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DRAFT

**INDONESIAN WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN GCC COUNTRIES:
COSTS AND OUTCOMES OF THEIR MIGRATORY EXPERIENCE¹**

¹ This document has been prepared by Ms. Aswatini Raharto, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Indonesia, for the Interregional Workshop on Strengthening Dialogue to Make Migration Work for Development in the ESCAP and ESCWA Regions, 28-30 June 2011, Beirut. The paper has been reproduced as submitted, without formal editing. The views expressed are strictly those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

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Draft

Indonesian women domestic workers in GCC countries: Costs and outcomes of their migratory experience

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Abstract

Indonesian women's participation in international migration started under the coolie contract programme during the Dutch colonial period. Under this programme, a small number of Javanese women were recruited to work in the plantations in Deli, Sumatera. Some were also recruited to provide domestic services, combined with sexual services under extramarital relationship with European men who worked in the plantations. These women were referred to as *nyai* in Java and Sumatera.

After Indonesian independence, a large proportion of Indonesian women workers began to migrate to foreign countries. Increasing numbers of women workers, mostly involved in domestic work, were seen in response to governmental policy in the late 1970s. The main destination countries of Indonesian women migrant workers are Saudi-Arabia, Malaysia, Taiwan Province of China, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, China, Kuwait, and Singapore. Increased numbers of Indonesian migrant workers working in the Middle East placed Indonesia as one of the most important labour exporting countries in South-East Asia. However, recently, there has been a change in this trend and some countries in Asia such as Taiwan Province of China, Hong Kong, China and the Republic of Korea are becoming more important destination countries for Indonesian women domestic workers. However, for women migrant workers from some areas in Indonesia, such as Indramayu District in West Java, countries in the Middle East and in particular Saudi-Arabia, remain important destination countries.

The involvement of Indonesian women as domestic workers in some Middle Eastern countries has economic and social outcomes, both positive and negative, not only for the migrant worker's families but also their hometowns. The positive impact can mainly be measured in terms of economic benefit from the remittances sent back by the women which are mainly used for daily consumption. Only a few were able to accumulate enough savings to build a house, buy agricultural land or invest in a new business. The social impacts, on the other hand, are mostly negative and greatly affect the family left behind. Besides the economic benefit, departure of wives/mothers affects changes in the division of roles and responsibilities among family member. There is a change in the traditional gender roles and this particularly affects the husbands left behind. Husbands no longer have the role of main breadwinner as their wives have gone abroad to work and have as a result taken on that role. However, domestic chores which used to be the wives' tasks are now carried out by the husbands. Many studies concluded that this change in gender roles brought about marital conflict as the husband often maintains his masculine identity while performing domestic chores that are traditionally considered as a women's job. This also seems to be the situation faced in Indramayu District based on the information provided by informants in a study, although they seem to be getting used to the change in roles and have been adjusting to it.

In particular, among children, the absence of the mother may create emotional problems which sometimes also lead to inadequate behaviour. One of these 'negative' behaviours which has been seen is that children end up spending much of their time away from home with their peers as their mother is not at home. This is probably caused by the lack of the mother's attention - love and care, which creates the feeling of being abandoned. Furthermore, older children end up having more responsibility in performing household tasks. They have to assist their fathers to accomplish the chores since their mothers are not present at home.

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1. Introduction

1. International migration from Indonesia started in the 18th century, as spontaneous migration as well as through coolie contracts regulated by the Dutch colonial government. Spontaneous international migration involved some ethnic groups such as the Bawean people, Balinese, Madurese, Buginese, Makassarese, Banjarese and the Minangkabau people, who moved irregularly to Singapore and Malaysia as traders or in search of employment opportunities. During Dutch Colonialism, government regulated workers migrated under the coolie contract recruitment programme. Under this programme thousands of Javanese coolies were sent to plantations newly opened by the Dutch Government in the Sumatera and Kalimantan (Borneo) islands as well as in the Dutch colonies in Surinam. Later, the Dutch government also sent Javanese contract coolies to some colonies under the British and French governments. During Japanese occupation in Indonesia, this movement continued and was known as 'sending romusha'.

2. Migration of Indonesian women also started under the coolie contract programme. A small number of Javanese women were recruited to work in the plantations in Deli, Sumatera (Bremen, 1997: 67, 100-102). The women workers under coolie contracts were obviously more exposed to exploitation compared their male counterparts. Among them some were also recruited to provide domestic services, combined with sexual services under extramarital relationship with European men who worked in the plantations. These women were referred to as *nyai* in Java and Sumatera. This arrangement was structured into company labour policies to promote permanent settlement among European staff (Stoler, 2002: 41-55).

3. After Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, the spontaneous as well as government regulated movement of migrant workers from Indonesia continued. Until the end of the 1970s, Malaysia and Singapore remained the main destination countries for migrant workers from Indonesia, dominated by the flow of spontaneous undocumented or illegal movement (Spaan 1994). International labour migration from Indonesia increased substantially with the rise in demand for male migrant workers from Asia, including Indonesia to work in infrastructure projects in the Middle East around the 1970's. This was followed by increased demand for women domestic workers resulting in the feminization of migration as quite a substantial number of women migrant workers, especially from Indonesia and Sri Lanka, entered the domestic labor market in the Middle East (Asis, 2005).

4. A large proportion of Indonesian women workers migrated to foreign countries in the early 1980s. An increasing in the number of women workers, mostly involved in domestic work, was triggered by governmental policy in the late 1970s (World Bank, 2006). The main destination countries of Indonesian women workers are Saudi-Arabia, Malaysia, Taiwan Province of China, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, China, Kuwait, and Singapore, while most Indonesian men migrate to Malaysia and the Republic of Korea (Table 1). Increasing numbers of Indonesian migrant workers working in the Middle East placed Indonesia as one of the most important labour exporting countries in South-East Asia. However, recently, there was a tendency for some countries in Asia such as Taiwan Province of China, Hong Kong, China and the Republic of Korea to become more important destination countries for Indonesian women domestic workers.

5. As these countries are experiencing economic development, married women are also encouraged to enter the labour market to augment the workforce. This opened the space for domestic workers and care givers to replace the services provided by the women/wives at home. It resulted in an increase in demand for domestic workers from foreign countries where unemployment is high including Indonesia. However, for some areas in Indonesia, such as Indramayu District in West Java, some countries in the Middle East, especially Saudi-Arabia remain the most important destination countries for women working as domestic workers.

Table 1: Indonesian Migrant Workers in 2008 to the Top Ten Destination Countries

No	Country	Men	Women	Sum
1	Malaysia	117052	140658	257710
2	Saudi-Arabia	23020	211623	234643
3	Taiwan Province of China	6165	56268	62433
4	United Arab Emirates	5531	32669	38200
5	Hong Kong, China	12	30195	30207
6	Kuwait	2962	26262	29224
7	Singapore	25	21842	21867
8	Republic of Korea	12943	603	13546
9	Jordan	1433	9732	11165
10	Qatar	1845	6871	8716

Source: BNP2TKI, 2008

6. Between 1994 and 2008 around 6.2 million Indonesian workers were been deployed to work overseas in 42 countries around the world (BNP2TKI, 2010). Data for the period between 1994 and 2008 shows that the number of Indonesian migrant workers deployed to the Asia-Pacific region outnumbered those deployed to the Middle East and Africa. The flow was also dominated by women with a sex ratio between 20 and 79 in the period from 1994 to 2008. On average there were only 36 men migrant workers for every 100 women migrant workers deployed overseas (Table 2). The migration flow to the Middle East and Africa was dominated by women with a sex ratio of about 12 between 1995 and 2005. Among migrant workers going to the Asia-Pacific region, about 79 men migrant workers were found to every 100 women migrant workers (Raharto, 2007).

Table 2: Number and sex ratio¹⁾ of documented Indonesian labour deployed overseas, 1994-2008, by region of destination

Year	Region of Destination					Sex Ratio ¹⁾
	Asia-Pacific	Middle East and Africa	America	Europe	All Regions of Destination	
1994	70,733	98,710	4,036	1,708	175,187	32
1995	67,877	48,355	3,600	1,054	120,886	48
1996	380,369	135,336	980	484	517,169	79
1997	101,621	131,734	1,189	709	235,253	20

1998	227,911	179,521	2,928	1,249	411,609	28
1999	267,768	154,636	3,519	1,696	427,619	41
2000	304,186	129,168	1,509	359	435,222	46
2001	178,147	116,597	349	55	295,148	23
2002	238,324	241,961	40	68	480,393	32
2003	109,722	183,770	171	202	293,865	37
2004	160,970	219,699	17	4	380,690	28
2005	297,291	177,019	-	-	474,310	46
2006	326,760	353,240	-	-	680,000	25
2007	351,966	343,487	-	1,293	696,746	28
2008	392,923	334,440	-	1,325	748,825 ²⁾	36
Total 1994-2008	3,476,568	2,847,673	18,338	10,206	6,372,922	36
%	54.6	44.7	0.3	0.2	100.0	-

Notes: 1) Sex ratio: Males per 100 females

2) Including 20,137 sea men

Source: <http://bnp2tki.go.id/content/view/180/87/>; accessed 29 October 2010

7. The study aims to examine the cost and benefit of working as a domestic worker. It is based on women migrant workers who have to Indonesia and in particular looks into the case of Indramayu District in West Java Province, using quantitative and qualitative approaches. West Java is known as one of the most important province of origin for migrant workers from Indonesia. Within this province Indramayu District is also known as an important source of migrants. The study area (the District) is located about 250 km from Jakarta. The quantitative approach of the study was carried out by conducting a survey with 100 women who used to work as domestic workers in the Middle East. The women respondents were selected among the group who returned to Indonesia between 2009 and 2011. The most recent date of return of some of the respondents was April 2011 (only a few days before the survey was conducted).

8. The qualitative approach was implemented by conducting in-depth interviews with a selected number of women out of the 100 women who were included in the survey for data collection. Secondary data, mainly on the flow of Indonesian migrant workers abroad, was collected from various institutions involved in the recruitment process such as the Ministry of Manpower and National Authority for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (*Badan Nasional Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia/BNP2TKI*).

9. Information collected from the survey included information on their household and individual characteristics, the reasons for working abroad, the cost of migration, work typically performed in the destination countries, skill level and training received before departure, the use of remittances as well as the costs and benefits of working as a domestic worker in the Middle East. The qualitative research approach was implemented to gain an in-depth understanding regarding the decision making process related to becoming a migrant worker.

2. Characteristics of Indonesian domestic workers in GCC countries

10. Until recently, most of the Indonesian women recruited to work in GCC Countries were hired to work as domestic workers at their prime working age and mostly had low educational qualifications. Age and education are among the most important characteristics in analyzing international migration trends. In October 2004, Government Act No. 39 concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers overseas was announced. This law is the first comprehensive legal instrument regulating the recruitment process and protecting Indonesian migrant workers overseas. It spells out the prerequisites required to work overseas including age and education. According to the Act Indonesians who want to work abroad must be at least 18 years old and those who intend to work in a private household (as domestic workers) must be at least 21 years old. In addition, Junior High School (9 years of education) is the minimum level of education required.

11. Most of the women returnees who used to work as domestic workers in GCC countries interviewed in the study area In Idramayu District in 2011 were between 25-34 years old. The data shows that more than 50 per cent were ages under 21 when they started working in GCC countries and one respondent even stated that she started to work in GCC countries before she was 15 years old (Table 3). This data indicates that the Indonesian Government Act No. 39 concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian workers overseas has not been fully implemented in the recruitment process of Indonesian women planning to work as domestic workers overseas. However, since the Act was only adopted in 2004, it is probable that those who were recruited below the age of 21 departed before October 2004. In some cases, there may be the possibility that the recruitment agencies falsify the women's age in the documents in order to fulfill the minimum age requirement.

Table 3: Characteristics of Indonesian women returning from GCC countries, Indramayu District, 2011 (percentage).

Women's Characteristics	Percentage
1. Current Age	
18-24	11
25-29	24
30-34	24
35 and above	41
2. Women's age at the first time working as domestic workers in GCC Countries	
< 21	51
21 years and above	49

3. Marital status at the first time working	
Not married	41
Married	53
Widowed	6
4. Education	
Never attending School/Elementary school, not completed	4
Elementary School, completed	52
Junior High School, completed	38
Senior High School, completed	5
Diploma1/2/3/College	1
5. Activity during the last six months	
Work	9
Job Seeker/Unemployed	21
Taking care of the family/household	70
Number of cases	100

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District.

12. The majority of women (52 per cent) interviewed in the 2011 survey completed elementary school (six years of education) and only about 4 per cent never attended school or did not complete elementary school. The PPK-LIPI's Study conducted in Indramayu District in 1999 among women returnees from GCC countries showed that the majority were between 20 to 35 years old. Furthermore, the majority of them did not complete elementary school and never attended special training related to their job overseas. Only a very small number completed junior high school or higher. (PPK-LIPI, 2002). The two surveys show that after 10 years, the minimum education criteria does not seem to be considered in the selection of women domestic workers sent to GCC Countries even though it is included in Government Act No. 39. However, there is an increase in the age of women returnees. In 1991, about 33 per cent of women returnees were above the age of 30 and in 2011 this number increased to 65 per cent (Table 3). The low level of education implies that the women's ability to understand information concerning overseas employment and related aspects is limited.

13. More than 50 per cent of women were already married when they went to work in GCC Countries for the first time. West Java Province is known for having a high percentage of women married at a young age. Therefore it is not surprising that those women who work as domestic workers in GCC countries were already married with children despite their young age. They leave their children under the guardianship of their husband and commonly also under the guardianship of their parents (grandparents of the child/children). Among the 100 women

interviewed in the survey, 76 per cent stated that they left at least one child back home the last time they went to work overseas. Most (60 per cent) of the children were still living with the husbands (their father). The LIPi's study in 2010 found that there were changes in the roles and responsibilities among the family members when the wife/mother went to work abroad. The impact of changing gender roles is particularly felt among the husbands left behind (Raharto *et al*, 2011).

14. Most of the women, after returning from working as domestic workers in GCC countries did not do any paid work but instead mainly performed domestic chores at home (Table 1). While there are many Indonesian women going abroad to work as domestic workers, it is becoming more and more difficult to get Indonesian household helpers in Indonesia. It seems that they do not favour doing domestic work at home and instead prefer to work abroad. One important reason is the higher salary gained from working abroad compared with the salary received for the same work at home.

3. Migration process and experience

15. The migration process starts when an individual or household makes the decision to go work abroad, followed by the pre-departure and departure processes. Decision-making is important when studying migration since the absence of any household member, especially a women/mother, will have a significant impact on the family structure and the roles of the family members. Information on the migration process was mainly collected during the in-depth qualitative interviews with the selected respondents.

Decision-making

16. The study conducted among women returnees in Indramayu district in 2011 reveals that decision-making regarding women's migration to work as domestic workers in GCC countries involved the nuclear family members. Married women mainly consulted with their husbands in deciding whether or not to go abroad for work. The women seemed to have a strong influence on the decision-making process. When the idea to work abroad came from the women themselves the husbands simply seemed to agree. This is probably related to the economic needs that cannot be fully fulfilled by the husbands. Children were less likely to have any influence in the decision-making process even though some children may not have been happy that their mother went abroad for work. For single women the parents were the most important people who were consulted in the decision-making process. Here again it seems that most of them supported their daughter in going to the Middle East to work as a domestic worker. Below are some statements from some of the women who were interviewed.

Ms. Id is 29 years old. She worked in Oman for two years, from 2007 to 2009. She was a widow when she left her village to work as a domestic worker in Oman and left a 2 year old son at home under guardianship of her parents. She described her intention to work abroad as follows:

Question (Q): *The first time you thought about working as a domestic worker abroad, did anybody influence your decision of whether you should go or not?*

Answer (A): *It was my own desire. My parents left the decision up to me and gave me their blessing. It was up to me. I notice that many women who went to work in Saudi-Arabia could buy anything. My friends, my neighbours and I really wanted to be like them. We wanted to have enough money to buy many things.*

Ms. Len is 45 years old. She was 24 years old, married with one child aged 6 years old the first time she went to work as a domestic worker in Saudi-Arabia in 1990. She is among the first generation of women migrant workers from her village that went to GCC Countries. She went back 5 times to work in GCC Countries between 1990 and 2011. She had just returned home after completing her last contract in 2011. Below she explains how she took the decision to work abroad the first time:

Q: *You were married with a child, the first time you went to work as a domestic worker in Saudi-Arabia in 1990. How did you come to the decision to work abroad? What did you say to your husbands?*

A: *I had just told my husband that I wanted to work in Saudi-Arabia. I had decided that if he agreed I would go but if he didn't agree then I wouldn't go. He said that it was up to me and if I really wanted to go, I could go. He gave me permission to work in Saudi-Arabia.*

Q: *But you were helping your parents in their land at that time. Why did you decide to go to Saudi-Arabia to work as domestic worker?*

A: *The only available job at that time was in agricultural land with uncertain income. I wanted more money and I heard that the salaries were high in Saudi-Arabia.*

Ms. Rok is 37 years old. She has experienced work as domestic worker in Saudi-Arabia three times between 1992 and 2011. The first time she went in 1992, she left her baby son with her parents after having divorced from her husband. The last contract was from 2009 to 2011. She returned home in January 2011. She described her motivation to work in Saudi-Arabia:

Q: *Why did you work in Saudi-Arabia after getting divorced from your husband?*

A: *If I stayed in my village, I would not have had any income. Actually I wanted to work in the rice fields if I could but I couldn't as it was hot and muddy. Tandur (planting rice) is not an easy job and my friend said that I couldn't do it and that I would make a mess in the rice field. Also It is not like working in Saudi-Arabia where I can get more money.*

17. It seems that there isn't any "real" decision-making process in the family when a women plans to go abroad for work. There was no family discussion to talk about the advantage and disadvantage of the daughter/wife/mother going to work as a domestic worker in GCC countries. Moreover, there was also no discussion on how the family left behind would cope with various issues including completion of household chores while the wife was working abroad. The family left behind have to deal with the problems themselves. The LIPI's Study on the Social Cost of Migration and the Children Left, conducted in Indramayu District in 2010-2011 confirms the arguments as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

My mother only told me that she would go to Saudi-Arabia for work. My parents did not ask for my agreement and also did not ask whether I agree that my mother is leaving. All was decided by my parents, particularly my mother. Honestly, I am not happy with my mother's absence at home, but at the end I can accept it since my mother does not go for her own pleasures. She is leaving to make

money for my education and also to fulfill my family's needs. (A 17 year old girl left behind when her mother went to work in Saudi-Arabia.)

My daughter came to me and told that she would leave to go to work in Saudi-Arabia. She asked whether I was willing to take care of their children while her husband goes back to live with his parents while she is away. I had to accept her demand since she left to earn money for the family. (A 55 year old lady who cares for her grandchildren.)

The recruitment process

18. The pre-departure process includes recruitment and skill/language training for prospective migrant workers. Placement of Indonesian migrant workers overseas is permitted only to countries that have a written agreement with Indonesia. Based on regulations related to recruitment and placement of Indonesian migrant workers overseas, deployment of formal Indonesian migrant workers involves the Government and private recruitment agencies that facilitate the migration process. The Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and National Authority for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (Badan Nasional Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia/BNP2TKI) are the main government institutions responsible for the placement and protection of Indonesian migrant workers. The Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration is responsible for providing and improving regulations related to the placement and protection of Indonesian migrant workers overseas. The BNP2TKI's main responsibility is to give integrated services for the placement of Indonesian migrant workers overseas, including preparation (before departure) as well as rehabilitation after migrant workers return home (Chapter 10, Article 94, Act No. 39, 2004). At the provincial level, BNP2TKI is represented by Service Unit on Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (*Balai Pelayanan Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia/BP3TKI*). The private agencies involved in the recruitment of migrant workers are the Indonesian Private Agency on Overseas Labour Placement (*Pelaksana Penempatan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia Swasta/PPTKIS*) and Overseas Labour Market Agency (*Bursa Kerja Luar Negeri/BKLN*).

19. There are two general ways by which prospective migrants can be recruited for overseas employment. The first is to directly contact a formal private labour recruitment agency known as the Indonesian Private Agency on Overseas Labour Placement (*Pelaksana Penempatan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia Swasta/PPTKIS*) or the Overseas Labour Market Agency (*Bursa Kerja Luar Negeri/BKLN*). The second way is to use the services provided by middlemen. For example, in the area which is the focus of this study, they are known as *calo* or *sponsor*. Most returnees interviewed in the study make use of the services provided by the *calo* or *sponsor*. The role of *calo/sponsor* in the migration process is to be a supplier of prospective migrant workers to the PPTKIS.

20. There is a registration process of potential migrant workers before their placement is processed by PPTKIS. At this stage, at least two government institutions are involved, (1) Local government at Sub-district level and (2) Manpower Office at District/City level. Potential migrant workers register with an official in the Sub-district and the data is reported to the Manpower office at the district level. The PPTKIS can only deploy migrant workers to the countries that already have an agreement with the Indonesian Government as per the BNP2TKI (Article 11, Act No 39). However it is not clear in what form the agreement needs to be (Memorandum of Understanding,

bilateral agreement, bilateral discussions) and that guarantee the commitment on either side. In practice, Indonesia still sends migrant workers to Saudi-Arabia even though there is no agreement to support this.

21. The preparation for the potential migrant worker's departure is handled by the PPTKIS. This includes the supervision and handling of the medical check up, training for a certain skill (some PPTKIS have their own training facilities), local test after training period, final test conducted by National Certification Body, getting a recommendation from Police office for passport publishing and getting the work visa. The PPTKIS also has to provide the potential worker with an insurance scheme. Ensuring that all the requirements for placement are met is under the responsibility and coordination of the BP3TKI at the provincial level or at the port of departure. After all requirements have been met, the BP3TKI will issue an Identity Card for Overseas Migrant Workers (Kartu Tenaga Kerja Luar Negeri/KTKLN) and the last preparations before departure can be made.

22. According to Government Act N0 39, 2004 and after BKLN is established, the recruitment of migrant workers should be done through BKLN. However, quite a large number of potential women migrant workers are still in favour of using services provided by the middlemen/sponsor/caló. The middlemen had a larger role in the recruitment process since they come from the village and they know the potential migrant workers and their families. The Manpower Office, BKLN and PPTKIS, on the other hand are located in the cities far away from the villages where the potential migrant workers come from, so to register to these agencies, potential migrant workers have to travel to the city. This takes time and transportation costs also need to be covered. The PPTKIS in Indramayu is therefore exploring new methods for direct recruitment from the villages.

23. The middlemen in the recruitment process operate between the place of origin of potential migrant workers and the recruitment agencies in the city that have official licenses to send migrant workers overseas. Generally, one recruitment agency in the capital city has representatives in various districts and each representative has business relations with a number of middlemen known locally as *sponsor dalam*. They in turn establish connections with local middlemen known locally as *sponsor daerah* (local sponsor). In practice, the *sponsor daerah* usually plays a significant role in recruiting and selecting female migrant workers to be employed as domestic workers overseas because they live close to the villages of the potential migrant workers. In building up these business networks, however, cooperation between sponsors (*dalam* and *daerah*) must also be extended to different labour recruitment agencies (PPTKIS) in order to connect the potential migrant workers to the PPTKIS as soon as possible, which leads to financial benefits for the sponsors. The sponsors generally recruit as many potential migrant workers as possible as the more applicants they can get the money they will make through the recruitment fee from the PPTKIS.

24. There were variations in the total cost paid by women migrant workers during the recruitment process. About 77 per cent of women returnees explained what they had to pay for the recruitment process the first time they went to work in GCC countries. The cost was between Rp. 150,000 to Rp. 2,000,000 but the highest number of women paid between Rp. 501,000 to Rp. 1,000,000². However, only about 24 per cent of women returnees stated that they had to pay the

migration cost and about 69 per cent stated that they did not pay the migration cost for their last contract (Table 4).

25. The cost paid by women migrant workers only represented the amount of money they had to spend. They did not know the actual migration cost for working overseas or whether they had to pay or not. Such limited information put them in a vulnerable position and susceptible to financial fraud from the *sponsors* (Raharto, 2002). Many women even had to borrow money from relatives, friends or neighbours to cover the cost of migration. Some of them borrowed the money from the sponsors. However, about 90 per cent of the women paid the migration cost for the second time from their own savings. This is most likely because they already had some savings from first working contract (Table 4).

26. Actually the recruitment fee should be paid by the future employer in the destination country. Therefore most of the returnees stated that they did not pay the recruitment cost for their second working contract (Table 4). This is a change from previous practice of recruitment where the cost was paid by the potential migrant workers (Raharto, et al, 2002). The current practice (based on the interviews in 2010) is that the potential migrant worker will get paid after they pass the medical check-up. The amount of money they will get depends on the agreement between the potential migrant and the sponsor who directly recruits them. Generally, the *sponsor* is somebody who is well known by the potential migrant worker. Therefore, using *sponsors* to find overseas employment gives a sense of assurance and security to the potential migrant workers. However, the involvement of several layers of sponsors makes the migration process longer and more commercial.

Table 4: Migration cost paid by women during the recruitment process

Cost (Rp) and sources of the cost	First Contract	Second Contract
	Percentage	Percentage
Cost, paid to the sponsor/Middlemen¹⁾	77	24
150,000 – 500.000	(31)	(7)
501,000 – 1,000,000	(44)	(12)
>1.000.000	(2)	(1)
Did not pay the cost	18	69
Cost paid by the employers		5
Cost paid by the sponsor/Debt to sponsor	5	2
N (number of cases)	100	84
Sources of money to pay the cost		
Cash, my own money/saving	44	91
Cash, borrow from relatives/friends/neighbours	49	-

Cash, my own money and also borrow from relatives/friends/neighbours	5	-
Borrow from the sponsor	2	9
N (number of cases)	82	22

Note:

1). Cost paid to the sponsor:

1st contract etween Rp. 150.000,- - Rp. 2.000.000,-

Last Contract: Between: Rp 200.000,- - Rp. 1.500.000,- (For those working more than once/one contract).

2) Current exchange rate: 1 US \$ = Rp. 8

() is number of cases

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District

Pre-departure Training

27. Out of the 100 women returnees interviewed in 2011, 96 stated that they had received skills training before being deployed as domestic workers for the first time. Most (75 per cent) of those who received training stated that the training was run by the Indonesian Private Agency on Overseas Labour Placement (*Pelaksana Penempatan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia Swasta/PPTKIS*).

28. The rest received training from the training institution under the Ministry of Manpower. There are some differences in the information provided concerning the length as well as materials/skills provided during the trainings (Table 5). Generally the trainings run for 2 to 4 weeks and only 12 per cent stated that the training lasted longer than a month. The training was mostly run in Jakarta and a few women stated that they had their training in other cities (Bandung, Bekasi in West Java).

29. Almost all the women who received similar skills training including cooking, tips on how to use modern kitchen household equipments, caring for children, language, general knowledge on the working place and condition (culture, habits, general rules) and how to seek protection if they have any problems with their employer. About 90 per cent of the women also stated that they received training on how to take care of older persons. However, many women felt that the training was not completely in accordance with what was needed in their overseas work place. Therefore, clear information on what appliances are actually used in the kitchens and houses of the employers is necessary. They also need more knowledge on the life style and daily habits of their employers and family members such as, for example sleeping and eating habits.

30. Most women felt that (local) language training was extremely useful and necessary in their position as domestic workers in GCC countries so that they could communicate fluently with their employer. Some women attended an Islamic School (Madrasah) in their village which provides Arabic teaching. This, as stated by some women, was very helpful when they received formal Arabic language training in preparation for their migration to GCC countries. However, it cannot be said that smost of them already mastered the local language when they arrived at their

employers' house. The PPT-LIPI study found that almost 50 per cent of women were not fluent in the local language the first time that they worked as domestic workers in GCC countries. As a result they sometime felt pressured because they did not know what their employers wanted and they could not protest or speak up when the employers were being tough or treating the employees unfairly (PPT-LIPI, 2002). All women who received training before their departure also stated that they had to take a test at the end of the training. They are not permitted to go work in GCC countries if they fail the test.

Table 5: Training received before deployment for the first time working abroad, institutions and place of training

Skill, institution and place of training	Percentage
Received training before departure to work abroad for the first time	Yes = 96 No = 4
Institution delivered the training	
Indonesian Private Agency on Overseas Labour Placement (<i>Pelaksana Penempatan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia Swasta/PPTKIS</i>)	75
Government skill training Institution (<i>Balai Latihan Kerja/BLK</i>) under the Ministry of Manpower	25
Duration of training	
2 days	2
7 – 14 days	28
15 – 30 days	58
More than 30 days	12
Place of training (City)	
Jakarta	97
Bandung	2
Bekasi	1.
Skills received during training	
Cooking	99
Using modern kitchen/household equipments	100
Taking care of children	100

Taking care of older persons	90
Language	100
General knowledge on working place and condition (culture, habit, general rules)	100
Legal protection	100
Test after the training	100

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District.

4. Work experiences and working conditions (as domestic workers) in GCC Countries

31. Working as domestic workers in GCC countries is not a new phenomenon for women from the Indramayu District. Out of the 100 women returnees interviewed, more than 80 per cent at least have working in GCC countries twice and about 8 per cent have working in GCC countries five times (on five different contracts) (Table 6). The women worked from 1988 to 2011 (period when they had their first contract) and returned home after completing the last contract (or in some cases the first contract if they only had one experience working in GCC countries) between 2009 and 2011. Saudi-Arabia is the most important destination countries in terms of numbers followed by the United Arab Emirates.

Table 6: Destination countries for Indonesian women working in GCC countries from the first to the last working contract (percentage)

Countries of destination	1 st Contract	2 nd Contract	3 rd Contract	4 th Contract	5 th Contract
Arab Saudi	52	26	13	11	3
Uni Emirat Arab	18	27	15	4	2
Kuwait	9	8	7	6	1
Qatar	8	8	8	4	1
Oman	7	4	-	-	1
Others	6	11	9	2	-
N	100	84	52	27	8

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District

32. The analysis on women's work experiences and the working conditions is based on the accounts of women returnees who worked as domestic workers in GCC countries. The analysis of the women's work experiences is mostly based on the work load, tasks performed, working hours and other responsibilities such as caring for older persons. More than 60 per cent of the women landed in a home where they were the only domestic worker and most of the families they served (91 per cent) were nuclear families consisting of the parents and their child/children only. Only 9 per cent worked in households that consisted of two families or more, and only 1 per cent worked in households with 4 families living in the same house. Even though there was more than one worker working in the house, they had different tasks. The majority of the families consisted of less than 10 members with at least one child under 12 years old and only 15 per cent of families had a member aged 65 or above (Table 7). The number of young children and older persons in the family have an impact on the work load of domestic workers since they may need special attention and/or treatment.

33. One women interviewed in the study described her work load while working as a domestic worker in Saudi-Arabia:

Ms. Rok: The first time I worked for a family with 5 members: the husband, wife and their 3 small children. I was the only domestic worker so I had to do all the household work including cooking, cleaning etc. Everything. First, my female employer taught me how to cook their food. After that she left it to me and all the food had to be ready by the time they came home from work (both the husband and wife worked). My duties also included taking care of the three children aged below 10 years. I could not handle taking care of the 3 small children in addition to all of the other household chores so after 14 moths, I asked to resign and went back home to Indonesia.

34. As the only domestic worker in the house, most women end up having very long working hours. About 78 per cent of women stated that they worked for at least 16 hours a day, leaving only about 6 to 8 hours for the workers to rest and do everything else (eating, take a bath etc.) (Table 7). Three women (respondents in the survey) even said that they could only have 3 to 4 hours of rest a day. The PPK-LIPI's study also showed similar finding. Most women had very long working hours starting from about six o'clock and finishing work late at night. The pattern of working hours was also worsened by the Arabic habit of having dinner late at night, and the workers had to prepare the dinner as well as wait to clean up after dinner (PPK-LIPI, 2002).

35. In general, the tasks performed by domestic workers in GCC countries did not differ much from those performed by domestic workers in their home country (Indonesia). It included cooking, washing, cleaning the house and looking after young children. However, some women workers (24 per cent) also stated that 'washing the cars' was a daily task they had to performed. This kind of work does not fall within the scope of household work. Since they had some training related to the work they had to perform as domestic workers, it can be expected that they would not encounter any problems. However, as they could not speak the local language some Indonesian women migrant workers had some difficulties and had to perform the work as expected by their employer. The PPT-LIPI's study revealed that about 50 per cent of women interviewed in the study were not fluent in Arabic the first time they went to work in GCC countries. This created some difficulties in communicating with their employer/employer's family and became a

constraint when carrying out their daily tasks. The women sometimes felt pressure because they did not know what their employers wanted and could not communicate or protest when the employers were mistreating them (PPK-LIPI, 2002).

Table 7: Characteristics of domestic work in GCC countries

Work Characteristics	Percentage
Other domestic workers working in the same house	
No (only one)	63
Yes	37
Two	19
Three	14
Four	2
Five and more	2
Number of people living in the house	
1-4 people	21
5-9 people	60
10 people and more	19
Children under 12 living in the house	
None	26
1-2	40
3-4	29
5 and more	5
Old people age 65 and over living in the house	15
Working hours in one day	
6 - 8 hours	2
10-12 hours	8
13-15 hours	12
16-18 hours	67
More than 18 hours	11
Daily tasks performed	

Cleaning the house	97
Taking care of children	83
Cooking	64
Taking care of old people	14
Washing the cloth	90
Washing the cars	24
Looking after pets	2
Number of cases	100

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District

Salary and other benefits

36. The standard salary Indonesian women migrant workers received in Saudi-Arabia is 600 Real per month. There are differences in salaries between different GCC countries. In Saudi-Arabia, the salary has not increased for the past 20 to 30 years. Recently there was the news that the salary of Indonesia domestic migrant workers in Saudi-Arabia would increase to 800 Real. As revealed from the in-depth interviews with ex Indonesian women migrant workers, the salary paid to women workers also varies. Some women receive less than the standard amount of 600 Real. This was, for example, the case for Ms. Rok:

- Q: So, the first time you worked in Saudi-Arabia only for 14 months even though the contract was actually for 24 months. Why?*
A: Because I only got paid 500 Real per month.
Q: Did you not ask your employer, why he/she only gave you 500 Real?
A: My employer said that this was the amount set by the recruitment agency that made the arrangements for me to work in Saudi-Arabia.

37. Even though most women workers stated that they got their salary payment regularly, this did not mean that they received the salary for their last month. Some women got paid only when they asked their employer for their salary, then the money was usually sent back home as remittances. A small proportion of the women workers also stated that it depended on their employer whether they would get paid or not (Table 8). There were also some cases where the women migrants returned as they did not get paid (PPT-LIPI, 2002). The PPT-LIPI's study also revealed that there was no other financial reward given to women workers other than their salary. Many employers would give a small gift at the end of the Holy month or at the end of the contract period, but they were unlikely to give an expensive gift or a lot of money as a present unless there was nothing behind it such as sexual harassment. This finding was also revealed during the study in 2011. Besides the salary, many of the women domestic workers did not receive any other services such as health insurance or other insurances from their employer. However, some stated that their employer would cover all expenses for medical treatment.

Table 8: Method of salary payment and amount of salary received

Method of salary payment	Percentage
Regular payment	
Yes	83
No	17
Periods of salary payment	
Every month	72
Once every two months	3
Once every three months	6
Once every four months	1
Once every five months	1
Salary paid when the workers asked to their employers	12
Depend on the employers	5
Number of cases	100

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District

38. During their working period as domestic workers in GCC countries, they are threatened with limited protection, particularly legal protection. Usually their passports are kept by the employer to prevent the workers from running away and potentially moving to another employer. As a consequence, the women do not have any identification card to protect them from being accused as illegal migrants if they have a problem in their work place and run away from their employer. The Indonesian embassy in the host countries is one place where the migrant workers can seek legal protection when they have problems with their employers. However, as explained during the in-depth interviews many of the woman migrant workers feel that they did not receive much help.

5. Return to migration

39. Labour migration overseas causes some economic and social outcomes, both positive and negative, not only for the families but also for the hometowns. Most studies on the return of labor migration are focused on the economic costs and benefits of migration. The aforementioned social impact, however, is mostly considered as a negative effect of labour migration, such as the relationship with the family left behind. Most of the returnees said that they kept in contact with the family members left behind especially the nuclear family - their husband and children, through various forms. Mobile phone is the most important means of communication. However, not all employers allow their domestic workers to have mobile phones. The relationship with the family left behind is also maintained through remittances sent to the hometown. Remittances are mainly used for daily consumption. Only a few could make any savings to build a house, buy agricultural land or to invest the capital in a business.

40. About 17 per cent of the women migrant workers stated that they did not regularly send remittances home. Among the women who sent remittances, most of them sent remittances every 1 to 4 months. The amount of the remittances sent back home each time also tends to vary between Rp. 1,000,000- to Rp. 6,000,000,-. Also, 12 per cent of the women workers said that they sent back more than Rp. 6,000,000,- each time (Table 9). It can be expected that the longer the time period the higher the remittances sent back home. The most common way of sending remittances back home were through bank services or through a money transfer service company. Western Union is a popular money transfer company that operates at the village level in Indramayu District.

41. Most of remittances sent by women migrant workers back to their hometown were received by the husbands (for married women) and by the parents (for single women). The survey data shows that most remittances sent back by women migrant workers to their home countries was spent on daily expenses, medical expenses and for the education of the children education. About 50 per cent of women migrant workers stated that they used the remittances to build or renovate the house. This is very common among migrant workers as their intention to work in GCC countries is often to earn enough money to build or renovate their house. Only about 10 per cent of women migrant workers stated that the remittances were used for productive activities to generate income (Table 9).

Table 9: Remittances sent back home

Period of sending remittances back home	Percentage
1-2 moths	30
3-4 moths	41
5-6 months	9
7 months and more	3
Not regularly	17
Never send remittances	2
Amount of money/remittances send back home each time (Rp)	Percentage
1,000,000 – 2,000,000	18
>2,000,000 – 4,000.000	47
>4,000,000 – 6,000,000	21
>6,000,000	12
Never send remittances	2
How to send the remittances	Percentage
Bank	32

Money transfer service company (e.g. Western Union)	65
Friends/family who returned home	1
Never send remittances	2
Who received the money at home	Percentage
Husband	60
Child/Children	4
Parents	29
Other relatives	4
Never send remittances	2
The use of remittances	Percentage
Daily expenses	98
Child/Children education	78
Medical expenses (doctor, hospital)	92
Build/renovate house	50
Buy motor bike/car	38
Productive activity	10
Others	5
Number of cases	100

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District

42. The negative impact as stated by returnees are mainly related to the family left behind, such as separation from family that could caused uncontrolled children, lack of mothers involvement in looking after the children. There were also a small number of cases where the husband married a second women. Among the children in particularthe , mother's absence could create emotional problems which sometimes lead to inadequate behaviour. Children may end up spending much time outside of the home with their peers as their mother is not at home. This is probably caused by the lack of the mother's care and love which create a feeling of being abundant. Furthermore, older children end up having more responsibility in the house and have to take care of some of the chores. They have to assist their fathers to accomplish the tasks since their mother is not present.

Table 10: Disadvantages of working abroad

Disadvantage	Percentage
Missed in looking after the child/children	29
Separate from family	45
Husband getting married for the second wife and use the remittances uncontrolled	5
Did not get paid/ salary and cannot pay the debt (e.g. for money that have been borrowed for the cost of migration)	2
Difficulties in communication with family members	3
Uncontrolled Child/children left behind	1
The employer did not pay the salary	1
Others/No answer	14

Source: Primary data, 2011 Survey in Indramayu District

6. Government policy on migration of Indonesian workers overseas

43. There are four basic instruments concerning the recruitment process and placement of Indonesian migrant workers overseas reflecting government policy on the migration of Indonesian workers overseas. These are:

- Act No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower;
- Act No. 39 of 2004 concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers;
- Presidential Regulation No. 81 of 2006 concerning the establishment of a National Authority for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (*Badan Nasional Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia/BNP2TKI*); and
- The Head of BNP2TKI Regulation No. 28 of 2007 concerning Overseas Labour Market Agency (*Bursa Kerja Luar Negeri/BKLN*).

44. There are also some supporting regulations to support the implementation of these four basic instruments.

45. Act No. 13 concerning Manpower passed in 2003, states that the placement of Indonesian workers overseas is regulated by a special act. However, until 2004 Indonesia had not had any

comprehensive regulation related to recruitment and placement, at national level, that can be used as basic reference for protection of Indonesian migrant workers.

46. In October 2004, Government Act No. 39 concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers overseas was announced. This law is the first comprehensive instrument in regulating placement process and protection on Indonesian migrant workers overseas. Considering that Indonesia has started to deploy migrant workers in the 1970s, this law is more than 30 years later. There is also considerable controversy on it, since the law it considered does not provide enough protection to Indonesian migrant workers.

47. Government Act No 39 can be considered as the basic instrument on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers that should cover the entire migration process: preparation, departure (both in home country), period of stay/work in destination country as well as the return back to the home country after the migrant workers finished their working contract. However, out of 16 chapters, only one chapter (Chapter VI) directly foccuses on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers. More elaborations are given on the administrative and practical aspects of the placement of migrant workers, such as the rights and obligations of migrant workers, the institutions involved in the recruitment and placement of migrant workers, disputes between migrant workers and employers, supervising and monitoring. Indirectly, all these issues also affected the protection of migrant workers.

48. The launch of Act No. 39 of 2004 was followed by several instruments to support the formal procedure of recruitment and placement of Indonesian migrant workers for overseas work. These include Presidential Instruction No. 6 of 2006 on Policy Reform of Placement and Protection System of Indonesian Migrant Workers and Presidential Regulation No. 81 of 2006 on the establishment of the National Board on Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (*Badan Nasional Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia/BNP2TKI*). Article 49 of Government Act No. 39 of 2004 stated that six months after the law was launched all documents and activities related to the placement and protection of Indonesian migrant workers overseas should be handed over from the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration to the BNP2TKI. According to this regulation, the BNP2TKI is the institution with legal authority to formally register and deploy Indonesian migrant workers overseas including government to government (G to G) migrant worker recruitment programmes, migration processes handled by private recruitment agencies as well as migration arranged by the individual migrant workers.

7. Recommendation: Protection of Indonesian migrant workers overseas with special reference to domestic workers

49. There are increasing numbers of Indonesian women looking to international migration in search of better job opportunities, however the general education and skill level remains low. The majority of the women also end up in low skill job and often as domestic workers. These make them vulnerable to exploitation and very weak in self-protection when it comes to their rights as international labour migrants. This urges the Indonesian Government to provide better management of the recruitment and placement of Indonesian migrant workers working as domestic workers overseas. This includes streamlining regulations and ensuring that the adequate

institutions and practices are in place to facilitate and regulate the placement and protection of Indonesian migrant workers. The national regulatory framework for migrating overseas for work is important in protecting the rights of migrant workers. This is especially important for female migrant workers since they are more exposed to the risk of exploitation. Discrimination on the basis of gender, race and class may also be apparent and strongly relates to the nature of their work which is mostly in the informal sector (Raharto, 2002). The development of a protection system for Indonesian women migrant workers should be initiated by the home country, even by the home village, by providing comprehensive gender sensitive regulations.

50. The main basic legislative instrument concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers overseas is Act No. 39 of 2004. This is the first regulation announced by the Indonesian Government after about 30 years of deploying migrant workers overseas. However, this act does not provide enough protection for women migrant workers, or even for migrant workers in general, for the following reasons:

- More elaborations are given to administrative and practical aspects on the placement of migrant workers, such as the rights and obligations of migrant workers, the institutions involved in the recruitment and placement of migrant workers, disputes between migrant workers and employers, supervising and monitoring. These aspects only indirectly affected the protection of migrant workers.
- Out of 16 chapters, only one chapter (Chapter VI) and eight articles, out of 109 articles of this law focus directly on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers. The word 'female' is only stated once (article 35) when stating: 'Currently not pregnant for potential female workers'. There is no emphasis on providing special protection to women migrant workers.
- Some articles in the law are also considered to have ambiguous meanings concerning the authority of the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration (*Kementrian Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi Republic Indonesia/Menakertrans*) and other government agencies involved in the recruitment and placement of Indonesian migrant workers.
- Some articles are unclear. For example, Article 11 on the agreement between the Indonesian Government and the Government of the host country on the deployment of Indonesian migrant workers. It is not clear in what form the agreement should be in (Memorandum of Understanding, bilateral agreement, bilateral discussion).
- Some chapters and articles need to be supported by other government regulations for their effective implementation and these are still not available.

51. Therefore, there is a need for amendment to the Indonesian Act No. 39 of 2004 regarding the placement and protection of Indonesian labour migrants. This should be focused on an effort to provide more protection for Indonesian migrant workers, especially women who work as domestic workers. This includes the provision of minimum salary or wages, regulating working hours, domestic workers' rights and protections, employee supply agencies, and encouraging the resolution of disputes between domestic workers and employers.

52. Regarding international instruments, Indonesia has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families (ICRMW). Some major destination countries for Indonesian migrant workers have not ratified the convention. This is also becoming an obstacle for Indonesia in providing protection to its citizens working overseas. Indonesia has an MOU with some receiving countries including Malaysia, Jordan and Kuwait. It is preparing to sign an MOU with some other countries. However, an MOU is not a powerful instrument in providing protection for Indonesian migrant workers overseas. The Indonesian Government needs to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families to ensure the protection of Indonesian international migrant workers

53. The recruitment and placement process of Indonesian migrant workers is regulated in four basic legislative instruments namely: Act No. 13 of 2003; Act No. 39 of 2004 Presidential Regulation No. 81 of 2006 and the Head of BNP2TKI Regulation No. 28 of 2007. According to these regulations, many government institutions as well as private agencies at the national and local level are involved in the recruitment and placement process of Indonesian migrant workers. With regard to the institutions involved in the recruitment and placement and practices there are some issues in terms of the protection of Indonesian migrant workers:

- The recruitment and placement of Indonesian migrant workers for overseas work involved many government institutions at national and local level. This creates problems in the coordination between the various sectors and between the administrative hierarchies. The confusion and conflict of authority among different government institutions can further affected the arrangement of migration of Indonesian workers and may also affect the level of protection that can be provided by the state.
- The middlemen/sponsor/calo still play an impotrant role in the recruitment of potential migrant workers. For many potential women migrant workers, the middlemen/calo is an important source of information on overseas employment opportunities. The middlemen/calo also actively visits households in village where potential migrant workers live providing information on the employment opportunities abroad. However, the involvement of several layers of middlemen/calo makes the migration process longer and more commercial. There is also a high possibility that women migrant workers are exposed to exploitation long before their departure. They may not be aware of the importance of information regarding the qualifications and other requirements to work overseas, since all the documents need to be handled by the sponsor to the government authority. There is a high possibility that the sponsor will provide fake documents to make the recruitment process faster.

54. There is a need for the Indonesian Government to strictly control the role of recruitment agencies and empower the prospective Indonesian migrant workers by providing them with easy access to information regarding the working conditions abroad.

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