

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers

September 2004

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE URGES “FAIR DEAL” FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

At its 92nd Session held in Geneva in June 2004, the International Labour Conference focused a part of its agenda on the issue of labour migration in this period of globalization. The Conference looked at policies and structures affecting the movement of migrant workers and at ways of improving migrants' protection through the setting of standards that will have international application.

A Conference Report which made use of a migrant survey conducted in 2003, described the growth and characteristics of labour migration in the present era of globalization. While there were increasing numbers of migrants who worked in industrialized countries in the 80s and 90s, they still only represented less than 5 per cent of the total workforce in those countries. Also, more migrant workers were coming from weaker economies and going to places where wages were not dramatically higher (for ex. from Haiti to the Dominican Republic, Indonesia to Malaysia, etc)

The Report noted that the economic gains expected from increased integration of the global economy have not “trickled down” to the world's poor countries, and that the income gap remains wide between rich and poor countries. In fact trade liberalization, a key aspect of globalization, led to falling exchange rates in poor countries that just intensified the pressure on workers to leave for jobs abroad.

While most receiving countries like Canada welcome the entry of professional immigrants, it is well-known that most migrant workers are located at the lowest rung of the employment ladders, where they do the 3-D jobs: Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult.

For some time now, women have outnumbered men in migrating and filling the demand for workers in other countries. Women migrants fill the demand for domestic and caregiving work as well as in manufacturing industries such as garments and electronics. This feminization of migration has significant implications for families and societies and must therefore be considered when formulating future migration policies and standards.

The Report confirms that “migrant women domestic workers are among the world's most vulnerable workers.” They are often poorly paid, usually unprotected by the receiving country's laws, and subject to human rights violations. As experienced by caregiver/domestic workers in Canada, even if they are covered under certain laws, enforcement of those laws is often difficult. Hiring migrant women to do their housekeeping and childcaring, women in destination countries have the advantage of working and earning money outside the home. The migrant domestic workers they hire leave their own children in the care of relatives and rear them “long distance”.

The Report also confirms the ineffectiveness of border controls and deportation to stem unauthorized migration. What happens is that irregular migrants, while often indispensable in certain economic sectors, are criminalized, victimized by lack of protection and security, and their human rights randomly violated. Those workers who are “trafficked” by syndicates and other gangs, often end up in forced prostitution and slave labour, living in fear and violence and working in the most abject conditions.

Every year as millions of new workers enter the labour force in poor countries where job creation is not keeping up with their growing numbers, there will be increasing and stronger pressures to leave and cross borders to find jobs. Meanwhile, aging populations in more prosperous countries are leading to scarcity of workers in many of their economic sectors.

So far there has been little success in ensuring that labour migration yield benefits particularly for source countries and migrants themselves. The number of migrant workers “in an irregular situation” – that is, without documentation or legal status – has

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*All Domestic/Caregiver workers,
Newcomers and those on Temporary Work Permit
are welcome to attend*

**INTERCEDE MEETING
Every First Sunday of the Month**

(if holiday, meeting is on the second Sunday)

Apply for/renew your membership - \$10.

Sunday, September 12, 3-5 p.m.
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

Workers Health & Safety
Guest Speaker: Mr. Juno Stewart, Instructor
Toronto Workers Health & Safety Legal Clinic

See you there

increased with the widespread commercialization of the migration process or its transformation into a lucrative private business enterprise. Worse, there has been an increase in smuggling or trafficking of migrants desperate to find jobs. On the other hand, there has also been a growth in informal forms of employment in receiving countries where migrants are paid below regular rates and don't enjoy benefits and protection afforded by law.

The Report warns: "Unless the international community acts, this situation is likely to worsen, with worrisome implications for migrant workers' rights...". It calls for an international consensus and a setting of standards to properly regulate and manage the flow of migrants so that migration will be of mutual benefit to sending and receiving countries as well as to the migrant workers themselves. An integrated and comprehensive approach to international labour migration must prioritize the rights of migrants in recognition of their principal role in economic development both of their own countries and the countries of their destination.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Let's Celebrate
INTERCEDE's 20th Year Anniversary

**Watch for upcoming INTERCEDE
ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES:**

☞ **December 4, 2004 - Christmas Dinner
Dance at Ramada Hotel**

Mabuhay! Long Live INTERCEDE!

Caribbean Connection Black Support Group
Next Meeting: Saturday, September 25, 2004
INTERCEDE Office
2:00-4:00 p.m.
*If you have any questions please contact Bernice at
(416) 483-4554 x 22

INTERCEDE
cordially invites you to its
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Cecil Community Centre
Sunday, October 3, 2004
58 Cecil St., Toronto, On. (south of College St., east of Spadina)

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| 3 p.m. | Business Meeting |
| 4:30 p.m | Program and Guest Speaker |
| 5:30 p.m. | Snacks & Refreshments |



HATS OFF TO OUR PICNIC DONORS!

We extend our sincerest appreciation for the generosity of *Mr. Dards Diaz, Philippine Tropical Express Remittance Centre* and *Gold Ribbon Bakery and Café*.

Thank you so much for your donation of prizes for a fun-filled and well-attended picnic. It is with your support that this annual summer picnic was a success.

As you know, in many INTERCEDE endeavours since 1984, the help of entrepreneurs and people like you in our community, in the form of cash contributions and gifts in-kind, assist us in continuing to address the needs, big and small, of thousands of caregivers and newcomers in our community.

Maraming salamat po!

Coco's Corner

On several occasions, we have received calls about collecting loans made to relatives and friends. These loans are given as a favor or to assist someone in need. Unfortunately, the lender is usually placed in a difficult situation when collecting payments and often, friendships break down as a result.

It is a praiseworthy act to provide assistance to people in need but you have to know your limits when it comes to money. There are institutions where your relatives or friends can borrow money. Spare yourself the hassle of getting back borrowed money especially complicated by lack of back-up documents such as receipts, agreement regarding mode of payment, or duration periods.

To avoid aggravation and breakdown of trust and friendships, avoid lending and instead refer them to a bank or credit union where they can negotiate for a loan. If appropriate, you may refer them to places where they will learn about money management.

Summer picnics in the park are occasions for get-togethers and reunions with townmates, schoolmates and old friends. At such events, I often meet up again with former members, clients and supporters of INTERCEDE. Spontaneously, they eagerly share information about their jobs, travels, and families with whom they have reunited. They proudly introduce parents, siblings, spouses, partners and children in unending succession!

Usually, they are surprised and delighted to learn that INTERCEDE, which they credit for their achievements, is still around. Yes, they were under the live-in caregiver program once, encountered problems with employment, experienced difficulties and waited long for the approval of their landed status. They also suffered loneliness from being separated from their families and dependents, and social isolation as they saved hard earned money to process their immigration papers.

Their laughter and contentment indicated the satisfaction they feel about what they have accomplished. Now they are looking forward to celebrate INTERCEDE's 20th year of service. They are happy to support the group that supported them.

It was a fun-filled day at Earl Bales Park for INTERCEDE members and friends on August 8, when we held a picnic to celebrate 20 years of service. The perfect location at the park was hard to miss, what with the very colourful banner hanging from the trees.

Cases of bottled water and pop and dozens of watermelons quenched our thirst after feasting on a long table full of delicious dishes including a whole roast pig. To help digest all that food, everyone eagerly participated in games that attracted even other people in the park.

There was also a Tai Chi Demonstration, another highlight of the fun-filled day.

Game winners received prizes generously donated by Philippine Tropical Express and Gold Ribbon Bakery Café.



A DAY IN A LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER

By Thess Pacis, Volunteer

Volunteer anyone? Who? Me? Yeah, I would love that but nah...got no time! These were the words that came out of my mouth the first time somebody asked me if I ever thought of doing volunteer work. This was two years ago, at a time of my life when I was busy. I worked five days a week, went to school on Saturdays and attended mass on Sundays. I would meet "Grandpa" for brunch and if time permitted, hooked up with friends just before I headed back to Aurora, where my job was. Before I knew it, another week had passed. So, how in the world could I squeeze in any volunteer work even if I wanted to! (Good excuse, eh!)

Something happened that required I pay several visits to INTERCEDE. It was during these visits that I came to know more and to appreciate the kind of services INTERCEDE offers to individuals like me. I observed how hectic the staff schedule was so that at the end of the day, there remained work to be done but not enough time and manpower to accomplish everything. They need extra hands! So, I asked Genie (who always has a ready smile no matter how busy she is) if I could volunteer. I started my volunteering with Des Balce-JSW Facilitator. She let me update files on the computer. I have been doing this for quite sometime now. And I love it! Do you know why? It is because I am able to practice and put into use whatever knowledge I have acquired from my computer classes.

Answering the phone is a great experience! Not as if I had never answered or used a phone before but just the chance to talk to different people. Welcoming walk-in visitors or clients is definitely fun! People who, a lot of times, just needed someone to talk to and share what they've gone through or are going through. It doesn't matter if it is a happy or sad story. I, as a volunteer, don't necessarily have to give them advice (well, volunteers are not authorized to give advice!). They just needed somebody to listen to them. But at times, I wish I could do more than just listen.

Volunteering at INTERCEDE is something that I will never regret. In fact, it is something that I am very grateful for. not only did it give me back my confidence and a sense of fulfillment but also, made me feel that this is where I belonged! Indeed, how lucky we are to have an organization like INTERCEDE.

Volunteer! Anyone? Count me in!



TO MARK
 THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF INTERCEDE SERVICES,
 YOU ARE INVITED TO

A FUNDRAISING BUFFET DINNER AND DANCE

Saturday, October 30, 2004
7 p.m.
At the Cecil Community Centre
58 Cecil St., Toronto (south of College, east of Spadina)

(Guest Speaker to be announced)

Suggested Attire: Formal or National Dress *Ticket \$30*

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN NETWORKING AND CUSTOMIZING YOUR RESUME ARE KEY

Jessie Langki, JSW Participant



I'm an accountant by profession. Back home in the Philippines my work involved a lot of brain work. But I realize that being a newcomer in Canada, I can not easily find the same nature of work that I used to do.

I don't feel bad starting from a low-paying position. I've learned from my job search experience that being a newcomer, it is unlikely I would find a job that exactly matches my education and work background.

I'm happy to find my first job through networking. One of INTERCEDE's JSW success stories, Mr. Jezz Garvez, also an accountant, helped me connect with SYMCOR, where I now work. As a data entry clerk, I am doing a relatively simple job, less analytical than I am used to. I have to admit that, in a way, it's ego-deflating to start from square one, knowing I am better qualified. I have no choice but to swallow my pride, while at the same time I persist in looking for work which is closer to the ideal. I just think that I won't be doing this forever, as I am doing all I can to eventually land a job I'll really feel good about.

Customizing your resume is key. I've learned from JSW that it is a must to revise and customize my resume for every position I'm interested in. It is exactly the strategy for landing an interview. The idea is to meticulously focus on the qualifications and requirements the prospective employer wants to see in your resume.

To all newcomers like me who are looking for a job: embrace the challenges of job search with an open mind, tons of patience, persistence and a positive attitude.



FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS & NEWCOMERS

WHEN: SUNDAY
September 12, 19 & 26, 2004
October 3, 17, 24 & 31, 2004
November 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2004

TIME : 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
WHERE: INTERCEDE
234 Eglinton Ave E., Suite 405
Toronto, On, M4P 1K5

Please call (416)483-4554 ext. 30 or 21 to sign up.
Seating is limited.

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada & sponsored by COSTI & OCASI

INTERCEDE

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 405
Toronto Ontario
M4P 1K5

Regular Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 4 p.m.
Telephone: (416) 483-4554
Fax: (416) 483-9781
Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554
E-mail: info@intercedetoronto.org

INTERCEDE STAFF:

- Jo Alcampo** — Interim Administrative Co-ordinator
- Des Balce** - JSW Facilitator
- Fely Villasin** - Part-Time Facilitator
- Columbia Diaz** - Settlement Counsellor & Program Manager
- Anita Fortuno** - Settlement Counsellor
- Bernice Small** - Settlement Counsellor
- Genie Policarpio** - Intake & Administrative Assistant

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP Program and Job Search Program with COSTI-OCASI; Ontario Status of Women; the Municipality of Toronto CSGP, Maytree and Trillium Foundations grant programs, for their financial support..



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