



## KALAYAAN

Justice for migrant domestic workers

# Who Cares? Researching and Meeting the Needs of Migrant Care Workers

A study conducted on migrant workers who care for the elderly in private households by Kalayaan, a migrant domestic workers' advice and support group, in collaboration with COMPAS, University of Oxford.

## Background

This study has been conducted in the context of the UK's ageing population, a growing need for affordable care and a market for care workers which faces significant recruitment and retention problems. In the context of the ongoing personalization of care, care users are increasingly having to find and pay for their own private care or rely on informally provided care. This study explores the living and working conditions of migrant elder care workers working in private households and covers themes such as employment rights and relations, care regulation, race and racialised labour, integration and skills. Findings arising from the study will be of policy relevance in the fields of both care and immigration, particularly in the context of the forthcoming Green Paper.

## Aims and Objectives

This project combines a robust scientific and user orientated methodology, a policy focus, and an interest in theory development. It will provide information about *who* is currently caring for the elderly, and how the employment/caring relationship is negotiated. As well as academic advances the research will produce a detailed community-based strategy for migrant care workers that will examine issues facing this group and best practice for increasing social inclusion and planning future services. It will identify factors contributing to social exclusion of migrant care workers, identify commonalities and differences with other types of care workers, and analyse the challenges in the relationship between migrant care workers and care users.

Research is focused around the following areas:

- (1) **How important are migrants** in the provision of elder care in private households?
- (2) Do migrant care workers share common **characteristics** (i.e. Immigration status, nationality, age, gender, etc.)?
- (3) What are the living and working **conditions** of migrant care workers?
- (4) How do migrant care workers **negotiate their employment and social relationships** with care users and their relatives?
- (5) How does **race and racism** impact on the employment of migrant care workers?
- (6) What strategies would be helpful in promoting **social inclusion** among migrant care workers?

## **Methods**

The project combines qualitative and quantitative methods, and integrates support and workshops with research work. It also develops previous academic work on the eldercare sector more generally. The research process also provides an opportunity for care workers (often isolated) to meet and share experiences and provide information and workshops on practical problems. Key methods utilized are:

1. Statistical analysis of Kalayaan's client database, tracking which migrants work in eldercare and the characteristics they share;
2. Participant observation in Kalayaan;
3. In-depth semi-structured interviews with migrant elder care workers;
4. Focus group discussions with migrants;
5. Interviews with employers, agencies and stake holders.

The research has been supported and advised by an advisory committee including 4 migrant workers, and an ethical sub-committee has played an important role in ensuring that the research was conducted with a view to the British Sociological Association's ethical guidelines.

The research began in June 2007 and will be completed in September 2009.

Launch of findings and dissemination: October 2009

Kalayaan will **launch** the findings of their two-year research project on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October** at 6.30pm in the Brunei Suite, School of Oriental and African Studies. Drinks and nibbles served from 6pm onwards. Those interested in attending the launch should register by contacting [mumtaz@kalayaan.org.uk](mailto:mumtaz@kalayaan.org.uk)

## **Researchers**

Community researchers: Mumtaz Lalani and Lourdes Gordolan (Kalayaan, London)

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Overall project coordinator: Kate Roberts (Kalayaan, London)

## **Funder**

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