

-  **Project Category:** Social Justice
-  **Name of the Project:** The Ministry of Domestic Workers
-  **Date of the Project:** ongoing since October 2014
-  **Project Period:** April 2022 to March 2023
-  **Location:** Archdiocese of Kolkata, West Bengal
-  **Area of operation:** Kolkata Deanery

About the Project and Program Status:

Domestic workers forum continued doing the noble ministry; began in 2014 making domestic workers aware of their dignity and empowering them for life. Forum was connected with them mainly through visits, phone calls, meetings, various programmes, counselling and guidance. Most women are working for number of years in the same family for various reasons i.e. security, recognition and respect, are trusted by the employers and family members, a few working for more money and others no choice than engaging oneself in domestic work for even less payment. The loyalty and faithfulness towards employers, hard work and loving service is remarkable.

Project Goal:

The Domestic Workers' Ministry will focus on the identity, dignity and empowerment in personal and professional life of domestics.

Project Objectives:

1. To bring awareness and empower them.
2. Continue connectivity and keep good relationship.

Project Activities:



Date	Planned activities	Activities achieved
April 2022 to March 2023	Connectivity and Visits, Counselling & Pastoral Care	Telephonic connectivity was done mostly for the programs. There were visits to know their conditions, for counselling and pastoral care.
April 2022 to March 2023	Monthly Meetings	Monthly meetings were held regularly at St. Thomas Church Middleton Row Presbytery. The average attendance was 15.
1st May 2022	International Labour Day	The May Day was observed at St. Thomas Church Middleton Row. The number of participants 52. Invitation letters were distributed to individuals by visiting them personally. This gave the opportunity to meet some of the employers.
7th August 2022	August World I Indigenous Day (Vishwa Adivasi Diwas)	The forum sent wishes for 7th August. World Indigenous Day (Vishwa Adivasi Diwas) to all domestics in our contact. A few visits were made prior to 7th August. 70 workers participated in the celebration organized at St. Thomas Church (Middleton Row).
9th October 2022	Nayakhani	The workers gathered to thank God for the First Fruits at St. Thomas Church. 31workers observed this day.
11th December 2022	Christmas get-together	On 11th December 2022, 82 domestic workers gathered at St. Thomas Church hall to celebrate Christmas get-together.
12th March 2023	Pilgrimage to Bandel	12 domestic workers had been to Bandel for pilgrimage.

Challenges faced and Learnings:

1. Less time was given visiting domestic workers.
2. New comers were unattended on their arrival and in working place.
3. Many domestics were hold back after Corona.
4. There were less people in the programs organized for them.
5. Employers and domestics had less interest in the meetings and programs.

Story of Change:

Balamdina Kerketta age 45 from Gigboi Dt.Tinsukhiya; Dibrugarh, Assam works under the guidance of Madam Morgan & Shalini Jalan, at 1 Rainy Park, Ballygunge Circular Road, Kolkata-700019. At the age of 20 she began her work with a salary of Rs. 300. Thirty years have gone past; she continues to display her loyalty and responsibility towards the work entrusted upon her. She has earned the respect from her employers and is considered as one of the members of the family. This year in January 2023, she underwent an open heart surgery, and a whopping Rs. 3 lac was spent towards it, the cost of which was borne by her employers. Her employers provided her with every essential facility for her complete and thorough recovery. Balamdina indeed was taken good care by her employers and she is forever grateful for the love and care received from them.



Domestic workers forum accepted the challenging work with great love by visiting the domestics and the families located in different places concentrating Kolkata Deanery. The forum learnt that most women are doing hard work to support their families in need. They are able to help to give medical help in sickness and restore good health, to support and educate children, to bring the poor family condition up and many other situations that needed attention. The effort of the forum is always to bring awareness about their dignity and respect for their life through visits, meetings, various programmes, counselling and guidance.

