

DOMESTIC WORKERS ASSOCIATION ZIMBABWE

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

The Domestic Workers Association of Zimbabwe (DWAZ) is a membership based network of Zimbabwean domestic workers in Zimbabwe and outside. It was founded in August 2017 and it has over 160042 members in South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe and growing.

The motivation for the founding of DWAZ came as a realization that domestic work has had weak representation in policy issues and domestic workers themselves have been invisible in the public space and policy platforms. They are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, thus the need to form an organised and coherent platform to enable interaction and dialogue from which to harness and catapult efforts to raise the voice of domestic workers. Domestic works also lack access to skills and knowledge necessary in their industry and thus they also need to be development personally and professionally.

Introduction

Domestic work sector and practice are crucial and sustainable. Every home needs a Domestic Worker at one point or another.

The long existing practice of domestic work services is crucial but both the sector and the men and women committed to it have been grossly undervalued. Lack of recognition and marginalization of domestic workers and the domestic work sector in the professional arena has resulted in the trampling of domestic workers and disregard of their rights, privileges and other constitutional provisions. Domestic work has been undervalued and has not received the acknowledgement, attention and support it deserves.

Advocacy trends have grown positively and commendably in favour of historically or constitutionally marginalized, disadvantaged, unrepresented, vulnerable and unrecognized groups of people, workers and professions of which domestic work and domestic workers are, and have always been a part of. Unfortunately, they have not received the much needed and deserved meaningful recognition and support from organizations or the government. Consequently, the rights and privileges of domestic workers, and particularly women, embedded in the constitution and hailed across the board, are nothing short of an interesting constitutional account. Most domestic workers are at the mercy of their employers, some are treated unfairly and

unequally treated or dismissed, some work under non-conducive environments, rules and conditions, whilst others are poorly paid. It is this dynamic and persistent subtle disregard and professional negligence of domestic work and domestic workers which is the genesis and motivating force behind DWAZ.

Background

Domestic work is one of the oldest and most important occupations in many countries, particularly for women. Care work in the household is quite simply indispensable for the economy outside the household to function. DWAZ represents the voice of domestic workers.

Domestic work is an important source of employment. Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global wage employment and of the global workforce in informal employment. While domestic work industry was once believed to be an industry that belonged to a past type of society and did not belong in a modern world, trends are showing that although elements of the domestic industry have been changing, the industry itself has shown no signs of fading away, but only signs of transformation

With the current economic situation, the difficulty of securing employment is all too clear, despite countless forces working against the informal sector, it continues proliferating and flourishing as a means of livelihood sustenance for the majority of the population. DWAZ accepts and acknowledges this state of affairs and takes a firm stance to stand advocate for domestic work. We realize that like any other advocacy task, the process and journey to having a meaningful and lasting impact is not a smooth one, but we are ready to go the distance.

Objectives

The central focus of DWAZ is to provide a platform for bringing together domestic workers so they interact, discuss issues affecting them and come up with solution to the day to day challenges confronting them.

Advocate for recognition and respect of rights and privileges of domestic workers since they are still vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Campaign for effective implementation of policies in favour of domestic work.

Advocate for formalization of domestic work hence securing access to legal and social protection and benefits available to other categories of work in the labour sector.

Lobby for decent working conditions and remuneration.

Vision

To be the representative of continuous transformational change in legal, social, policy and behavioural areas fostering recognition, respect and inclusion of domestic work and workers in the current inclusive development

Mission

Bring together domestic workers in an organized and systematic manner to raise a voice, raise awareness and increase their visibility through advocacy, training and skills development, dialogue and ultimately representation in the public space to effect positive change of attitude, behaviour, laws and policy.

Values

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Honesty
- Commitment

Strategic priorities

DWAZ advocates for recognition and formalization of domestic workers and the sector as a whole. The long term agenda being to address the rigid and informal nature of the domestic work sector. We realize that the domestic work sector has perhaps been as inflexible and unsystematic as it is informal, and these factors contributed towards the prevailing lack of recognition and formality. As DWAZ we are committed to interrogating the gaps and innovatively devising an efficient system, introducing flexibility, order and convenience within the sector.

The central priority of DWAZ is to raise the voice, representative and bargaining capacity of domestic workers, and eventually harnessing this combined capacity towards effecting a comprehensive positive and progressive transformation of the domestic work sector into a formal and professional sector. This requires a skills development program tackling various critical issues and topics which include the following:

Education and Training.

Education is the key to success and DWAZ is committed to ensure that domestic workers get equal and affordable access to education. From whatever level they want to start to whichever level they aspire to reach, we want to see to it that nothing hinders their academic aspirations. For this ambition to become tangible, DWAZ needs the partnership of academic institutions that can provide learning services to our domestic workers under permissive conditions both financially and in terms of time. This agenda follows in the footprint of women empowerment initiatives which include giving them equal access to education for them to become self-sufficient and competitive in whichever field they may be in. such a move will not only enable domestic workers to be competitive, self-sufficient qualified and proactive, it will also greatly improve opportunities available to them, increase their wages and bargaining power thus building professionalism and formality within the domestic work sector. This is eventually an effective strategy to raise the voice of domestic workers. Domestic work will no longer be considered a last resort field for failing persons but rather a professional and desirable field like any other.

Technology

The twenty first century is a technology dominated era. Communication technology is perhaps the largest, most efficient and convenient platform for interaction and dissemination of information to raise awareness and rally support. More over the most basic and previously human undertaken tasks around the house can now be done using different machines and appliances. From vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers and grass and tree cutters to washing machines, electric irons, dish washers, microwaves, stoves, computers, televisions, the list is endless. Domestic workers therefore need to have basic knowledge on how to operate these machines and appliances properly. Again DWAZ has makes it a mandate to ensure that our maids get basic education on all technology related issues so that they are able to efficiently effectively deliver in any home environment we have to place them.

Psycho-support

On another level, domestic workers themselves may require expert assistance in the form of counselling for example, as they may encounter situations which can take an emotional, mental or psychological toll on them.

Representation in policy issues

Advocating for domestic workers and domestic work sector, capacity building and skills improvement for domestic workers is an immense task. DWAZ seeks to

engage and partner with different stakeholders in order to produce top of the line professionals, reputation, brand and service, becoming a force to be reckoned with.

Promotion and protection of human and domestic workers` rights

To promote and advocate protection of domestic workers rights, there is need to improve organization to enhance representational capacity in all public spaces as well as in labour negotiation and expression of voice. This will be achieved through organizing sensitization and information sessions, develop nationwide advocacy campaign, publications on domestic work in Zimbabwe, partnership with research institute, development and advocacy organizations. Also make labour market institutions more inclusive to the domestic workers

Access to Social Security Services

These include health insurance, legal protection, funeral cover, life assurance and they have always stayed out of reach of domestic workers even though they need them just as much as every other worker does. The need and cost of accessing health services remains very high for both the working individual and their family or household. Consequently failure to pay for health means even children and other dependant persons suffer lack of access to health, dampening efforts to improve general health of all, especially children. Health insurance for example would make a huge difference. As such there is a gap that requires attention so that eventually social security services can be provided to domestic workers with time

Activities

Pooling membership to raise the voice of domestic workers

Advocating for rights of domestic workers at home and abroad through campaigns, sensitization meetings

Capacity building for domestic workers through training and skills development programs

Mobilizing support from relevant stakeholders for advocacy and support through forging partnerships

Providing a convenient interactive platform utilizing social media platforms, physical social interactions and digital communication channels

Sustainability

DWAZ programmes are designed to derive sustenance from its growing membership and building a strong base as a representative for domestic workers.

Training fees

Donor funding for projects and initiatives

Sponsorship from stakeholders and partners

Membership Sustainability

The skills development programmes will ensure that all members develop their skills and improve their knowledge thus equipping each one of them as a representative of themselves and the domestic work sector as a whole. Their marketability, employability, competitiveness within domestic work profession will also improve. Being aware of their rights will reduce their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. Equally important is the link DWAZ will create bridging domestic workers` access to critical services such as education opportunities, social services like health, life cover, legal protection etc.

Why DWAZ

We are committed to our members, providing them with a comprehensive package for their development, building their professional capacity, representing them and advocating for their rights and working to secure their access to services previously out of reach to them well as the recognition and formalization of the domestic work sector.

Professionalism is our guide. We are a coherent and determined pack. We are innovative, ambitious and motivated to raise the voice of domestic workers and give them the long overdue representation for transformation and be the best in our line of work for the sake of the clients and members dependant on us

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