsibly. The program recognizes that these interventions can only take root in an environment where there is a positive narrative about migrant domestic workers. Shelter ME also conducts campaigns to create an enabling environment and change the narrative on migrant domestic workers both in countries of origin and destination.

The program engages non-traditional stakeholders; primarily employers of MDWs. Employer advocacy and outreach initiatives enable a balanced approach, taking into account the views and experiences of employers and use the same medium to influence positive changes in the employment relationship. Other non-traditional stakeholders include businesses and embassies (as employers of MDW employers). As part of its multi-stakeholder approach, the program targets recruitment agents directly and indirectly (depending on the context) to make the sector more transparent, fair, and to positively influence their practices on the ground through training and dissemination of various tools.

The support extended by the Embassy of Netherlands in Qatar was invaluable, from supporting to steer the project at its inception to, connecting with stakeholders.

This report is based solely on the research conducted by facilitators based in Qatar, with the support of participants who willingly gave their time and aired their views openly. Neither this research nor this report would have been possible without their support. A special note of gratitude is extended to participants who welcomed facilitators into their homes for interviews and group discussions. The information gathered from these individuals is being used to formulate future actions and policies to promote safe migration, fair recruitment and beneficial employment practices.

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01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The feminization of domestic work and the low status of migrant domestic workers is a visible social encounter in Qatar. The abuse and exploitation of domestic workers on the other hand – tucked away in the privacy of employers' homes and hidden from public eye – is extensively documented. Such visible and invisible sources of domestic workers' vulnerability are swathed in a legislative system that excludes them and a social narrative that commodifies them.

In order to challenge this narrative and transform domestic work into an experience that leaves women respected and empowered (not weak and dehumanized), the perceptions of employers towards domestic workers needs to be understood. Needless to say there is a consistent link between perceptions and behavior: the devaluation of unpaid domestic work in employers' perceptions is reflected in the devaluation of paid domestic work, employers who perceived domestic workers as women who behave immorally denied them the right to socialize freely or access communication devices. Similarly employers who perceived Filipina domestic workers as being vocal or demanding would not employ Filipinas.

This research is an exploration of employers' perceptions of domestic workers, domestic work, and employment practices prevalent in Qatar¹. The study also examines the isolation of domestic workers through denial of right to day off, socializing space and access to communication. The findings are based on a qualitative study carried out through focus group discussions, online surveys and one to one interviews with employers. The main findings are summarized along with verbatim quotes from employers.

The research revealed that Qatar has its

This research is an exploration of employers' perceptions of domestic workers, domestic work, and employment practices prevalent in Qatar .

own unique dynamic of the employer-domestic worker relationship. Debunking a pervasive myth the study showed that exploitation and denial of rights are not confined to Qatari homes, but are also present in the homes of expatriates of different nationalities, who make up over 80% of Qatar's population. Furthermore, the study reveals that employers are cognizant of the lack of resources relating to the hiring and management of migrant domestic workers – there is a thirst for information. The Employers' Guide²(a Shelter ME publication) was well received by employers in Qatar, indicating that the publication filled a recognized void. The study also found that a considerable anomaly exists between employers' attitudes and action towards domestic workers: employers would sympathize with the status and poverty of the workers, but continued to justify their own treatment on the basis of paying "exorbitant fees" to recruitment agencies.

The research indicates that improving the living and working conditions of migrant domestic workers in Qatar requires a multipronged approach including advocating for the abolition of the sponsorship system, formalizing domestic work under the labor law, advancing fair recruitment practices, and challenging societal norms and changing the narrative surrounding domestic workers. In the last mentioned approach (i.e. changing the narrative) employers have the potential of becoming an ally.

02

INTRODUCTION

There are at least 84,000³ women migrant domestic workers forming part of Qatar's 2.6 million population. The number is, in and of itself an indication of the contribution made by domestic workers to the country's lifestyle. And yet migrant domestic workers – mainly from South, Southeast Asia and Africa – continue to be unrecognized and ignored by a legal system which confers extensive powers on employers through the sponsorship law. Effectively domestic workers are denied even the most basic rights such as the right to know the terms of employment, the right to wage protection and regulated working hours.

Legal exclusion is not the only source of their vulnerability. Social marginalization and gender discrimination are defining characteristics of a domestic worker's reality too. These sources together have created an exploited segment of society facing multiple abuses including forced labor, forced confinement, unpaid wages, physical, psychological and sexual abuse. The extreme vulnerability of domestic workers is laid bare in the case of women who report sexual abuse and risk being charged with "illicit relations" (sexual relations outside of marriage) a crime normally punished with a year in jail and deportation in Qatar; this in the context of domestic workers making up approximately 70 percent of Qatar's women's prison⁴.

84,000

Women migrants

2.6 million

Qatar population.

Domestic workers make up approximately

70%

of Qatar's women's prison .

¹. Similar studies have been carried out in Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon. *Employers' perspectives towards domestic workers in Jordan* (ILO), *Employers' perspectives towards domestic workers in Kuwait* (ILO) and *A study of Employers of Migrant Domestic workers in Lebanon* (ILO).

². Your Guide to Employing a Foreign Domestic Worker (www.migrant-rights.org)

³. "My sleep is my break": *Exploitation of domestic workers in Qatar*(Amnesty International, 2014)

⁴. Ibid

2.1

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The relationship between a domestic worker and employer is complicated. While the boundaries of a regular working relationship may become blurred, it continues to remain a contractual obligation on both sides. Making the match between employers and domestic workers is never easy so is navigating through rights and responsibilities and practically implementing them in the private space of one's home.

Likewise, the process of recruiting a domestic worker (and finding employment as a domestic worker) is complicated too. Both parties are highly dependent on recruitment agencies, for whom the well-being and needs of the employer and employee is the least priority.

There is need for detailed information on the full gamut of the employment relationship: "What are the social and cultural implications of hiring a domestic worker?" "How do employers keep boundaries and build a trust relationship?" "How do employers perceive domestic work and domestic workers?" "What are employers' experiences and perceptions of recruitment agencies?" are some of the questions in this knowledge gap.

The expected result of this research was to close this knowledge gap to the extent possible and to collect data to inform advocacy efforts to present a more balanced approach. These insights have been shared with governments in countries of origin and recruitment agents. Policy briefs to the Indonesian labor ministry have been informed by the research findings. Similarly eighty seven recruitment agencies in Qatar⁵ were oriented based on the findings of this research. The orientation discussed the gaps in expectations between employers and employees, and how recruitment agents can tackle this gap, provide ethical services and sustain satisfied clients.

The expected result of this research was to close this knowledge gap to the extent possible and to collect data to inform advocacy efforts to present a more balanced approach.

Furthermore, the methodology (focus group discussions and one on one interviews with employers) provided a venue to indirectly advocate for the rights of domestic workers and influence employers' mindsets about the employment relationship. The discussions/ interviews far exceeded expectations in terms of how employers would provide insights: overall there was an atmosphere of sharing, learning from and reflecting on each other's viewpoints. While the discussions were useful in understanding issues in recruitment, employers' awareness of laws governing domestic workers and such, they also provided a far deeper understanding of the employer-employee dynamic, including issues employers consider important in hiring domestic workers and how they deploy a mixture of techniques (coercion, threats, rules) to regulate the behavior of domestic workers. Insight into this relationship provides the foundation for further advocacy with employers, recruitment agents and governments.

5. These recruitment agencies are all registered with the Philippines Embassy. The Shelter ME training module integrated research findings with the current Philippines embassy training module used in the Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar (POAS).

03

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND LIMITATIONS

The data for this research was collected over a period of twenty two months, from January 26, 2015 to November 9, 2016. The research was approached qualitatively and was sourced through focus group discussions, one to one interviews, and online surveys.

3.1 RESEARCH COVERAGE

The research sought answers to four primary questions:

1. What are employers' attitudes and perceptions of domestic workers?
2. What are the employment practices prevalent in Qatar?
3. To what extent is the employee's right to access communication, to days off from work and socialize being met?
4. What are employers' perceptions of and experiences with recruitment agencies?

3.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS⁶

To collect qualitative data the following research tools were used:

- 55 online surveys
- Eleven focus group discussions with 83 participants
- Four one to one interviews
- Notes and observations of the facilitators from discussions and interviews

Since employer advocacy is an initiative not undertaken in Qatar previously multiple tools were used in order to reach out to as many employers as possible. Focus group discussions placed the most demand on employers' time, not all employers were willing to commit this time. This latter group of employers was reached through the online survey (the online survey also provided the anonymity some respondents sought). Employers who were willing to commit their time but were unwilling to air their views in a group setting were reached through one on one interviews.



6. Not mentioned in the list of instruments is a presentation made to a group of over 100 employers at a local mosque as a part of Migrant-Right.org's Ramadan campaign (See Appendix A). While the presentation did not evolve into a full FGD, a few key concerns employers have were discussed.

Three out of the four one to one interviews were held in coffee shops and one at the employer's residence. Four focus group discussions were held in coffee shops in different locations around Doha, one discussion was held in the employer's house on invitation, three at the offices of the participants, one at a University and a last in a mosque where two of the participants worked. Focus group discussions lasted between 1.5 to 2.5 hours, interviews between 1 to 1.5 hours and surveys took 5 to 7 minutes to complete. Both group discussions and interviews offered the opportunity to examine⁷ issues affecting the employment relationship deeply. They provided facilitators a forum to engage in indirect advocacy with employers and encourage peer education and knowledge sharing among participants. On a negative note however the group setting also raised the possibility of respondents playing to an audience.

Participants were primarily female employers, both current and potential. Approximately 15 male employers attended two group discussions. Economic migrants from different nationalities, Qataris, working women, women who do not work, long-term employers⁸, new employers⁹



7. 96% of the respondents to the survey replied "Yes" when asked Do you allow the domestic worker to carry a mobile phone?. However in the group discussions and interviews it emerged that domestic workers "carried" phones under partial to extensive restrictions.

8. Employers who have been employing workers for over 20 years.

9. Employers who have been employing workers for less than one year.

10. Appendix B

and employers who have employed domestic workers in more than one country made up the research sample.

All discussions and interviews were recorded except one. The discussion was not recorded on a participant's request, and two facilitators took notes during the discussion.

Discussions were conducted under Chatham House rules.

The survey questionnaire¹⁰ was designed to give adequate coverage to the main questions the research sought to answer, and were drafted based on the Shelter ME project concept. Survey questions and the "Focus Group Module"¹¹ were used as a guide and methodology by facilitators to navigate through discussions and interviews. It is pertinent to note that while the survey helped to ask pointed questions, discussions and interviews used these questions as a guide to probe deeper into issues and elicit broader understanding. In some instances questions were amended to suit the group on facilitator's discretion.

3.3 SAMPLING

Participants were invited to take the survey and / or attend a discussion:

- A. If they employ a domestic worker/s currently or
- B. If they have employed a domestic worker recently
- C. If he/she is a potential employer of a domestic worker (i.e. is considering hiring and actively researching the matter, or is in the process of hiring an employee) or
- D. If they employ live-out/part time domestic worker/s

Invitations were sent through email and/or personal calls:

*Dear *Participant**

The Shelter ME project is a unique approach reaching out to employers (both current and potential). We want to understand the issues employers face in recruiting and employing domestic workers. With this information, gathered over several months, we hope to influence better practices in sending countries and better policies in receiving countries.

Through focus groups and workshops we want to understand in detail the process of recruitment; how this process can be changed to be more efficient for the employers and for the domestic workers to be fairly treated during the recruitment phase; the social and cultural implications of employing a live-in maid; and finally, how this relationship can be made advantageous to all involved.

Respondents (participants) were those employers who accepted the invitation and attended the discussion/interview. Multiple sampling methods were used to select samples, primarily because of limitations posed by the sensitivity surrounding the subject.

1. Snowball sample

Personal contacts (friends, colleagues, neighbors etc) of the facilitators were invited to the discussion. They were then asked to identify other potential participants, and those identified were invited and asked to identify further potential participants.

2. Accidental Sample

A key component of Shelter ME is collaboration with businesses. Through this collaboration Shelter ME provides guidelines to employers (i.e. employees of the company) of domestic workers to improve worker welfare policies on recruitment and treatment of domestic workers.¹² The primary target group for business advocacy were current and potential employers (with the exception of a few HR personnel who regularly face questions relating to the employment of domestic workers by staff). Two advocacy sessions with businesses evolved into focus group discussions and the research questions were discussed at length with the participants during these discussions.

Employers from the snowball sample who declined to be a part of the group discussion were invited to one to one interviews. Four such employers obliged and are included in the research sample.

A simple random sample of employers was used in identifying respondents for the online survey. Given the sensitivity of the subject employers were chosen from known networks and asked to respond to the survey and share it with peers.

11. Appendix C

12. Appendix E

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis comprised three stages:

- A. Recording
- B. Transcription
- C. Analysis

All except a few online surveys were conducted in Arabic. All group discussions and interviews were conducted in English and audio recorded, while facilitators took notes.

The recordings were transcribed after the workshops, and were analyzed in reports that were shared with the rest of the team. While the reports did not have a set format, they all followed the same trend seeking to answer the questions the research sought to cover.

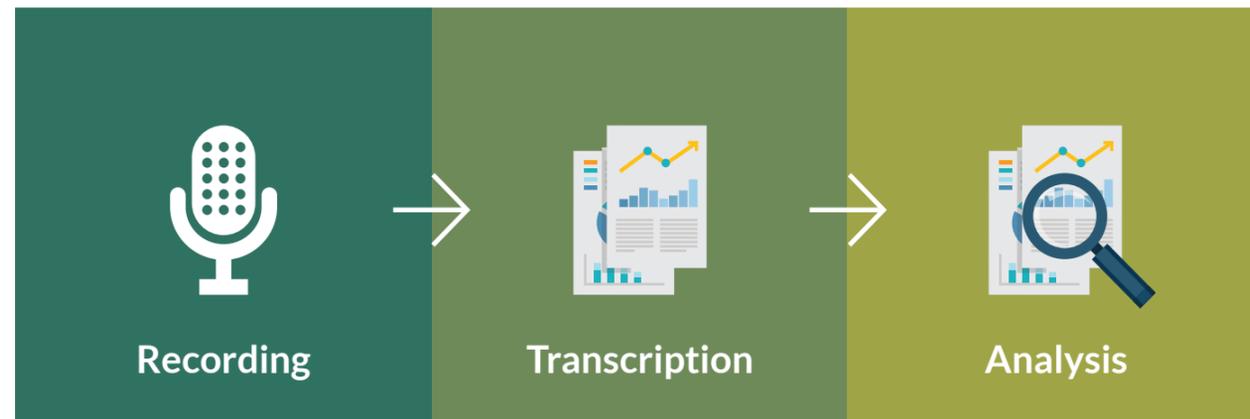
Data analysis involved a complex process of reading through reports, comparing notes between facilitators, reflecting on non-verbal cues and the context in which comments were made by the participants. Through this process various story lines, commonalities and differences in attitudes, and nuances in the working relationship between participants were identified.

3.5 LIMITATIONS

The key limitation in this research was the absence of a representative sample. Employers who participated in the discussions represent only a part of the population in Qatar, and do not represent an all inclusive spectrum of employers living in Qatar, or society as a whole. This limitation is posed by the sensitivity and general taboo surrounding the subject. The sample includes employers who were willing to speak to project facilitators and be a part of this project.

The sample is not representative of bedouin Arabs in Qatar, or Qatari employers who are not a part of the work force. All the Qataris who participated in the group discussions were either working women or university students. The sample includes western expatriate employers who are married to Qataris and are part of an extended Qatari family.

Despite the limitations the research captures nuances in the employment relationship, cements some previously held views and debunks myths. And it opened doors to advocacy in an indirect manner.



04

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Unlike any other employer-employee relationship, the one between a family and its household worker blurs the personal-professional line, making employers an important component in advocacy efforts pertaining to domestic workers.

Employers see themselves as vulnerable to exploitation by agents and workers. Across focus group discussions, respondents asserted that these discussions were *like counseling sessions* for them (indicating that they have had difficult experiences with domestic workers). An employer who received the invitation to attend a group discussion replied: *"I was looking for an opportunity where employers were able to have a voice and where they were abused by the employees!"*

The view of domestic workers as "khadama" or "maid" reinforces the devaluation of domestic work, the low social status of domestic workers, and the feminization of this work.

This section presents Shelter ME findings from eleven focus group discussions and four one to one interviews with employers of domestic workers. As the purpose of this report is to provide qualitative data related to the subject, brief references are made to the quantitative data emerging from the online survey where necessary.

Employers' verbatim responses are italicized.

4.1 PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DOMESTIC WORKERS

4.1.1 What's in a name?

Employers use the worker's name to directly address her, however in referring to the worker "khadama" and "maid" were two most commonly used terms. The terms "live-in", "live-out" and "servant" were also used, although to a lesser degree. Other common references included "returnee", "runaway", and "applicant", these names were more frequently used by recruitment agents¹³.

The absence of the terms "nanny" and "cook" maybe indicative of the fact that domestic workers in Qatar carry out myriad tasks around the house, dispensing a need to refer to them by their primary job responsibility: "domestic servants have been integrated into the home culture in the Qatari family and their roles conflated in child care and home care."¹⁴

Only one respondent seemed to be aware that "maid" was not an appropriate title and asked what would be an appropriate reference.

The view of domestic workers as "khadama" or "maid" reinforces the devaluation of domestic work, the low social status of domestic workers, and the feminization of this work.

¹³. Appendix D, See Appendix F for results of Recruitment Agencies survey of 400 employers in Qatar.

¹⁴. Khalifa, Batoul & Nasser, Ramzi (2015) *The closeness of the child to the domestic servant and its mediation by negative parenting behaviours in an Arab gulf country.*

4.1.2 The “place” of the worker in the employer’s home

Research findings indicate that employers have a contrasting approach to defining a worker’s “place” in their home. On one end of the spectrum a feudalistic, exploitative approach is visible while on the other end of the spectrum an inclination to “welcome the worker into the family” is observable, although ironically both approaches obstruct the formalization of domestic work and deny the worker’s access to labor rights.

Stemming from such feudalistic approaches is the view held by some respondents that submissiveness is a part of being a good employee.

Maids are demanding; they don’t say “oh madam, thank you for employing me”.

She is very good: she knows her place and helps when needed and doesn’t take the role of a mom.

The sterner you are the better they work.

[Employers must] toughen up [or else] they walk all over you.

The idea of being employed is not something they [domestic workers] understand.

One employer explained that she has switched from Filipinas to Sri Lankan domestic workers, because the former are too vocal and complain that six children is too much work.

Contrasting this approach were employers who referred to domestic workers as *part of the family*. *She’s family and we treat her like family* were statements that were heard repeatedly. While clearly, the access a domestic worker has to her employer’s private space/home may have contributed to this view, its adverse effects on efforts to formalize domestic work is undisputed.

In one group discussion with four employers, all the respondents agreed that once the worker begins to view herself as part of the family, the concept of six-day working-week, and a regular day off become irrelevant. So was scheduling or maintaining a timesheet. Just as the family members *do not clock in and clock out* so did the employee, *as she was a part of the family: She’s generous with the time and effort (she puts) into household duties.*

One respondent – a home tutor,¹⁵ who is also an employer – explained how treating workers like family fosters a better employer-employee relationship. She explained how she observes a sense of *detachment from the maid* in her students’ homes.

You always get a sense of detachment from the maid, and my maid is like a part of the family. Maids [in those homes] go about like robots and kids don’t have a relationship with them. [It is] very easy to go over boundaries when they are detached from their maid. Young children are allowed to make them do anything. Not just pick up their books but do their work for them.

15. Home tutors have the unique position of being able to enter the private space of other employers. As this interviewee explained a home-tutor is not considered part of the family and neither is she treated as a stranger, which places them in an ideal position to open up discussions

about domestic workers (the interviewee had done so on numerous occasions). Home tutors are also in position to influence the mindset of children (and sometimes parents) through education.

4.1.3 The “value” of domestic work

In 2009 Qatar hosted 48,147 documented women migrant domestic workers¹⁶. According to the Labor Force Sample Survey of the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (Qatar) the highest average working hours are recorded in “household activities” at 57 hours weekly. Regional studies however note that working hours can go up to 100 weekly with no day off¹⁷. Yet, the numbers do not speak for themselves: it is widely reported that both employees and employers have low consciousness of domestic work; domestic workers’ contribution is grossly undervalued.

[I have] to trust somebody at home, someone that I don’t know anything about, that I have only read through a piece of paper, which will most likely be false, but we have no options. It’s difficult and not easy to leave your kids when you work. There is this sense of guilt also when you are a mother.

Across the group discussions the underlying tone was one of recognizing that domestic workers carry out useful work, but lacked an acknowledgement of the value of their contribution. Even working women and mothers attached little to no value to the work performed by domestic workers.

[I have] to trust somebody at home, someone that I don’t know anything about, that I have only read

through a piece of paper, which will most likely be false, but we have no options. It’s difficult and not easy to leave your kids when you work. There is this sense of guilt also when you are a mother.

While any assertion of the value of domestic work was absent, what emerged was an acknowledgement that *they deserve respect because they have left their homes to work here.*

I try to be different than the rest of the people when it comes to the way I treat my maid. Some of them are older than me and I don’t let them carry heavy stuff for example. I believe that if a woman left her country just to work for us, the least they deserve is someone to respect them. They are seen as people who don’t think and feel in most families. But I consider them differently.

At the end it is a matter of respect. From our side we should respect the people who are leaving their homes to work here and on the other hand they should respect the fact that we trust them to keep them between us even though we come from a different religion and different culture.

Two respondents had a unique perspective of the subconscious of domestic work and its impact on the work and attitude of the worker and conversely on the employment relationship. Explaining this anomaly one employer said that a domestic worker does not migrate to better her own life, she works to better the life of family back home, remits most of her earnings - *she has many mouths to feed*. There is no sense of earning or working to better one’s own life condition, and as a result of this duality *she loses motivation to work after a while.*

16. *Essential yet Invisible: Migrant Domestic Workers in the GCC* (Gulf Labor Markets and Migration, 2014)

17. *“My sleep is my break”: Exploitation of domestic workers in Qatar* (Amnesty International, 2014)

4.2 EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING PROGRAM

Employers voiced strong opinions about the relevance and effectiveness of pre-departure trainings. Many employers agreed that housekeeping skills were below standard, and that training centers impart misinformation. A respondent mentioned that she was aware, that *running away* (absconding) was presented as an option for workers in Sri Lanka at training centers (and agencies), and another explained that a domestic worker refused to leave the employer's residence even on her day off as the training centre had scared her into believing horror stories (about what could happen to WMDWs who venture out of the employer's residence).

Pre-departure trainings are irrelevant.

Domestic workers generally bring their habits from home: one employee used the employer's son's boxer shorts as a wiping cloth, another lacked any training related to personal hygiene such as clipping nails, and changing clothes regularly.

Post-arrival training is a must.

Some suggestions made by employers: post arrival training must encompass relevant information/education such as how to protect oneself in extreme weathers, cultural sensitivities in Qatar and in the homes of

Pre-departure trainings are irrelevant. Post-arrival training is a must.

different employers etc The training must address issues that may arise in relation to privacy, on maintaining a work ethic and must drive hard the idea of being employed – *the idea of being employed is not something they understand*. The training must also discourage a dependency relationship; much of the dependency relationship arises as a result of what is being communicated at training centers and agencies. Trainings must address fiscal issues geared towards financial planning and independence of employees during and after the course of employment.

4.3 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

4.3.1 Men vs women employers

Approximately 15 male employers participated in two Shelter ME focus group discussions. Male employers displayed a distinctly different approach to the employment of domestic workers. They showed little interest in discussing the nitty-gritties of employment or day-to-day management of workers. Issues such as timesheets, task lists and access to communication stimulated little to no discussion among them.

Approximately 15 male employers participated in two Shelter ME focus group discussions.

Clearly the role of men stopped at the end of the trail of paperwork: their primary concerns revolved around legal issues such as processing of visas, formalities related to renewal of passports, wages, security concerns and the legal liability of employers.

The following list of questions raised by male participants indicates issues which are of concern to them:

1. How can employers stay updated about regulations pertaining to nationalities? Is an employer legally allowed to sponsor a worker from his country of origin? What is the law on an Indian employer employing an Indian worker for instance?

2. Does the employee need the current sponsor's permission to change sponsorship?
3. If the employee is not living with the employer/sponsor is he/she still liable for the employee's (illegal) actions?
4. What is the liability of hiring undocumented workers? What is the liability of hiring absconding workers?
5. Is it legal for a worker living with the sponsor to work elsewhere? Is it legal to obtain the services of such a worker?
6. Does any part of the agency fees go to the worker's family?
7. What is a fair wage? How should the employer calculate a fair wage? What is acceptable as a minimum wage?
8. What is the employer's liability should the worker die in his house?
9. Can the employer be held liable for non-compliance with the laws of his country of origin in Qatar vis-a-vis his treatment of a domestic worker in Qatar?

4.3.2 What do employers look for in a domestic worker?

It was nothing to do with nationality, it was personality clashes said an employer who was dissatisfied with seven out of the eight domestic workers she had employed over the last eight years¹⁸. Realistic expectations on both sides are crucial in creating a good match between employer and domestic worker. For a majority of the employers, experience, training, and language were top priorities.

You have a mental list from previous experience.

Filipinos are wonderful, Indonesians are disaster.

Asians have a tendency to say yes and then figure it out later, [and this attitude was helpful in training the worker].

To many, the religion of the employee was irrelevant as a prerequisite to hiring:¹⁹ Muslim participants, for instance referred to *workers who wore a cross, or carried a bible*. Language on the other hand superseded religion in priority as it was viewed as a skill that affected the employment relationship *on a daily basis*. An employer decided to choose a *Kenyan* worker because *they speak English and it would be easier to communicate*. Participants who did not emphasize language as a prerequisite, on the other hand, expressed frustration about their reliance on Google translate: one participant explained how she felt frustrated when she could not find the worker's dialect on Google translate. Likewise, a group of Malaysian employers concurred that they preferred Indonesian workers because of shared culture- *we understand each other's culture* (and not shared religion, although Indonesian

workers are predominantly Muslims).

Perceptions of, and negative experiences (one's own and peers') with some nationalities play a key role in hiring practices and preferences.

You have a mental list from previous experience.

Filipinos are wonderful, Indonesians are disaster.

Asians have a tendency to say yes and then figure it out later, [and this attitude was helpful in training the worker].

[African maids are not well represented in social media]: *people complain about them a lot*. This is a deterrent from hiring.

In an employer's checklist language occupies an important place. While some employers insisted on a shared language others insisted on the absence of it. There is a growing preference for workers from Philippines in Qatari homes, since conversing with domestic workers will give [the employer's] *children a head start, [in] speaking English naturally*. In homes where English was the spoken language, a preference for non-speakers of English was apparent, because *it helps maintain privacy within the home* [as the worker will not be able to understand discussions within the family].

¹⁸. Only 18 of the 52 respondents to the online survey said the worker met their expectation.

¹⁹. According to findings from the Shelter ME online survey language, experience and training precedes religion in importance.

4.3.3 Formalizing the employment relationship

A vast majority of employers in Qatar do not have a written contract with the employee. Employers sign contracts with the agency and/or the embassy of sending countries where required.

The absence of a contract between the employer and employee leaves many rights and responsibilities fluid, expanding the scope of workers' vulnerability. Prominent among these unspoken, unspecified issues are: working hours (the beginning and end of working day) and day off.

I give my maid time off in the morning if she had worked later than usual the previous night. It is long hours, but I am working with her.

Working hours [are usually] from 7am to 10pm with lots of rest periods, when we have nothing to do, they rest; when we have weddings they work 24/7 because we work 24/7.

We give the helpers a 500 riyal bonus in Ramadan because they work hard in Ramadhan.

Working hours are from 5.30am to 2pm followed by a 2-hour rest period. The second session lasts till 8pm, unless there are guests.

She does not have working hours, she has jobs to do. If she finishes early she can rest.

A few employers had drawn up contracts. Contractual provisions included terms under which employment would be terminated (for example, morally unacceptable behavior), specific rules relating to hygiene and supplies employer undertakes to provide on a weekly/monthly basis such as SIM cards, and rules relating to the use of phones/calling facilities.

4.3.4 Employer awareness about laws

There is a sweeping lack of awareness among employers about the legal framework accommodating domestic workers in Qatar. The copious gray area in the legal system created by the exclusion of domestic workers from the more specific labor law and the excessive power exercised by employers under the kafala law may account for this void in society.

Research participants were often found applying rules and regulations based on societal norms, personal inclinations (often justified based on the hefty recruitment fees they have paid to secure an employee) or what feels like the right thing to do. Many respondents observed that Shelter ME initiatives were the first time they were engaging in discussions related to laws. Only employers who had a brush in with law enforcement authorities were cognizant of legalities, when the worker absconds or is found to be pregnant for example.

Problem is I don't know what's legal and what's not.

Permitting the employee to work in homes other than the employer's and complying with a live-out living arrangement with a full-time worker were the most common practices falling within the gray realm of the law.

Allowing employees to work in the homes of friends and neighbors to earn extra income was viewed as a sign of goodwill in group discussions. One employer said he *even drives* [his employee] to friend's home on the days she works for them. Some employers encouraged the employees to live-out in private accommodations, particularly when the employee's spouse lived in Qatar.

[This arrangement] worked really really well.

When asked if the employer considered the legality of her decision to allow the worker to live with her husband who was living in Qatar as “a bachelor” she replied: *It’s wrong of us to keep them [employee and husband] apart*, indicating that she (the employer) made this significant decision based on what she assumed was the right thing to do.

One employer related that an agency offered her a considerable discount to have a live-in arrangement with a worker under the agency’s sponsorship: the employer was housing a worker who was not under her sponsorship, which is clearly illegal under Qatari law. The agency also retained access to the worker’s earnings, deducting a part of the employer’s payment every month, contravening the provisions of UNTOC to which Qatar is a signatory.²⁰

There was consensus among respondents that access to a phone must either be supervised, restricted or denied.

4.4 ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION AND RIGHT TO SOCIALIZE

4.4.1 To have and to hold a phone

“The single most important communication channel for most migrant domestic workers is the mobile phone. The availability of cheap handsets and prepaid phone cards has been instrumental in opening up new opportunities for domestic workers to connect with the world beyond the confines of their employers’ homes.

Many migrants buy phones equipped for dual SIM cards so that they can maintain two lines, a local number in the country of destination along with a number in the home country. This allows relatives to send messages cheaply to the number in the home country, and migrants can reply from abroad using the number in the country of destination. Others keep two phones for the same purpose.”²¹

Mobile phone use has risen dramatically over the last decade. World Bank data indicate that mobile cellular subscription per 100 persons, peaks at 126, 111 and 103 in Indonesia, Philippines and Sri Lanka respectively.²² However, there was consensus among respondents that access to a phone must either be supervised, restricted or denied.

Anyone who had a mobile phone has caused me so much strife.

²⁰ Qatar is a signatory to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

²¹ *Breaking the Isolation: Access to Information and Media among Migrant Domestic Workers in Jordan and Lebanon* (Open Society Foundation, 2014)

²² <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2> [2014]

Many were the reasons aired in favor of this attitude:

The more you let them call the more homesick they feel.

[It]interferes with her work and conduct.

They have more than one phone, and they spend so much time on them. I feel I have the CIA with me. We discovered through Facebook (which the employee accessed through her phone) that they were inviting people into our homes, wearing our clothes, and taking pictures in our bed when we weren’t there.

Access to communication denied:

In our house we take the phone away when they arrive and we lock it in our safe and say you’ll get it back when you leave. I let them call family once a month and if they want more than that then they pay for it, maximum once a week.

A respondent said that the domestic worker is *not allowed have a phone*, however they gifted her children in Bangladesh with a phone so that they could keep in touch with their mother over the employer’s phone.

Access to communication restricted:

Phone access is restricted by disallowing Wi-Fi connections and phones with camera.

She shouts and laughs on the phone even when we have guests. [I] immediately switch off the Wi-Fi.

An employer gives the worker an iPad on Thursday nights to speak to family on early Friday mornings before the rest of the family is up for the day, while another said she keys in the Wi-Fi password manually each time the employee requests.

Access to communication supervised:

Two employers explained that phones are allowed under specified conditions and that *these rules are followed up with reminders*: phone use must not interfere with work and conduct (she may use it when she has completed tasks), sharing pictures of the employer’s children/home on social media or with contacts was not allowed under these terms.

4.4.2 Right to day off and Freedom of movement

Employers had no cognizance of a migrant worker's reality that freedom of mobility affects their ability to obtain information, as in many instances migrant workers are the best source of information to each other. This is particularly true in relation to new migrant workers seeking information and advice from veteran migrant workers. Periods of rest during work, day off from work and space to socialize are not perceived as a matter of the employee's rights, but rather as the monopoly of the employer.

Off days don't work very well.

I'm sorry, but I can't give them days off.

Even when a day off was granted, the employee did not have the liberty to choose the space within which she could socialize: it is customary for employers to decide where the employee would take the day off for example inside the house, or in the compound/neighborhood with domestic workers introduced by the employer.

Day off is [spent] inside the house.

Time off is in the room.

This restriction of workers' mobility was rationalized by employers on the basis of one of the following rationalizations:

- Since the employee is part of the family she either takes her day off with the family, or by socializing with employees within the employer's social circle when they (the employer's social circle) gather together.

She goes out with the family on outings but does not work.

Their days off are with me. Whenever I go to the restaurant, I will take them with me: Don't work but you will be with me.

- The domestic worker is the "responsibility" of the employer, and it is part of the employer's responsibility to ensure her security:

There's no way my maid is going out for two nights, she stays with me and is looked after like my daughters. Their families have sent them with the hope of us taking care of them. [They are] my responsibility.

- Insecurities that employees will abscond, commit crimes or behave in culturally inappropriate ways

You want to let them be, but when you do that they abuse it.

You want to give your maid some freedom but it also gives her the possibility to run away.

That is why they sometimes only stay a few weeks or months and then run away.²³

Sorry, but she cannot have a boyfriend - it is not ok with me. They are dealing with our kids and they could come back with viruses and I don't know what else to our homes. I don't want them to go and have a party, because the next day they will come and say 'I have a headache'. You came here to work. They have to respect my law.

[They] would talk to anything in pants, If you let

them go out, they come back with fifty phone numbers on the phone

Contrary to common practice, two employers²⁴ who gave a day off faced a different challenge: they expressed how a difficulty arose when the employee refused to take the day off by venturing out of the employer's house. They explained how it helps both parties de-stress from daily grime and how not taking the day off often adds to the tensions surrounding the relationship within confined space.

In 2013, 60.9 million people gained access to the labour market in one way or another through the employment & recruitment industry. As of 2014, there were some 140,000 PrEAs around the world.

²³. Research findings reveal that absconding or "running away" is a common issue faced by employers. Some employers recounted near traumatic experiences of dealing with absconding workers: *she ran away leaving my one year old baby by herself*. The research did not delve into reasons behind absconding.

²⁴. Both employers conceded that these employees were frightened into staying indoors by recruitment agents

4.5 RECRUITMENT: CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES

"Private Employment Agencies [PrEAs] are part of an increasingly powerful migration industry that has grown in size and profitability since the mid-1990s, in line with the rise in international labour migration. In 2013, 60.9 million people gained access to the labour market in one way or another through the employment & recruitment industry. As of 2014, there were some 140,000 PrEAs around the world."²⁵

Recruitment agencies (RAs/PrEAs) play a key and often powerful role in labour migration of domestic workers within the Asia-GCC migration corridor. They wield this power by virtue of their role as immigration consultants and the lack of protection for workers under the labor law in Qatar.

Employers on the other hand, feel that they too are vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous agents. An overwhelming majority of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction and distrust in recruitment agencies:

Because going to Indonesian embassy is not very attractive, the agency provides a short cut.

You know you're getting a bum deal (from the Agency) and you go with it because you are in desperate need for someone to help you.

with stories of workers being abducted or getting into trouble with law enforcement authorities when outside the employer's residence.

²⁵. *Regulating International Labour Recruitment in the Domestic Work Sector: A Review of key issues, challenges and opportunities* - ILO (2016)

While there was consensus that recruitment fees are overpriced in comparison to the service employers ultimately receive, and the information in the résumé is most likely false; employers still felt compelled to approach recruitment agencies. What exists is a dependency relationship between agencies and employers: agencies are connected to employees in sending countries and able to navigate through the complex maze of immigration and employment laws in both countries, neither of which employers are able to do.

The fees are crazy, 15,000-20,000.

Prices are so expensive that people find other routes [to hire maids] and this creates the whole [situation of] runaway maids.

One respondent employed five domestic workers over a nine year period - all were hired privately, because of the savings.

The CV is pure fabrication.

To trust somebody at home, someone that I don't know anything about, that I have only read through a piece of paper, which will most likely be false, but we have no options.

A growing body of employers actively hoping for the reform and regulation of recruitment agencies are visible: some employers viewed Shelter ME group discussions as a forum to seek this redress, while another employer insisted on a one to one interview with the facilitator in order to suggest her own recommendations to change the current situation. Pre-placement communication between employer and potential employee should be standard practice, and

agencies should not be allowed to withhold telephone numbers of the potential employee were some key suggestions made by this employer.

A recruitment agency rating system was viewed as an essential service.

Other methods of hiring:

Agency-based hiring however is not the only option available to employers. Research findings indicate a surprising spectrum of hiring methods. Weighing in on these "other methods" respondents agreed that it helped them to circumvent the negatives of agency-based hiring.

Direct hiring, transfer of sponsorship from employers leaving Qatar or wishing to terminate employment, transfer of visas of migrant workers who arrive in Qatar under business and other visas are types of hiring methods used by employers.

The most commonly cited reasons for such hiring include:

- A drastic reduction in recruitment fees (down to Qr. 5000).
- Being able to speak to/meet with the potential employee prior to employment.
- Direct reference from previous employer.
- Not being bound by the three-month rule imposed by agencies which employers said was being abused by agencies to defraud them.

4.6 OTHER CHALLENGES

4.6.1 Dealing with psychological issues of the worker

The need for a pre-departure psychological evaluation of domestic workers was verbalized by respondents in one way or another across focus group discussions.

Many maids come with psychological baggage and when we are in foreign countries and don't know what to do about it, it manifests in different ways.

Explaining her preference for employees over 30 years a respondent said: *[they are] likely to be more mature and hopefully better equipped to deal with loneliness and homesickness.*

Employers related incidents indicating the presence of a psychological disorder or temporary emotional/adjustment issue:

- *Within a few weeks of the domestic worker's arrival, her daughter in Kenya delivered a child and she became very emotional, and showed signs of severe homesickness. It became so hard that she started losing it, imagining she had diseases and dreaming of going back to see her first grandchild.*
- *The employee did her work well but never interacted with us and looked sad. Then one day she decided to stop working. When the respondent took her back to the agency, she (i.e. the domestic worker) told the agent that she had drunk bleach.*

[It is vital that] domestic workers understand that they are arriving into a culture and language that is

foreign to them, and that they will endure loneliness from time to time even if they are surrounded by people. The respondent said this is a reality that should be communicated in pre-departure training programs.

Employers in a group discussion recommended that a helpline should be established to support workers post-arrival. A helpline which workers can *reach out to in their own language* said an employer who regretted having to send her worker back to Kenya due to lack of adequate support structures in Qatar. The same employer also recounted how she approached a local institution with the hope they would mediate only to be turned away.

[It is vital that] domestic workers understand that they are arriving into a culture and language that is foreign to them, and that they will endure loneliness from time to time even if they are surrounded by people.

4.6.2 Lack of equitable recourse

While a majority of the employers felt disappointed in the worker and defrauded by the agency, some employers also felt marginalized; marginalized by a system that pressured them to repatriate the worker, who did not fulfill their requirements or work to their satisfaction or had committed a crime within the employer's home.

These employers vocalized the need for a mechanism/entity to resolve issues between the employer and worker. Within the current system the only recourse available - in the event the worker and employer do not get along, or the worker is guilty of wrongdoing - is to repatriate the employee. *The pressure is from the authority to send her back* said a respondent whose employee was found stealing.

This system leaves the employer with *no rights*. The employee is not held accountable for her actions as the options available are either to repatriate her immediately or prosecute her (which was viewed as a ruthless choice, given the low status of migrant domestic workers in Qatar). Furthermore the employer is forced to incur loss of the recruitment fees, bear the repatriation cost and face the need to incur these costs again to hire a replacement.

This entity will fill a gap in the system and function as a bridge between the employer and employee: a means to resolve disputes on the job, hold parties accountable and compensate where necessary, and in the event the employee commits a crime, a means to *protect the next employer*.

Within the current system the only recourse available - in the event the worker and employer do not get along, or the worker is guilty of wrongdoing - is to repatriate the employee. The pressure is from the authority to send her back...

05

CONCLUSIONS

This research was aimed at developing a keen understanding of the nuances of the employer-employee relationship in domestic work and the attitudes and perceptions of employers and how these in turn reflect upon the conditions of employment experienced by migrant domestic workers. Discriminatory and exploitative treatment of workers can often be traced back to the attitudes and perceptions of employers. Such treatment when justified (in private life and public space) then becomes deeply entrenched in society and takes root as norm. It then becomes vital to examine these attitudes and perceptions, challenge them and set precedents of acceptable norms and practices.

In conclusion, the research found:

1. Migrant domestic workers in Qatar exist within a vacuum outside of the legal system governing labor. Their exclusion from the labor law, over and above the inherently exploitative kafala system has created a marginalized segment of the country's population. At the root of this exclusion is the non-recognition of domestic workers as workers.
2. Employers wield unbridled power over domestic workers "sponsored" by them, and often use paternalistic/protectionist attitudes to justify their treatment of them.
3. Employment practices such as long working hours, denial of a weekly holiday, restriction of access to communication, and working without a contract are widespread, unquestioned practices in the employment culture.
4. Inclusion in the legal system will have an impact on the protection of MDWs in Qatar. Such recognition alone will not guarantee the rights of domestic workers fully. It therefore becomes just as necessary to ensure that the tenants of the law are reflected in the attitudes and practices of employers and recruitment agencies.

It is hoped that this report will strengthen initiatives aimed at improving the rights of migrant domestic workers pre-departure, post-arrival and upon return. These initiatives should address issues inherent to the worker's situation, the hiring process, and rights & responsibilities of employers.

06

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RAMADAN CALENDER

QATAR

PRAYER TIMES | QATAR

Day	Fajr	Suzrise	Duhr	Aur	Maghrib	Isha	
1	6/6	3:11	4:43	11:33	2:56	6:22	7:52
2	7/6	3:11	4:43	11:33	2:56	6:23	7:53
3	8/6	3:11	4:43	11:33	2:56	6:23	7:53
4	9/6	3:11	4:43	11:33	2:56	6:24	7:54
5	10/6	3:11	4:43	11:33	2:56	6:24	7:54
6	11/6	3:11	4:43	11:34	2:57	6:24	7:54
7	12/6	3:11	4:43	11:34	2:57	6:25	7:55
8	13/6	3:11	4:43	11:34	2:57	6:25	7:55
9	14/6	3:11	4:43	11:34	2:57	6:25	7:55
10	15/6	3:11	4:43	11:34	2:57	6:26	7:56
11	16/6	3:11	4:43	11:35	2:57	6:26	7:56
12	17/6	3:11	4:44	11:35	2:58	6:26	7:56
13	18/6	3:11	4:44	11:35	2:58	6:26	7:56
14	19/6	3:11	4:44	11:35	2:58	6:27	7:57
15	20/6	3:12	4:44	11:36	2:58	6:27	7:57
16	21/6	3:12	4:44	11:36	2:58	6:27	7:57
17	22/6	3:12	4:45	11:36	2:59	6:27	7:57
18	23/6	3:12	4:45	11:36	2:59	6:28	7:58
19	24/6	3:13	4:45	11:36	2:59	6:28	7:58
20	25/6	3:13	4:45	11:37	2:59	6:28	7:58
21	26/6	3:13	4:46	11:37	3:00	6:28	7:58
22	27/6	3:14	4:46	11:37	3:00	6:28	7:58
23	28/6	3:14	4:46	11:37	3:00	6:28	7:58
24	29/6	3:14	4:47	11:37	3:00	6:28	7:58
25	30/6	3:15	4:47	11:38	3:01	6:28	7:58
26	1/7	3:15	4:47	11:38	3:01	6:28	7:58
27	2/7	3:16	4:48	11:38	3:01	6:28	7:58
28	3/7	3:16	4:48	11:38	3:01	6:28	7:58
29	4/7	3:17	4:48	11:38	3:01	6:28	7:58
30	5/7	3:17	4:49	11:39	3:02	6:28	7:58

RAMADAN MUBARAK

2016

Sleep disruptions are never easy. Give her an opportunity to boost productivity with a power nap.

We used to offer the *Azhan* prayer early and then have the mid-day break. - *Aziz bin Malik*

Did she have a break today?

Long breaks between meals and hot weather affects everyone at work.

"When a man works with his workers in his house, he is one of the workers of Allah Almighty" - *Abdullah bin Anas*

Do not ask them (workers) to do things beyond their capacity and if you do so, then help them." - *Prophet Muhammad S.A.W*

Have you considered easing her workload this Ramadan? Lend a hand with cleaning and cooking.

Ramadan Reminders by
Shelter Me

A long day and short working hours in Ramadan is for everyone: a domestic worker too.

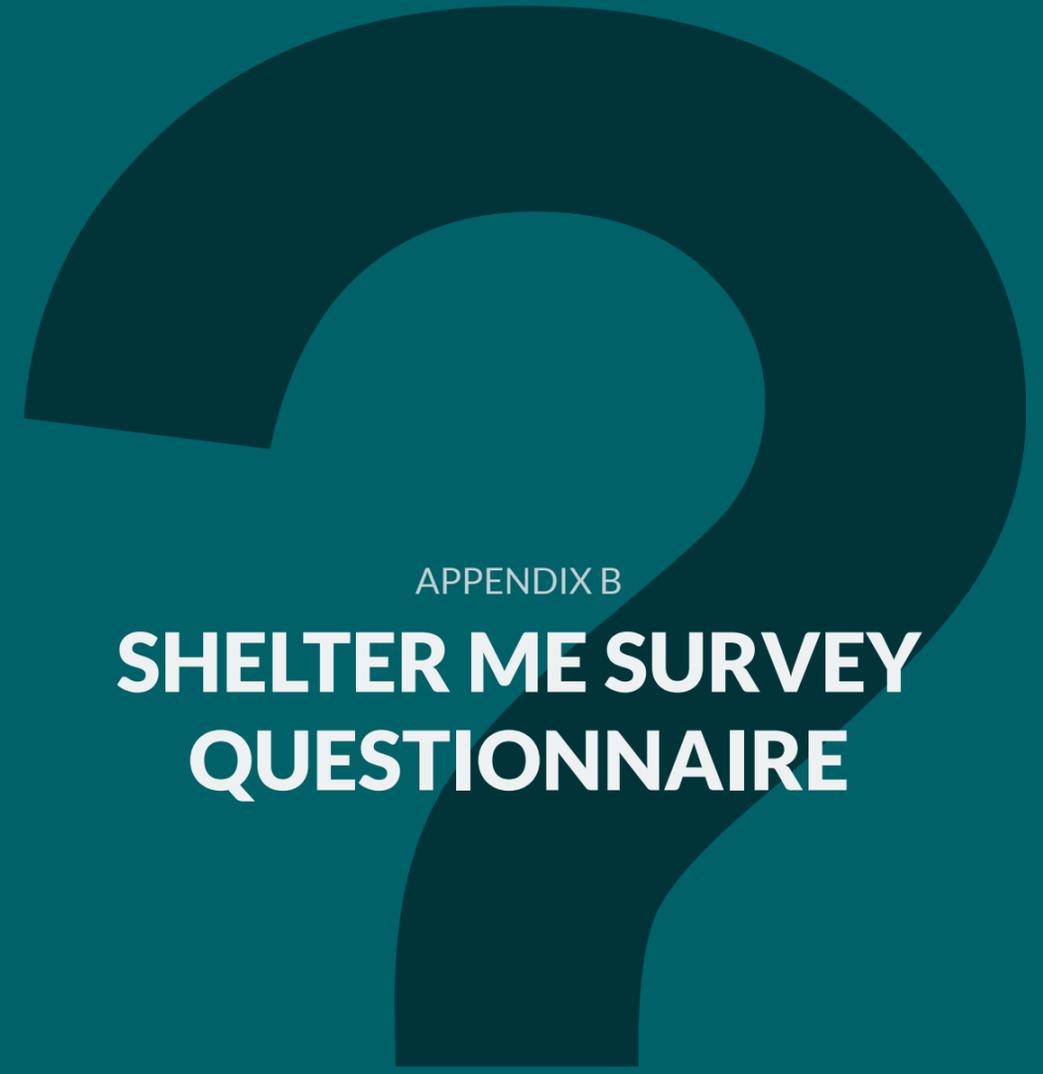
"They (workers) are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears..." - *Prophet Muhammad S.A.W*

Did she stop working earlier than usual?

Are you collecting the spiritual benefits of Ramadan while a worker under your roof leaves no footprint on a prayer rug nor has a moment for reflection?

The Prophet was the most generous of all people in doing good, and he was or his most generous during the month of Ramadan. - *Im. Abbas*

If she's a Muslim hand her a prayer rug. If she's not, make time for her for her own reflection.



APPENDIX B

SHELTER ME SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



1. Which country do you reside in?
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Qatar
 - Bahrain
 - Kuwait
 - Oman
 - UAE
 - Other:
2. How did you hire your domestic worker?
 - Word of mouth from friends
 - Direct from home country
 - Recruitment agency
 - Online forums, Facebook pages etc
- 3) How easy is it to find a reliable agency?
 - Easy
 - Not easy but possible
 - Difficult
 - Impossible
- 4) Name of agency (Optional)
- 5) How cooperative is your chosen agency?
 - Very cooperative
 - Cooperates after several attempts
 - Cooperates with increased payments
 - Uncooperative
- 6) What do you ask for in a domestic worker? Choose all appropriate
 - To be Muslim
 - To be young
 - To be mature/older
 - To be an English speaker
 - To be an Arabic speaker
 - To be trained
 - Nationality
 - To have experience
 - Other:
- 7) Does the agency take record of your requirements?
 - Yes, accurately
 - Yes, generally, some
 - Not really
 - Not at all

- 8) Were you given the chance to contact your domestic worker beforehand?
 - Yes, by Skype
 - Yes, by phone
 - Yes, by email
 - Yes, face to face
 - Yes, by other means
 - No
- 9) How long did you wait for your domestic worker to arrive?
 - Less than 2 months
 - Between 2-4 months
 - More than 4 months
 - More than 6 months
- 10) How much did you pay the recruitment agency?
 - 1000-2000 \$
 - 2000-4000 \$
 - 4000-6000 \$
 - More than 6000 \$
- 11) Upon arrival, did your domestic worker meet your expectations?
 - Absolutely
 - Somewhat
 - Not really
 - She was a complete disappointment
- 12) In what way was the domestic worker disappointing?
 - Appearance
 - Personal Hygiene
 - Language/Communication
 - Religion
 - Work ethics
 - Manners
 - Mistreatment of children
 - Other:
- 13) Did you try to replace the domestic worker?
 - Yes, and the agency replaced her
 - Yes, but the agency refused
 - No, because it is difficult
 - No, I decided to give her a chance

14) Did you try to communicate with your domestic worker about your disappointments?

- Yes, and she takes steps to improve
- Yes, but she does not understand me
- Yes, but she refuses to learn
- No, it is easier to fix her work myself
- No, she will learn over time

15) Do you allow the domestic worker to carry a mobile phone?

- Yes
- No

16) If not why? (Noted under additional comments)

17) Off day..

- Weekly on a set day
- Weekly based on our schedule
- Every two weeks
- Monthly
- She goes out with you on her off day
- Other

18) How many domestic workers do you currently employ?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

19) Nationality of domestic worker(s):

- Indonesia
- Philippines
- India
- Bangladesh
- Srilanka
- Nepal
- Ethiopia
- Other:

20) Your nationality:

- Saudi Arabia
- UAE
- Qatar
- Kuwait
- Other:

21) Your gender is...

- Male
- Female

22) Your occupation is...

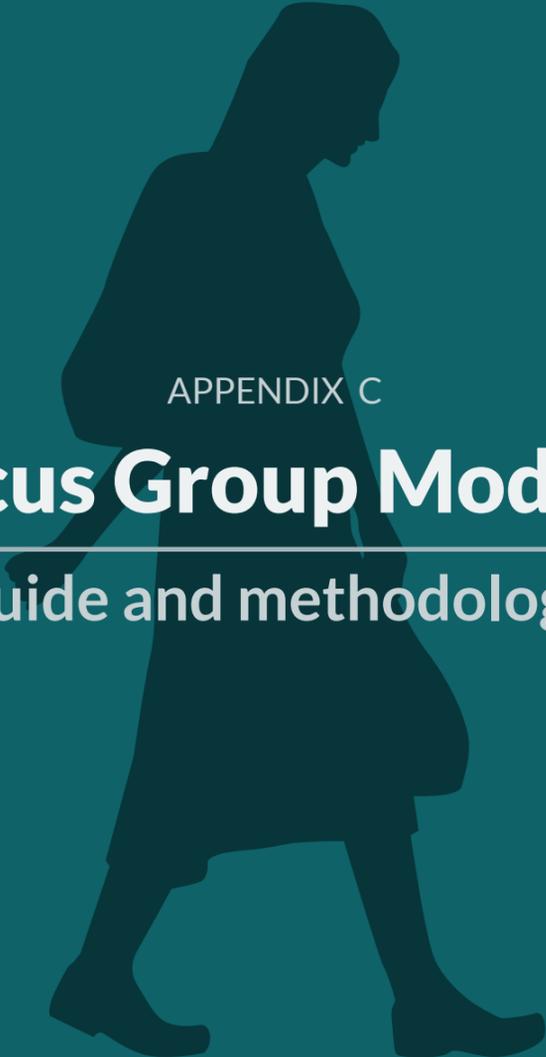
- Housewife
- Government employee
- Private sector employee

23) Your age is...

- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-65
- More than 65

24) Additional Comments (this should help us analyze the situation better and take proper action)

25) If you would like to participate in a one-one interview or a focus group to speak to us in greater detail on your experience with recruitment and employment of a domestic worker, please share your email. [Optional]

A dark silhouette of a woman walking from left to right, carrying a bag. The silhouette is positioned behind the main title text.

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Module

Guide and methodology

Shelter Me Telephone Tree

Migrant-Rights.org

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Background

The Shelter Me Project aims to reduce isolation of migrant domestic workers (MDW) in GCC States by providing them with tools (the SMS app) and information that will help connect them to compatriots.

That is the ultimate goal of the project. To arrive at that, we engage with domestic workers pre-departure and through the app, and with the employers in countries of destination in focus groups and through surveys.

The reason employers are an important component of our advocacy efforts is that unlike any other employer-employee relationship, the one between a family and its housemaid blurs the personal-professional line. The employers also seem themselves vulnerable to exploitation.

Through our initial discussions and explorations, we realised that it is important to engage with employers to ensure domestic workers are treated right.

The pilot project focusses on Indonesia as country of origin and Saudi Arabia and Qatar as destination.

In Saudi and Qatar, we conduct surveys and hold focus groups.

The following is the justification for and methodology used in focus group discussions.

Focus Groups

Why?

Focus groups help us learn more about the community opinions, challenges and the needs to be addressed, to make our advocacy effective and longlasting.

We've realised a combination of surveys and focus groups leads us closer to our needs.

With surveys we are able to ask more pointed questions, and answers can be tabulated and analysed.

Focus groups allow us to go deeper into the issue.

Who?

Employers of domestic workers, either current or past, willing to share their experiences. Employers can be of any nationality or economic group. If a predominantly Arabic-speaking group, we use an interpreter or a facilitator who is bi-lingual.

Since it's a sensitive subject, reach out to participants through an insider.

Facilitator:

We go with someone who is comfortable with the subject matter and passion about it. Personal interest and experiences help in such a project, instead of going for a professional focus group facilitator.

Goal:

Not just to understand what the participants think of on the issue we are discussing, but also to open doors to advocacy in an indirect manner. Pros and Cons to be aware of:

Pros:

Depth of discussion, angles and challenges that we would not have thought of, innovative solutions to problems. Identify those that are able to communicate with their peers.

Cons:

Participants may play to an audience. One person may dominate.

Pre-event:

Explain clearly the focus of workshops, and what we intend to do with the reports.

As below:

The focus groups are held to understand better the employer's perspective in the recruitment of a domestic workers. What are the social, cultural and financial implications of hiring, employing and housing a migrant domestic worker?

During the discussions participants are encourage to share their experiences on what worked well and what did not; how they dealt with issues that challenged them; what kind of support is missing locally; their experience with recruitment agents; and general reflections.

Through focus groups and surveys (invite them to take this as well), we hope to gather enough insights that will be fed back countries of origin, to influence recruitment and training practices there.

Assure all participants the focus group would be held under Chatham House rules.

Any audio recording would be for reference alone.

No photographs would be taken, unless explicit permission in writing has been received.

Facilitation methods

- Prepare questions, based on survey and the concept of our project. (Please refer to table at the end of the document for questions)
 - > The opening question that will be addressed to all participants
 - > Transition questions that help segue from one subject to another. Or to interrupt someone who dominates the discussion or disrupts discussion
 - > Anticipate possible threads of conversation
- Get the ball rolling by asking an opening question and making sure all opinions are heard
 - > Probe and follow-up interesting answers
- Ask open-ended questions
- Avoid yes/no questions
- Suspend judgement
- No pointed questions (use surveys for this)
- Discuss, don't debate
 - > Invite them to reflect
- Questions that draw on examples, rating scales, multiple choice answers
- Do not contradict participants
- Seek agreement or disagreement
- Pick up on non-verbal cues. Especially with participants who are shy to open up and speak up.

Facilitator to ponder:

- > What if someone dominates a conversation?
- > What if someone is disruptive?
- > What if discussion is not relevant?

Preparation and delivery

- > Build rapport with participants
- > Participant is the expert
- > Reserve judgement
- > Create roster of participants with their contact details
- > Record the meeting
- > Take notes
- > File report

Questions and Cues

This is a rough guide. Facilitator uses his/her discretion in amending questions to suit participant group

- How did you recruit your domestic worker (use 'housemaid' or 'nanny' for familiarity)?
- What were your experiences in the recruitment process?
- Did you get a chance to interview the housemaid before her arrival?
- Did you have a preference for age/nationality/religion?
- What's the ideal length of a contract according to you. And why?
- Do you have a contract with the worker?
- Indirect questions on communication/isolation:
 - > How often does she speak to her family?
 - > Does she have friends she speaks to?
 - > Does she have her own mobile phone?
 - > Do you set boundaries on phone usage at work?
 - > What does she do on her off day?
- Opinions on how trained worker is? What are the needs?
- employee relationship?
- Let this lead to questions on language, skills, understanding etc.
- How do you set expectations in the work relationship?
- How do you decide minimum wage and overtime (do not ask for specifics, keep it an open-ended question)

Findings

At the end of each focus group, we should have:

- Names and contacts of participants
- Understanding of recruitment issues
- What constitutes a good/effective employer-employee relationship?
- What constitutes an ineffective relationship?
- Key reasons for reluctance to allow MDW uncontrolled access to communication
 - > Positive reinforcement of those who do allow access
- Key reasons for reluctance to not allow freedom of mobility
 - > Positive reinforcement of those who do allow it
- How Islamic ethics is used in the conversation surrounding treatment of MDWs
- Positive and encouraging experiences where there's mutual respect and appreciation
- Names of recruitment agencies used. A rating on a scale.
 - > Followed up with our recruitment questionnaire
- Verbatim quotes that support all or most of the above.
- At least a few participants willing to engage further with us, and/or take surveys



APPENDIX D

Orientation of Recruitment Agents

Background & rationale

Recruitment agents (RAs) play a key role in labor migration of domestic workers (DWs), especially since the workers receive no protection under the labor law. From our survey and discussions with DWs and employers we understand that there is significant scope for improvement in how RAs operate. However, this information is rarely conveyed in a constructive manner to the RAs, and the only feedback they receive are in the form of complaints. Adherence to regulations is out of fear of blacklist, and not with an interest to ensure a fair and ethical recruitment process.

By feeding the broken information cycle, and orientating recruitment agents on gaps in expectations between employer and employee, we will be able to initiate change in RAs' current practices. The orientation will emphasize that these changes will benefit RAs and lead to satisfied clients. The recruitment industry's reputation desperately needs a revamping, as popular opinion in both sending and receiving countries are against them. An agency that provides good services will automatically receive more referrals.

Shelter ME in collaboration with the Philippines Embassy (Qatar), organized an orientation program titled Responsible Recruitment and Placement of Migrant Workers for 87 recruitment agents accredited to the Philippines Embassy. The Shelter ME module was integrated with the current Philippines embassy training module – "Post Arrival Orientation Seminar", and drew on Shelter ME's experience gathering information from household workers and their employers.

The orientation broadly addressed reducing isolation, creating a good match and protection, within the context of the following questions which were explored by the participating recruitment agents.

- Collaborating with sending countries: What works? What doesn't?
- Common complaints from employers: Which of these can be addressed? Which is beyond your control?
- Grievances of household workers: Which of this do you feel you can address? Which is beyond your control?
- What tools do you need to do your job better? What steps should be taken by governments?
- The Employer's Guide: Would you distribute it? What's your feedback?

Key Findings:

Constructive discourse on the subject is non-existent. The discourse was one of blame: blame was laid squarely on the worker or on the employer with little recognition of the role agencies can play in leveling the field.

The attitude of agents towards workers was apparent in the names used to refer to the latter - *maid, servant, khadama, household worker, applicant and drama*. (The program was tweaked on day 2 to accommodate a discussion on the names being used and their implications.)

Agents have no training or any means of receiving job certification. A vast majority of the agents were on the job for under 1.5 years, and stipulated that they *need more experience* to perform their jobs effectively. They are under pressure from line-manager to meet a quota (i.e. recruit a target number of workers) regularly.

The role agencies can play becomes clear in view of the services they have offered, for example some agencies have intervened and upskilled domestic worker visas 'depending on the skills of the applicant'.

Challenges faced by Recruitment Agents and tools necessary to work efficiently

The employer/sponsor and agency:

- Lack of employers' awareness ('education') on fair treatment of DWs. Sponsor's power over the worker. (The ability to blacklist sponsors with respective embassies was viewed as a tool necessary for agents to work efficiently.)
- Expectations of the sponsor, cultural differences, unregulated working hours, and language barrier are obstacles to a smooth relationship between the employer and employee. To redress this, agents suggested that the embassy of COO initiate a comprehensive orientation program for the employer and employee, and a written agreement between employer and employee as terms of reference.
- Employer's returning workers without a valid reason.
- Breach of contract by employer [i.e. contract between employer and agency]

- Lack of adherence to minimum wage requirements (by employer). One agent explained how, the agent can address this issue by talking to employers and explaining the minimum wage requirement.

The employee/domestic worker and agency:

- Lack of legal protection for workers and the absence of an umbrella entity combining the National Human Right Committee, Capitol Police and recruitment agencies to mediate in cases of abuse.
- Workers with negative attitudes who hinder a smooth work relationship : worker 'not trying her best' to accommodate and work with the sponsor.
- Absconding and returning domestic workers were viewed as big problems. These included workers who return to the agency over homesickness requesting to be sent back to the country of origin and returning without *valid reason/unreasonable excuses*.
- Empowered workers were viewed as challenges attempts by worker to 'choose' the sponsor, or declining an employer because the he/she refuses to allow the worker to hold a phone were viewed unfavorably.
- Empowered workers were viewed as challenges. Attempts by worker to 'choose' the sponsor, or declining an employer because the he/she refuses to allow the worker to hold a phone were viewed unfavorably.

The embassy and agency:

- Absconding workers affect agency business adversely because the Philippines embassy postpones the processing of papers of agencies' whose domestic workers have runaway and come to Philippines Overseas Labor Office (POLO) shelter .¹
- The embassy actively works towards the repatriation of the absconding/returning worker, rather than resolving issues between the sponsor and worker causing financial loss to the agency.
- Anomaly between rules in sending and receiving countries are negatively impacting recruitment agencies .²

¹ According to an embassy official the POLO Shelter is currently housing over a 100 absconding workers.

² Philippines does not recognize the three-month probation period post placement.

- Agencies carry out an informal method of blacklisting sponsors. While this system is neither recognized nor comprehensive, agencies share the blacklist within the industry. They expressed concern that the embassy does not take their blacklist seriously.
- It is not always possible to conduct comprehensive background checks. For example if a client is from a family related to the owner of the agency, an impartial background check with the owners support is not a possibility.

The orientation concluded with an undertaking by the agents present to

- Distribute the Employer Guide to prospective employers, and explain its' contents where necessary
- Explain the ethics of using the phone during employment to the worker
- Talking to the employer and mediating where the employer fails to adhere to minimum wage requirements
- Commitment to adhere to the provisions in the *Pledge of Responsible Recruitment and Placement of Migrant Workers*

It is now mandatory for new agencies seeking accreditation to the Phillipines Embassy to take the pledge and display it in their offices on an official letterhead.

Pledge of Responsible Recruitment and Placement of Migrant Workers

I pledge to,

To respect and protect the rights of migrant domestic workers, from abusive and fraudulent practices during the recruitment and placement process.

To ensure that workers are not made to pay recruiting fees or other payments in the course of securing employment.

To ensure that upon arrival domestic workers receive comprehensive instructions on their rights in Qatar, in their native language.

To inform domestic workers in writing, in their native languages, names, addresses and contact numbers of - the recruitment agency, any available local help centers/shelters, and embassies of the workers' country.

Ensure no wages are withheld in return for security.

To cease working with recruitment agencies in sending countries that are engaged in deception regarding contracts.

Date

Signature



APPENDIX E

THE BUSINESS APPROACH

In Qatar, for an expatriate to be able to sponsor a domestic worker, they must receive a letter from their employer. At this juncture, the organization becomes (indirectly) a part of the recruitment and employment process. This is both a responsibility and an opportunity to guide their (usually senior) staff on best practices. There is significant room for companies to exercise leadership and leverage, and scope to insist that where employees seek to engage the services of a domestic worker they do so following formalized conditions that respect the rights of the worker.

Towards the end of the first phase Shelter ME has started a conversation with institutions, and will step it up in the following phase.

Institutions that employ a large number of senior expatriate staff have to play their part. These executives are often the employers of domestic workers and their behaviour is a reflection on a business's core values. Some of the arguments we have made in co-opting these businesses and institutions are:

- Human Rights are universal, and there is no cherry picking a cause. There are over 53 million people involved in domestic work across the world. In Qatar alone there are over 150,000 migrant women in the domestic work sector. Kuwait has over 620,000 domestic workers; over 1.5 million in Saudi Arabia; and 750,000+ in UAE.
- They work upwards of 58 hours a week, to even about 16-18 hour workdays.
- By setting proper standards, businesses influence their workforce, and bring about a change in the larger community.
- While inaction may not have a negative impact on the situation, action will have invaluable effect on the lives of the vulnerable.

What can business do?

- Share the Employers Guide with employees that are both current and potential employers of domestic workers.
- Consider drawing up a policy that is in keeping with the corporate culture and core values – including a code of conduct for staff.
- Look at forming a community group within the organization to discuss human rights issues, formulate best practices in both recruitment and housing a worker, and also upskilling domestic workers in their employment.

- Look at the facilities available in the housing provided for staff (if the company does so). Will it accommodate a live-in worker?
- Discuss with home state officials and other diplomatic missions whether they have standards for hiring and employing domestic workers and encourage them to distribute the Employers Guide.

We were able to raise the issue of domestic work at a panel in the Asia Region UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, which gave us access to more local organizations.

One of our early believers, Georgetown University-School of Foreign Service in Qatar has already started distributing the guide, and is working on a code of conduct.

The Canadian Embassy hosted a roundtable for Canadian institutions in Qatar and another for 'friendly' missions, including the Swiss, French and British. We were able to table our plan to both groups.

We conducted two workshops with the College of North Atlantic in Qatar (direct outcome of abovementioned roundtable) and QDVC, a joint-venture between France's Vinci and Qatari Diar. This was an exploratory workshop, encouraging staff to talk about their concerns, run more formally than a focus group, but using similar principles.

We are speaking to both organizations about taking this further with a Code of Conduct for employees.

Clyde and Co has signed on as a legal partner (pro-bono) and will help us finalize the suggested Code of Conduct, and help us reach both government institutions and other businesses.

<https://www.ihrb.org/focus-areas/migrant-workers/commentary-companies-leverage-migrant-domestic-workers>



APPENDIX F

THE SHELTER ME PROJECT



Recruitment of domestic workers through agencies - A Qatar perspective

Research report
January 2017

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Introduction

Migrant-Rights.org is an advocacy organization which aims to advance the rights of migrant workers across the Middle East. The organization strives to effectively advocate with governments in Qatar and the Gulf to reform employment and residency laws for the legal protection of migrant workers.

This study focuses on domestic workers in Qatar, specifically those recruited through agencies. Quantitative research was required to provide statistically reliable results on employers' experience of recruiting domestic workers through Qatar based agencies. It is envisaged that the results will be presented to government organizations to help promote new labor laws which aim to protect the health and wellbeing of domestic workers in Qatar.

This research report presents the quantitative findings from 400 face to face surveys with employers who have recently recruited a domestic worker through a Qatar based agency. The research focuses primarily on housemaids and nannies sponsored by Qatari and expatriate families in Qatar.

Interviews were conducted using a face-to-face, pen-and-paper interviewing approach, with data entry into a digitized version of the questionnaire. Surveys were conducted in English and Arabic in October and November 2016. The average questionnaire length for this study was 15 minutes.

Migrant-Rights.org has previously conducted a similar study with domestic workers in Indonesia. Whilst this study focuses on the experience of the employer in recruiting a domestic worker through an agency, results have been aligned with the Indonesian study where applicable.

Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

- Understand the various steps in the recruitment process, the average length of time taken to recruit and the challenges and issues at each step in the process.
- Understand employer expectations regarding service delivery from agencies and quality of employee and the extent to which these expectations are met.
- Determine the occurrence of employers requesting an employee is returned to the agency and for what reasons.
- Determine the occurrence of employees requesting that they be returned to the agency and for what reasons.
- Performance ratings for the agency used.
- Awareness of whether the domestic worker paid any recruitment fees.
- Whether the domestic worker was given a contract pre-departure and whether it matches the contract provided by the agency to the employer.
- Provide a 360 view of migration from the country of origin to the country of destination by the domestic worker.
- Identify information, documents, agreement and experience which domestic workers are receiving from the recruiting agency.

Executive Summary

The key findings from **400** surveys with employers of domestic workers through recruitment agencies are outlined.

Employers Profile

- Male** (60% of sample)
Males are most likely to deal with the recruitment agency directly. The female head of household, particularly Arab expatriates, are involved in the selection criteria of the domestic worker.
- Qatari nationals or Arab expatriates** (97% of sample)
There was a low incidence of Western and Asian expatriates recruiting domestic workers through agencies.
- Have between 2 to 3 children living at home** (68% of sample)
- Aged between 31 to 40 years** (41% of sample)
- Most likely to have one domestic worker under the family sponsorship** (58% of sample)
Qatari nationals tend to sponsor more than one domestic worker – 62%
- Decision makers**
The majority of decisions made regarding the employment of the domestic worker are made jointly between the husband and wife – 80%

Agency Profile

- Agency**
Most respondents could not recall the name of the agency through which they employed their domestic worker.
- A few names of agencies recalled include: Al Barq, Al Harammen, Al Jori and Falcon.

Domestic Workers Profile

- Nationality**
The most common nationalities of domestic workers employed through recruitment agencies are: Filipino (50%); Indonesian (19%); and Indian (15%).

Services provided by the agency.

Provided list of candidates to choose from	✓	99%
Asked employer for their criteria for the domestic worker	✓	98%
Provided references/ work history for each candidate	✓	87%
Asked details about household	✓	86%
Provided employer with employment contract	✓	78%
Organized sponsorship transfer / RF issuing	✓	77%
Allowed employer to interview the candidate prior to selection	?	63%

Employer satisfaction with the agency

The recruitment process to sponsor domestic workers through an agency is straightforward and easy. Overall, satisfaction with the service provided by agencies is high, with most attributes recording total satisfaction levels of around 80% or more.

The only areas where satisfaction levels could be improved is with the agency supporting the domestic worker to adjust and settle into the home of the employer and reducing the time taken for the agency to find, hire and process the sponsorship.

The average time taken for the recruitment process from the initial registration to the worker starting in the home is: **6.2 weeks (1.5 months)**.

Agency recruitment costs

- The average spend on recruitment fees of domestic workers is: **13,301 QAR**.
- **81%** of employers do not feel this is good value for money (**30%** not very good and **51%** not at all good).
- **79%** of employers are unaware of whether the domestic worker paid any agency fees.

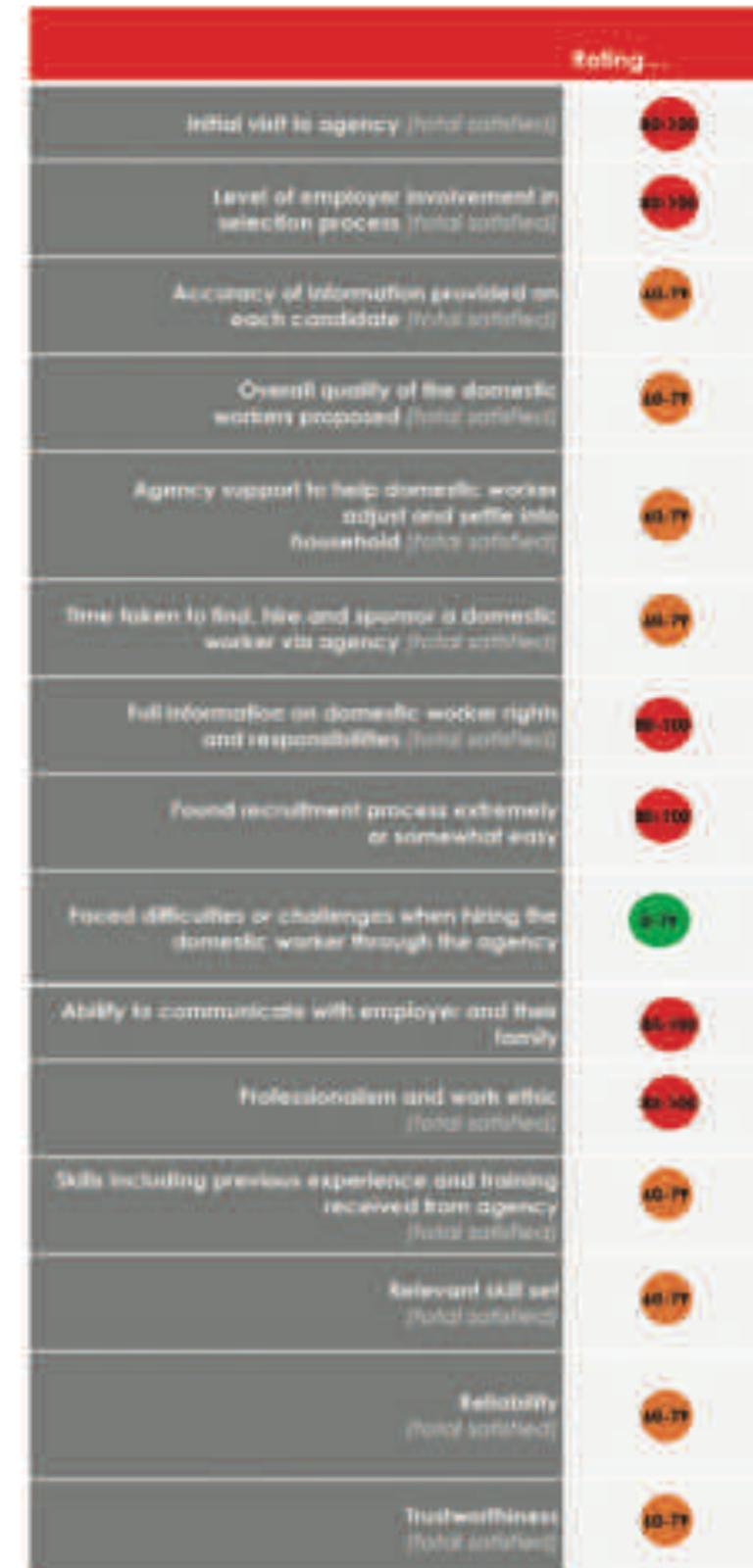
Employer satisfaction with the domestic worker

Employer satisfaction with the domestic worker is high for:

- Ability of the worker to communicate with employer and family
- The worker’s professionalism and work ethic.

The level of satisfaction is lower for the domestic worker:

- Having a relevant skill set
- Reliability
- Trustworthiness.





Questions:

Rights & protection: Do you know if your worker received any information on their rights as a domestic worker living and working in Qatar (% yes)

Customs of Qatar: Do you know if your worker received any information on the local customs and culture in Qatar and how this affects them (% yes)

Type of work required: Do you know if your worker received any information on the type of work they are required to do? (% yes)

Job description: Did your domestic worker receive a copy of a written job description (% yes)

Terms of employment: Do you know if your worker received any information on the terms of employment (salary, working hours, leave, overtime pay etc. (% yes)

Copy of employment contract: Did your domestic worker receive a copy of an employment contract (% yes)

Employment contract in own language: Does the domestic worker have a copy of this contract in their own language? (% yes)

Below are some statements people have made about hiring and sponsoring domestic workers. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement:

Passport kept by employer for safe keeping: I keep my worker's passport for safe keeping (% strongly agree/agree)

Important worker has RP: It is important that my worker has their RP in their possession for when they need it (% strongly agree/agree)

Access to a mobile phone: My worker has a mobile phone so they are able to regularly communicate with their family and friends (% strongly agree/agree)

Access to a bank account: Does your worker have his/her own bank account that they can access their money when needed? (% Yes)

Balanced score card: employer

Rights & protection	Customs of Qatar	Type of work required	Job description	Terms of employment	Copy of employment contract
40-59	80-100	80-100	0-19	80-100	40-59
Employment contract in own language	Passport kept by employer for safe keeping	Important worker has RP	Access to a mobile phone	Access to a bank account	
20-39	40-79	80-100	80-100	20-39	

LEGEND:



Detailed Findings

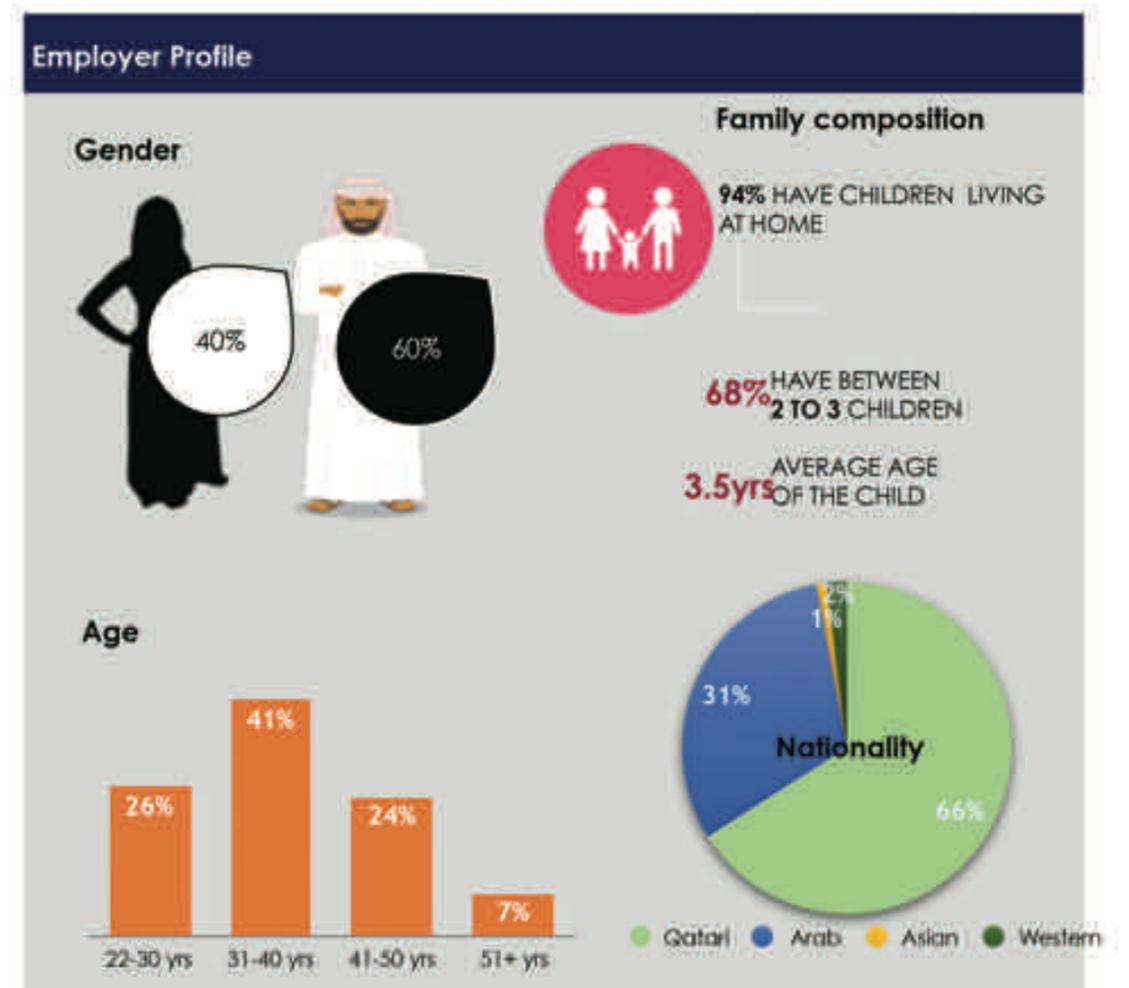
Section 1:
Key Segment Overview

Employer profile

This study consists of **n=400** face to face interviews conducted with employers who have recently recruited a domestic worker through an agency. Respondents were screened to ensure they had finalized the sponsorship process within the past three years to allow them to recall the process in detail.

The respondents were also screened to ensure they were the main decision maker on finding and employing the domestic worker. The sampling process found that the majority of decision makers in the Qatari sample were male. Most Qatari females have limited involvement in dealing with the recruitment agency, and therefore they were unable to answer the questions related to the service provided by the agency. As a result the sample consists of **60%** males and **40%** females.

During the sampling process, there was a low incidence of Asian and Western expatriates recruiting domestic workers through an agency. Therefore, the sample size is substantially higher among Qatari nationals (**66%**) and Arab expatriate (**31%**) respondents. Most employers of domestic workers recruited through agencies are aged between 31 to 40 years (**41%**), and nearly all have children living at home (**94%**).



Domestic worker profile

Employers of domestic workers were asked how many domestic workers they currently have under their family sponsorship. The majority of respondents have one domestic worker currently under their sponsorship. Six in ten Qatari nationals surveyed (**62%**) have more than one domestic worker under their sponsorship.

The majority of respondents (**79%**) finalized the sponsorship process through the agency within the past two years. One in five respondents (**21%**) went through the sponsorship process between two to three years ago.

The most common nationality of domestic workers recruited through an agency is Filipino, followed by Indonesian and Indian.

For **Qatari nationals**, the most common nationalities of domestic workers employed are: Filipino (**44%**); Indian (**21%**) and Indonesian (**19%**).

For **Arab expatriates**, the common nationalities of domestic workers employed are: Filipino (**58%**) and Indonesian (**20%**).



Agency profile

Respondents were asked to recall which agency their domestic worker was hired through.

The majority of respondents are unable to recall the name of the recruitment agency who their domestic worker was hired through. Most respondents are only able to recall the location of the recruitment agency offices. The name of agencies recalled include: Al Barq (n=10), Al Harammen (n= 8), Al Jori (n=6) and Falcon (n=4).

Most recruitment agencies are located in the older parts of Doha, such as Gharafa, Al Rayyan and Al Sadd.

Location of Agency Used

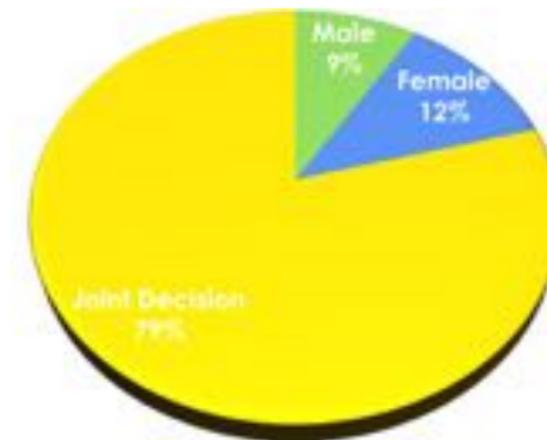
- SOUQ AL ALI / GHARAFa (n=51)
- AL SADD / NASSER AREA (n=17)
- AL SHAFI St / AL RAYYAN (n=17)
- MOUTHER (n=16)
- AL WAKRA (n=16)
- AZIZYA (n=13)
- BIN OMRAN / AL MARKHEYA (n=12)
- AL MUNTAZAH (n=6)

Q. What was the name of the agency you sponsored through your domestic worker? Base: All respondents, n=400

Main decision maker on employing domestic worker

Employers of domestic workers were asked who in their family was the main decision maker on finding and employing the domestic worker. The majority of decision making regarding the employment of domestic workers is undertaken jointly between the male and female head of the household (mentioned by 80%).

It is important to note, that during the respondent recruitment process it was found that whilst both the male and female head of the household have a role in the decision making regarding the worker, the male has a more prominent role in dealing directly with the agency. The female's involvement typically extends to reviewing the CVs of the domestic workers and selecting their preferred candidate for the position. This was particularly the case for Arab expatriate families.



Q. In your family, who was the main decision maker on findings and employing the domestic worker? Base: All respondents, n=400



Section 2: The Recruitment Process



Recruitment agencies and services

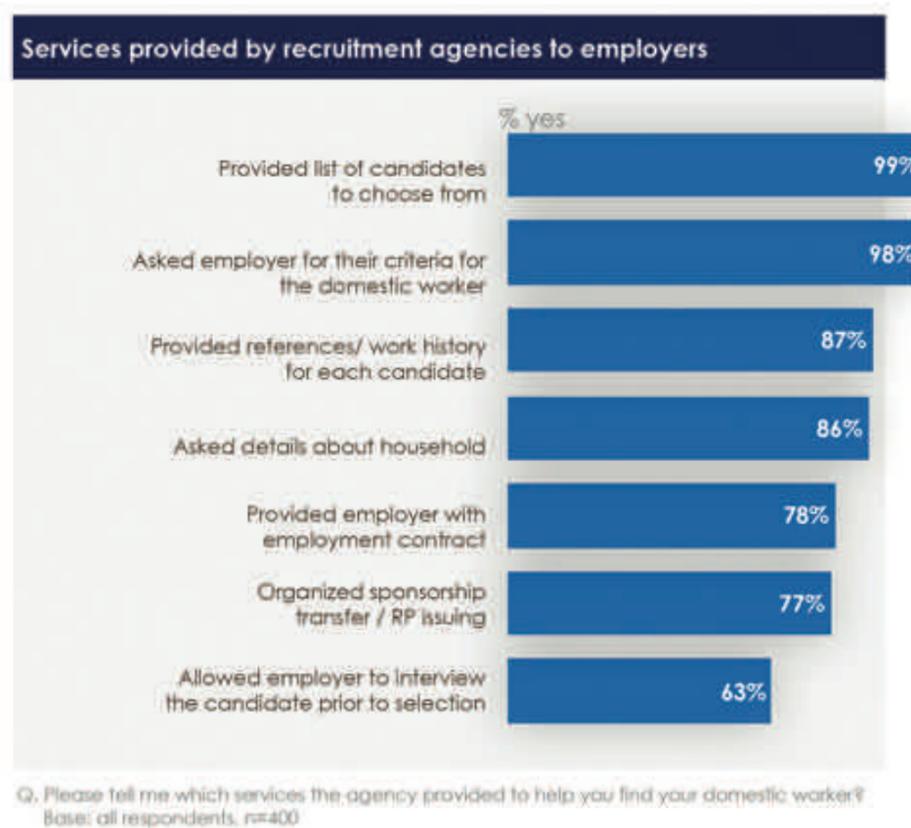
Respondents were asked which services the agency provided to help them find their domestic worker.

Recruitment agencies in Qatar provide a range of services to employers of domestic workers. Virtually all respondents (**99%**) were provided with a list of candidates from which they could choose from. Nearly all agencies also asked the employer for their criteria for the domestic worker (mentioned by **98%**).

In most cases, agencies provide the employer with references and the work history of each candidate and details about their household (mentioned by **87%** and **86%** respectively).

Just over three quarters of employers said the agency provided them with an employment contract and organized the sponsorship transfer and issuing of the RP (mentioned by **78%** and **77%** respectively).

Close to two-thirds of respondents (**63%**) said they were allowed to interview the candidate prior to selection.



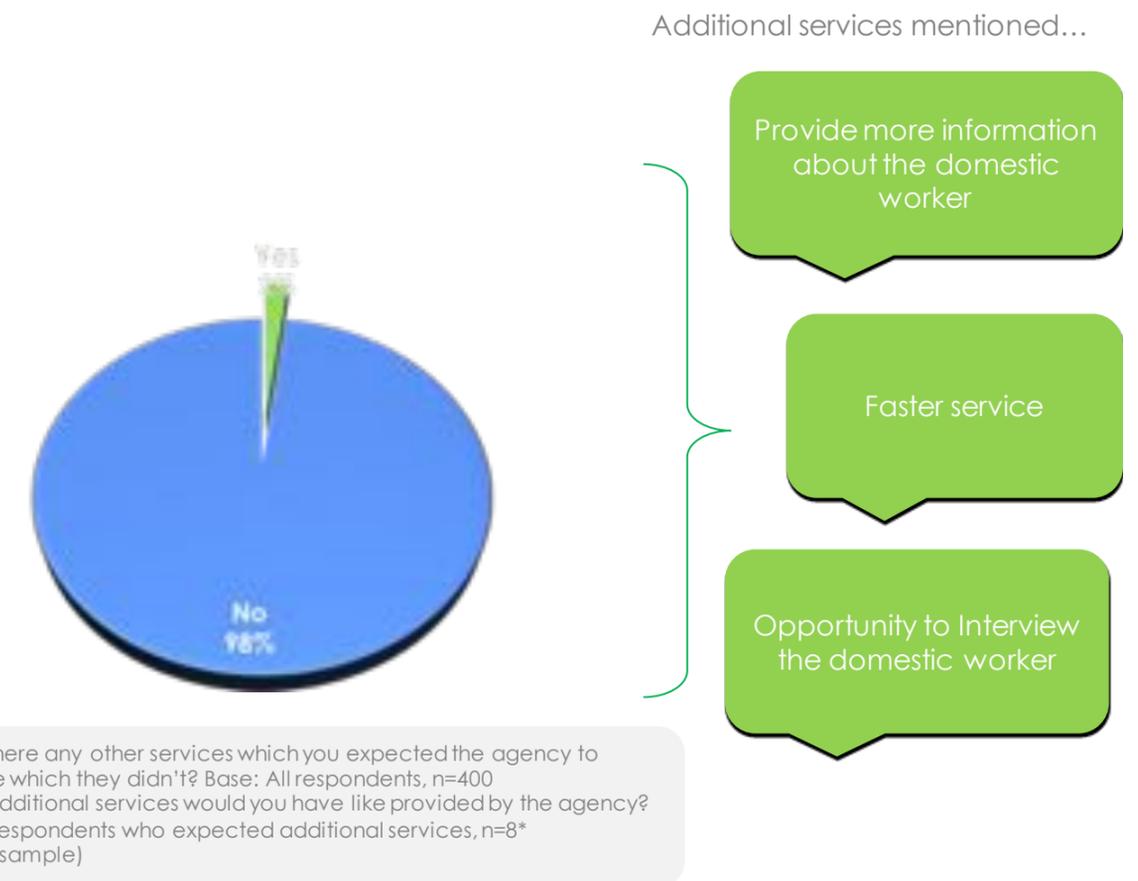
Additional services required from the agency

Respondents were asked if there are any additional services which they would have expected the recruitment agency to provide, but which are not currently provided.

Employers of domestic workers in Qatar appear to be relatively satisfied with the range of services provided by the recruitment agencies. Only a minority (2%) had additional service expectations which were not met by the recruitment agency.

These included:

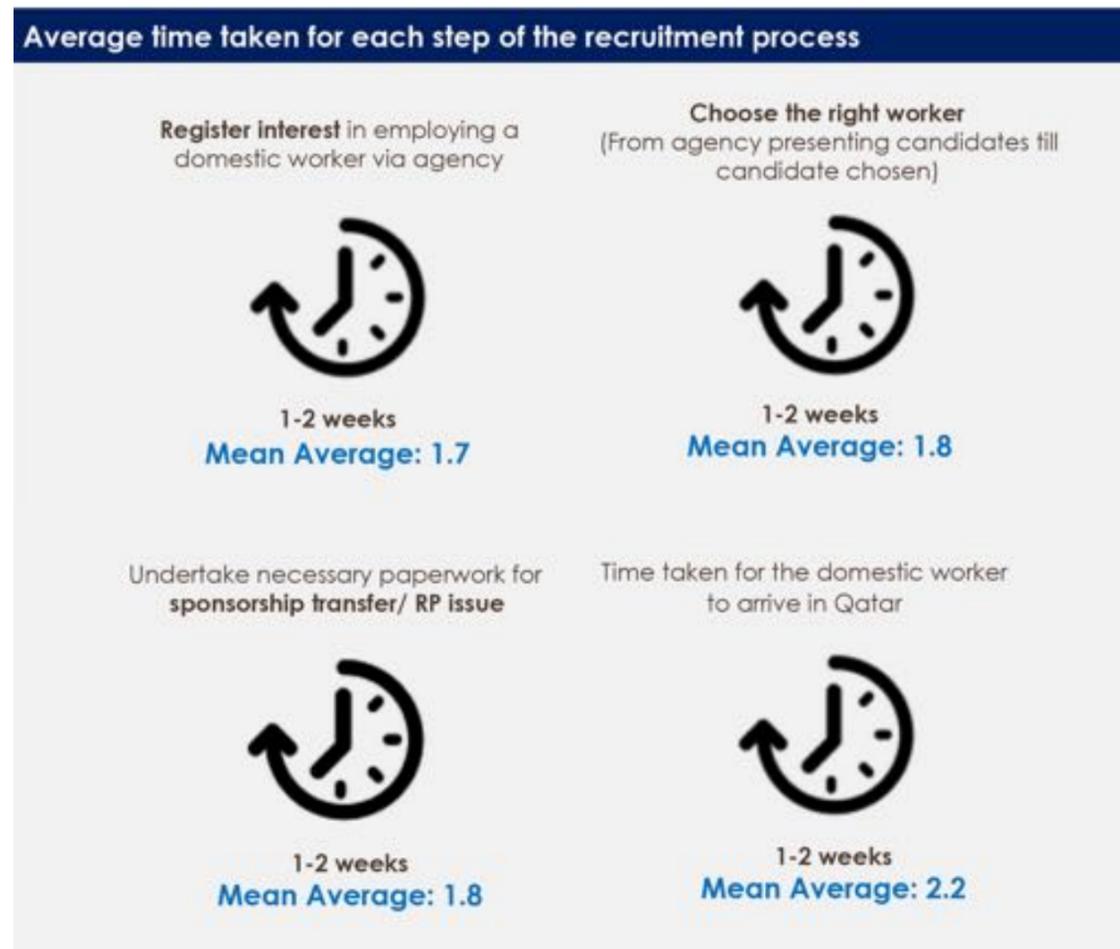
- More detailed information about the candidates
- Faster service
- Opportunity to interview the candidates before proceeding with the sponsorship process.



Time taken for the recruitment process

Respondents were asked the average length of time taken for each element of the recruitment process through the agency for the sponsorship of the domestic worker.

On average each step of the process took between one to two weeks. The time taken for the domestic worker to arrive in Qatar took the greatest length of time (**average 2.2 weeks**).



Q. What was the average length of time taken for each element of the recruitment process through the agency for the sponsorship for your domestic worker?
Base: all respondents n=400

Overall time taken for recruitment of domestic worker

On average, the process from initial registration of interest until the domestic worker started working in the home took **6.2 weeks** (1.5 months).



Overall ease of recruitment process

Respondents were asked how easy or difficult it was from start to finish, to find, employ and sponsor their domestic worker.

Most employers of domestic workers surveyed found the overall recruitment process to be either 'extremely easy' or 'somewhat easy' (mentioned by **54%** and **28%** respectively).



Q. Overall, how easy or difficult was it, from start to finish, to find, employ, sponsor your domestic worker through the agency? Base: All respondents n=400

Difficulties or challenges faced with the recruitment process

Respondents were also asked whether they faced any difficulties or challenges when hiring the domestic worker through the agency. One in ten employers surveyed (10%) experienced difficulties with the recruitment agency.

Those employers who experienced difficulties with the agency were asked how responsive the agency was in dealing with the issue. Just under half of the respondents said the agency was either 'very' or 'somewhat' responsive in dealing with the issues (mentioned by 15% and 31% respectively). A relatively large proportion of the respondents (12%) said the agency was 'very unresponsive' in dealing with the issue.

Difficulties faced by respondents when dealing with the agency included: language barriers making it difficult to communicate; the high prices charged by the agency; the length of time taken to finalize the visa process; and difficulties with the worker settling into the home.

Q. Overall, how responsive or unresponsive was the agency in dealing with the issue? Base: employers who faced difficulties, n=41



Q. Did you face any difficulties or challenges when hiring your domestic worker through the agency? Base: all respondents, n=400
Q. What difficulties or challenges did you face when hiring your domestic worker through the agency? Base: employers who faced difficulties n=41



Employer satisfaction with recruitment agency

Respondents were shown a list of touchpoints and attributes relating to the process of recruiting and sponsoring a domestic worker in Qatar via a recruitment agency. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each touchpoint.

Overall, employers are highly satisfied with all attributes in relation to recruiting a domestic worker via a recruitment agency in Qatar. The only attribute which achieves a lower satisfaction score is the 'time taken to find, hire and sponsor a domestic worker via an agency'.

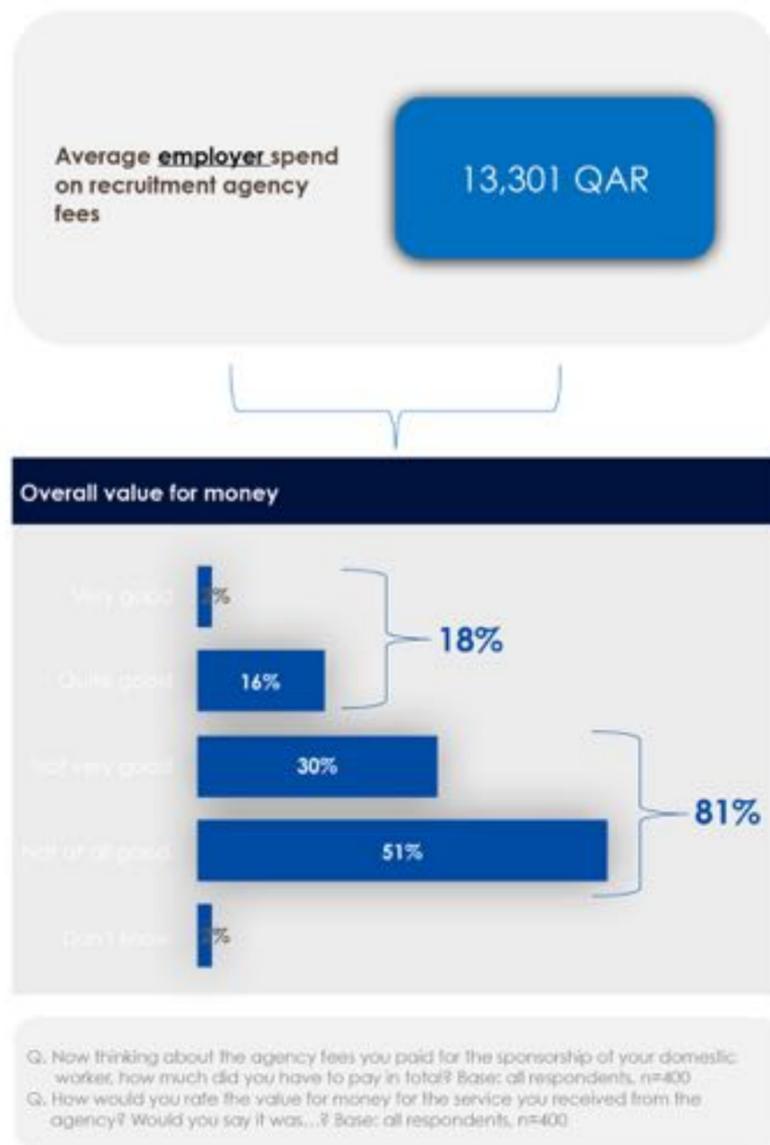
	Extremely Satisfied %	Somewhat Satisfied %	Neutral %	Somewhat Dissatisfied %	Extremely Dissatisfied %	Total Satisfied %	Total Dissatisfied %	Average Mean
Level of employer involvement in selection process	60%	27%	10%	3%	0%	87%	3%	4.44
Initial visit to agency	52%	33%	12%	2%	1%	85%	3%	4.33
Full information on domestic worker rights and responsibilities	56%	26%	14%	3%	2%	82%	5%	4.31
Overall quality of the domestic workers proposed	49%	30%	19%	1%	1%	79%	2%	4.24
Accuracy of information provided on each candidate	51%	26%	19%	3%	2%	77%	5%	4.22
Agency support to help domestic worker adjust and settle into household	48%	29%	17%	4%	2%	77%	6%	4.17
Time taken to find, hire and sponsor a domestic worker via agency	50%	26%	15%	6%	4%	76%	9%	4.14

Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the agency you worked with?
Base: all respondents, n=400

Recruitment agency fees

Respondents were asked to recall how much they paid in recruitment fees to their agency, and to comment on the perceived value for money of these fees. The average spend on recruitment fees by an employer is **13,301QAR**.

Most employers surveyed (**81%**) are dissatisfied with the value for money offered by agencies for the recruitment of domestic workers and rated the agency fees as either 'not very good' or 'not at all good'.

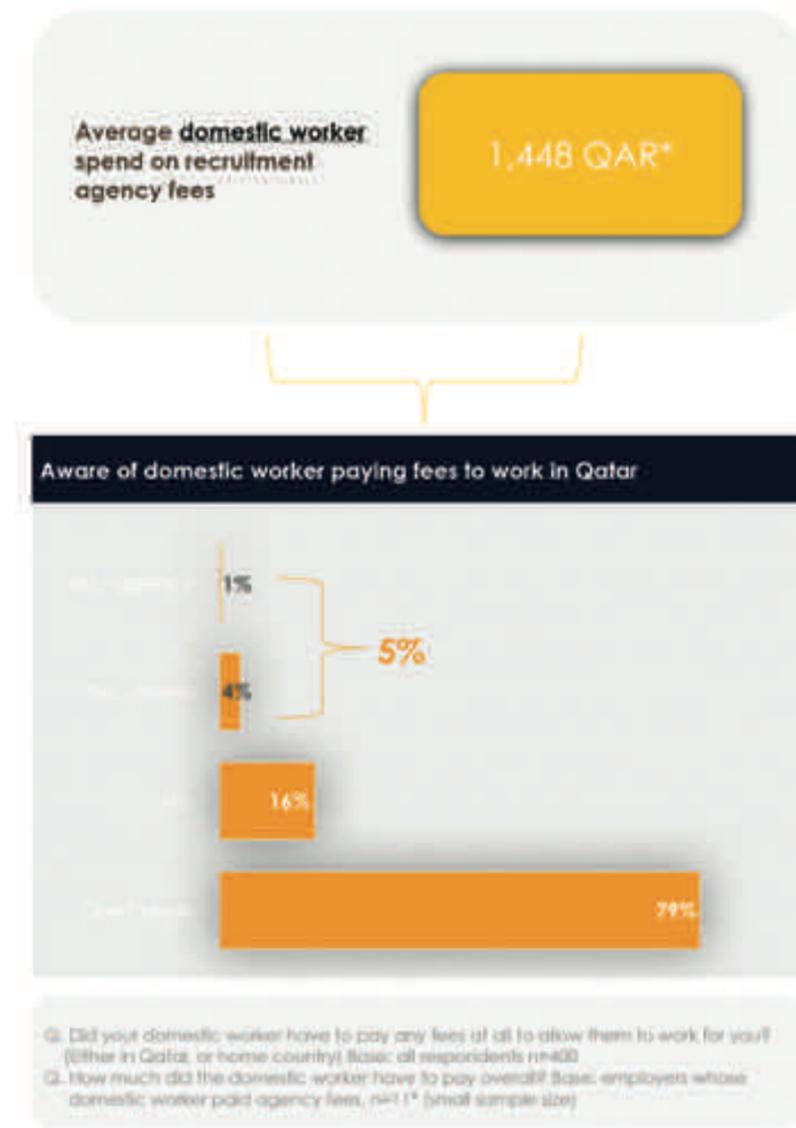


Domestic worker fees

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of their worker having to pay any fees to allow them to work in Qatar.

Most employers (**79%**) are unaware as to whether their domestic worker paid any agency fees, suggesting that this is not a conversation which employers in Qatar generally have with their employees. Some **16%** of respondents believe their worker did not pay any fees either to the agency or back in their home country.

Those respondents who are aware of their employee personally paying a fee to work in Qatar, indicated the average cost to the worker was around **1,448 QAR**.





Section 3: Domestic worker deep dive



Information and documents provided to domestic worker

Respondents were asked if the agency provided the domestic worker any type of information about working in Qatar.

Most respondents believe the agency provided information to the worker on the type of work that they would be required to carry out (mentioned by **97%**). A high **95%** of respondents are also of the understanding that information on the local Qatar customs and culture and how they affect them were also provided. Most respondents (**85%**) are also of the understanding that domestic workers were informed about the terms of their employment.

Only half of the respondents (**58%**) are aware of the worker being provided with information on their rights as a domestic worker in Qatar.

There is also low awareness as to whether or not the worker received a copy of a written job description and their employment contract (**23%** and **49%** respond 'don't know' respectively).

Did the domestic worker receive.....	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %
Type of work required	97	2	2
Terms of employment	85	2	13
Rights as a domestic worker in Qatar	58	22	20
Local Qatar customs and culture, and how these affect them	95	2	3
A copy of a written job description	16	4	23
A copy of their employment contract	40	11	49

Q. Do you know if your domestic worker received any information, on any of the following?

Base: all respondents, n=400

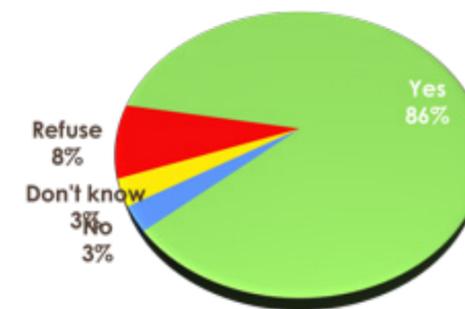
Q. Did your domestic worker receive a copy of the following...? Base: all respondents, n=400

Employer/worker contract & embassy registration

Respondents were asked if they have signed a contract with the agency when employing the domestic worker. The majority of respondents (**86%**) have signed a contract. However, half of the respondents who have signed a contract (**51%**) are unaware if the agency has given a copy of the contract to the domestic worker translated into their spoken language.

Respondents were also asked whether they were aware of their employee being registered with their country's embassy as a domestic worker in Qatar.

Only one in five respondents (**22%**) believe their employee is registered with their embassy.



Employee has a copy of contract in their own language...

20% yes

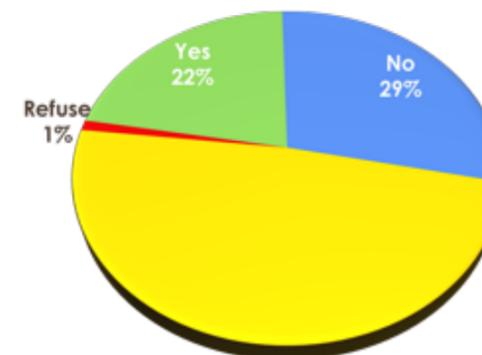
20% no

51% don't know

9% refuse to answer

Q. Did you sign an initial employment contract with the agency when employing this domestic worker? Base: all respondents, n=400

Q. Does the domestic worker have a copy of this contract in their own language? Base: respondents who signed an initial employment contract, n=344



Q. Is your employee registered with their country's Embassy as a domestic worker in Qatar? Base: all respondents, n=400

Hiring and sponsoring of domestic workers

Respondents were given some statements regarding the hiring and sponsoring of domestic workers and asked the extent to which they agree with each statement.

Nearly all respondents (**92%**) either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that their worker has access to a mobile phone so they can regularly communicate with their family and friends.

Homesickness seems to be an issue with domestic workers as half of the respondents 'strongly agree' that their worker can sometimes feel sad and homesick.

Close to two thirds of respondents (**63%**) either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that they like to keep their workers passport for safe keeping. Arab expatriates are most likely to keep the domestic worker's passport (**51%** compared to **26%** of Qatari nationals). A high **71%** of employers who have had a domestic worker run away in the past five years 'strongly agree' with the statement about holding onto the passport for safe keeping.

Despite the high incidence of employers holding the domestic worker's passport in their possession, the large majority of respondents (**80%**) either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that it is important for their worker to have their RP in their possession for when they need it.

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total Agree %	Total Disagree %	Average Mean
My worker has a mobile phone so they are able to regularly communicate with their family and friends	78	14	5	3	1	92	4	4.64
I like to keep my workers passport for safe keeping	55	8	11	5	22	63	27	3.70
My worker can sometimes feel sad and homesick	50	32	16	2	1	82	2	4.29
It is important that my worker has their RP in their possession for when they need it	65	15	15	2	2	80	4	4.40

Q. Below are some statements people have made about hiring and sponsoring domestic workers. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement. Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 5 is 'strongly agree' Base: all respondents, n=400

Access to a bank account

Respondents were asked whether their employee has access to their own bank account so they can access money when needed.

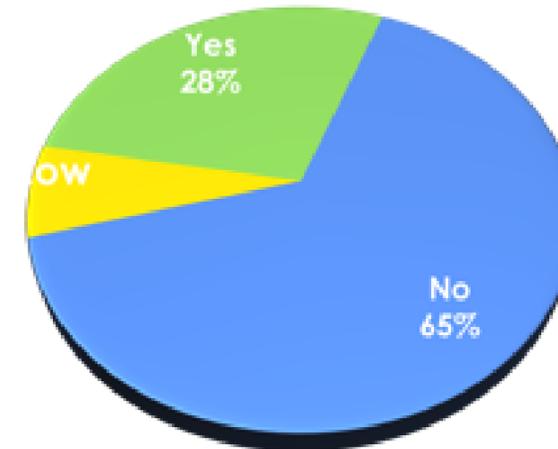
The majority of respondents (**65%**) said their employee does not have their own bank account. Over a quarter of respondents (**28%**) said their employee does have access to their own account.

Employer satisfaction with domestic workers

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the domestic worker they employed. Employers are most satisfied with the domestic workers in terms of their professionalism, work ethic and communication skills (average mean score **4.3**).

The reliability and trustworthiness of the domestic worker ranks the lowest in terms of employer satisfaction, with just over four in ten respondents being 'extremely satisfied' with each attribute (**43%** and **42%** respectively). Just over three quarters of employers (**77%**) are either 'extremely satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the workers skill set being relevant to the position.

Domestic worker has own bank account...



Q. Does your worker have his/her own bank account that they can access their money when needed? Base: all respondents, n=400

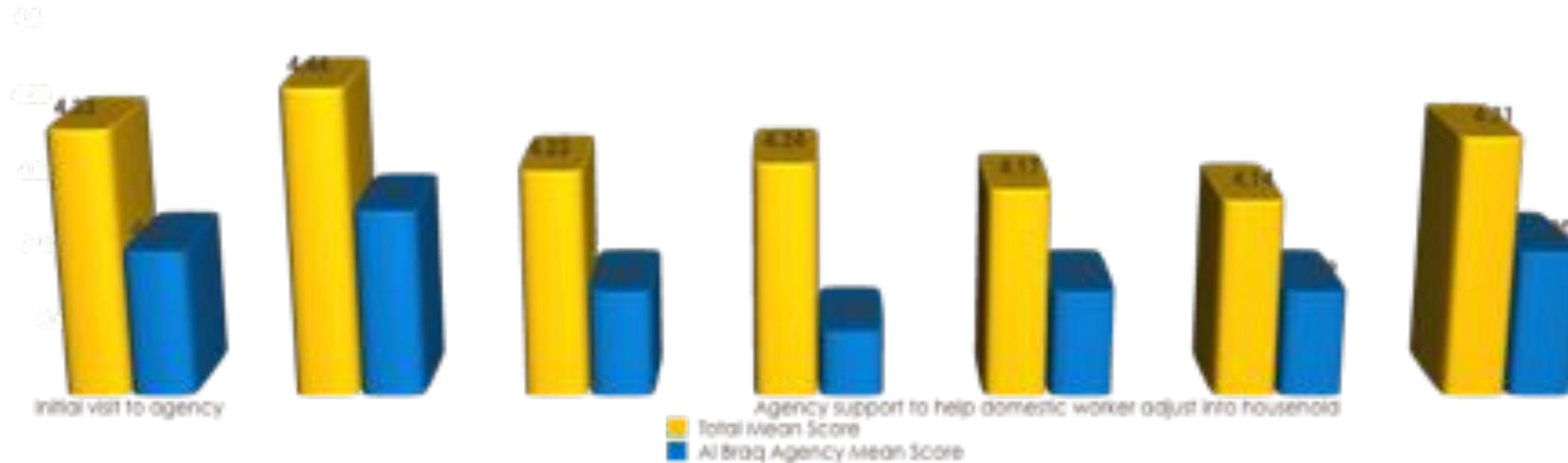
	Extremely Satisfied %	Somewhat Satisfied %	Neutral %	Somewhat Dissatisfied %	Extremely Dissatisfied %	Total Satisfied %	Total Dissatisfied %	Average Mean
Ability to communicate with employer and their family	50	35	13	0	2	85	2	4.3
Professionalism and work ethic	52	31	16	1	1	82	2	4.3
Skills including previous experience and training received from agency	45	35	17	3	2	79	5	4.2
Relevant skill set	47	30	21	1	2	77	3	4.2
Reliability	43	25	28	2	2	68	4	4.1
Trustworthiness	42	25	29	3	3	66	5	4.0

Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the domestic worker you employ? Base: all respondents, n=400

Employer satisfaction with recruitment agency: Al Braq Agency

Al Braq was the only recruitment agency which had a sufficient sample (n=9) to record the level of employer satisfaction. On all attribute measurements, **Al Braq** performs below the total average mean score for satisfaction of all agencies.

Satisfaction with all agencies vs Al Braq agency...

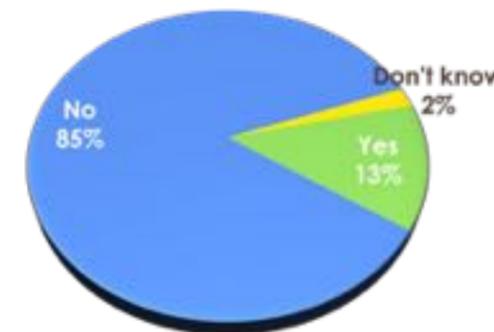


Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the agency you worked with?
 Base: Respondents who mentioned (Al Braq agency), n=9* (small sample, indicative results only)

Additional training provided

Respondents were asked if they provided any additional training to the domestic worker. The majority of respondents (85%) were not required to provide any additional training.

Among those employers who did provide training the majority of training was focused on educating the employee on cooking culturally appropriate food and how they can assist with chores.



- Additional training provided...
- 45% Arabic & Qatari cooking
- 40% How to help with chores
- 25% How to use the ATM
- 10% Qatari traditions & customs

Q. Did you have to provide any additional training to the domestic worker? It can be anything at all, even if not directly related to their work (e.g. how to use an ATM, or driving lessons...) Base: all respondents, n=400
 Q. What additional training did you provide? Base: employers who provided additional training, n=51



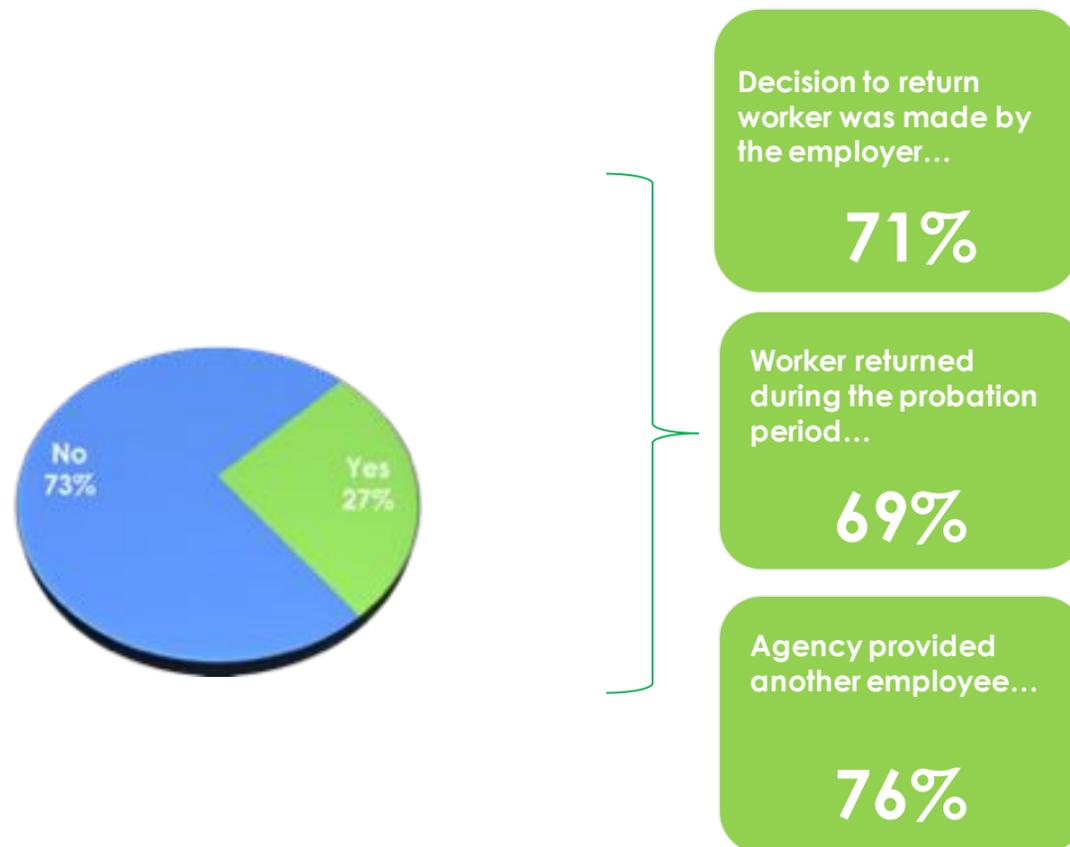
Section 4: Returns and runaways



Return of a domestic worker

Respondents were asked whether in the past five years, they have ever had to return a domestic worker to the agency from which they were recruited. Over a quarter of employers (**27%**) have returned a worker to the agency. In most cases, the decision to return the worker was made by the employer during the probation period.

The majority of employers who returned a worker to the agency (**76%**) were provided with another worker by the agency. Most often a replacement was provided when the employee was returned during the probation period (mentioned by **77%**).



- Q. In the past five years, have you ever had to return a domestic worker to the agency from which he/she was recruited? Base: all respondents, n=400
- Q. Was his/her return requested by you or by the domestic worker themselves? Base: employers who returned a domestic worker, n=109
- Q. Was the worker returned during or after the probation period? Base: employers who returned a domestic worker, n=107
- Q. Did the agency provide you with another employee? Base: employers who returned a domestic worker, n=83

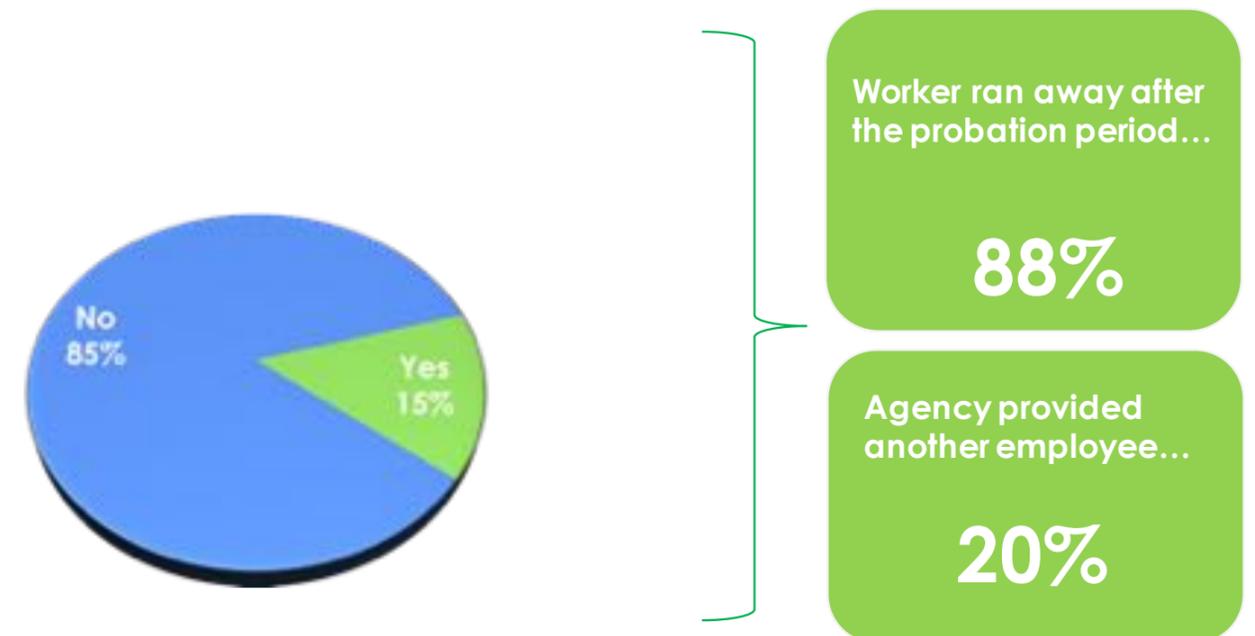
Incidence of domestic workers running away

Respondents were asked whether in the past five years, had they ever had a domestic worker that had been recruited through an agency run away.

One in seven employers (**15%**) have had a domestic worker run away when under their sponsorship. Most of those who have experienced run away workers are Qatari nationals (mentioned by **19%**).

In most cases, the worker ran away after the probation period (mentioned by **88%**).

One in five employers who had a worker run away (**20%**) were provided with another worker by the agency. Workers were replaced primarily when they ran away during the probation period.



- Q. In the past five years, have you had a domestic worker that has been recruited through an agency run away? Base: all respondents, n=383
- Q. Did they run away during or after the probation period? Base: employers with experience of a domestic worker runaway n=59
- Q. Did the agency provide you with another employee? Base: employers with experience of a domestic worker runaway n=30



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