

**Domestic Workers United**  
**afc2015/027**

**DOMESTIC WORKERS UNITED**

**Interview Transcript afc2015027\_03340\_ms02**

**Lizette \_\_\_\_\_ interviews Nubia \_\_\_\_\_. Interview done in Spanish, translated by Etta Barrman from Compu Craft Business Service**

00:15 Hello Lizette, how are you doing? My name is Nubia \_\_\_\_\_.

00:19 I am part of the Worker's Justice Project organization.

00:25 What's your name?

00:30 Hello my name is Lizette \_\_\_\_\_ and I am also part of the Worker's Justice Project.

QUESTION: What do you currently do for work?

00:47 I go to the corner. To the Williamsburg stop.

QUESTION: What do you there?

00:57 We wait there for the employers to come get us.

QUESTION: Where do live?

01:11 I live in Queens

QUESTION: Where are you from?

01:17 I am from Colombia

QUESTION: How did you start as a Domestic worker?

01:25 A friend took me there, to Brooklyn.

QUESTION: For how long have you been doing this job?

01:33 Two years.

QUESTION: How many bosses have you had?

01:40 it's always different, every day.

QUESTION: And do they all treat you the same?

01:56 No. They're different.

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QUESTION: Could you describe me the stop for those who don't know it? And could you also explain what's a female day laborer?

2:09 A female day laborer are women who stand on a corner and wait for employers to come and get us.

2:21 It's on a corner. The stop is Marcy Ave and Division.

QUESTION: When was the first time that you went to the stop? How did you find it?

2:35 A friend took me. And that's when I started, two years ago.

QUESTION: What's the daily routine at the stop when you get there? What happens while you're there? What are your responsibilities when you go there?

2:58: First, we get there and wait to see if someone comes for us. We wait under the sun, or the cold. There are many women. Some don't like us to go, like when you're new. It's hard.

QUESTION: What's a good day and a bad day on the stop?

3:27 A good day is like on Fridays, when they take you for 6 hours. And the bad is that some tell you they'd pay \$10 or \$11 and when you're done with the work, they tell you that only \$8 or \$9 because they don't have money to pay us.

QUESTION: How many women are on the stop? How's your relationship with them?

3:56 We are approximately 56 to 60, sometimes more. The relationships aren't great, because we're all different. Some don't speak, others have a bad temper. The relationship isn't good.

QUESTION: What skills do you need to be a domestic worker?

04:25 The skill? Be willing to work, specially cleaning. And be available during the day.

QUESTION: What's the necessary training to be a successful domestic worker?

04:46 Do your job well, but sometimes they don't have enough cleaning supplies to get the job done, so it's not good.

QUESTION: Have you learned any skills or tricks that attract employers? (repeats it) When the employers go to the stop, do you approach them, or do they chose you? How does it work?

05:40 Since there are many women, they pick one. They (the employers) are the ones who choose the women.

QUESTION: Do you have any specialty? (explains)

06:10 Oh, my job is... I used to archive files. But since I am undocumented, and I don't speak perfect English, I work as a day laborer.

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QUESTION: What tricks do you use to make a child eat vegetables?

06:40 I sing to them, play. Choose colorful vegetable like peppers and carrots, and playing.

QUESTION: What are some of the ways to make a child stop crying?

07:12 Singing to him/her, read him/her a book.

QUESTION: Have you ever used homeopathic remedies as treatment for a sick child, or teething?

7:29 No. I don't babysit.

QUESTION: Is there a special skill that you have thought to any of your bosses?

7:39 No.

QUESTION: What's the best aspect of your job? Give me an example (explains)

8:01 Well, the best is when they pay you on time, and pay what they had promised, the amount we arranged at the stop.

QUESTION: And what's the worst aspect of your job? Can you give me an example?

8:17 When we go there all week and don't get any work. We just stay there...

8:30 Also many of us have had our salaries stolen. They don't respect what they have said. They say they would pay a \$11, \$12 rate, but no. They don't pay.

QUESTION: How's your relationship with the employer or employers?

8:51 Not very good. There's no trust. You're always fearful.

QUESTION: Have had a significant relationship, good or bad, with a child you used to take care of?

9:13 I've never been a child caretaker.

QUESTION: Do you have children

9:19 Yes, I have two children. But the jobs that always get are for cleaning. Never to babysit. Always for cleaning.

QUESTION: How do you manage your feeling or emotions with the child or the family you take care of?

09:42 No. I don't take babysit.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the amount of hours you work, as well as your days off, holidays and vacation time are respected?

10:01 No. It isn't respected.

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QUESTION: Would you say that you or one of the others workers have been exploited due to your immigration status?

10:12 Yes, always. That's something that you see daily. There's discrimination.

QUESTION: Do you think employers treat you differently because you're a day laborer? Give me an example

10:30 Yes, because we don't speak English. They don't trust us, don't respect the arranged rate.

QUESTION: What do you feel when someone picks you up at the stop to go to work? Do you feel excited, fearful or successful?

11:18 You always feel fear. A lot of mistrust because there have been many situations of abuse. We are always scared.

QUESTION: What type of situations?

11:33 the fear of knowing that they won't pay us the right amount, they'd tell you 5 hours but it's really only 3. Sometimes it's very far. There are men who are abusive. They make you indecent proposals. Yes, you feel fear.

QUESTION: What are the risks and benefits of working at the stop?

12:07 The risks are many because we don't have a bathroom there. We don't have... yes, there are many risks being there.

QUESTION: And what are the benefits?

12:28 No, there are no benefits.

QUESTION: what are the benefits of working at the stop?

12:37 Benefits? No. Sometimes you work, and sometimes you don't. It's nothing stable. It's not secure. One day yes, another day three hours, no.

QUESTION: Do you share anything ethnical or cultural with the families you work with? Such as food, language, folk tales, believes about life and death?

13:04 Yes, sometimes

QUESTION: How do you balance your personal, family and professional life? (explains)

13:41 Oh! Most of the time I get to the stop at 8am. I'm there until 10am or 12pm. If nothing pans out, I go home and take care of my children, just stay there with them.

QUESTION: Are you a member of other organizations or groups?

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14:03 I'm a member of the Worker's Justice Project.

QUESTION: When do domestic work, do you feel like you're part of a larger community?

14:17 We don't work as domestic workers there. We work hourly, or daily, not as domestic <<NOTE: In Colombia, a "domestic" worker means live-in help>>>

QUESTION: But do you feel that you're part of a bigger group or community by being a domestic worker?

14:43 No.

QUESTION: When and how did you get involved in the Worker's Justice Program? How did you find it?

15:13 I became a member of the organization because there were women who came to offer us workshops, meetings, leadership, and I tried going and learned a lot there. They taught me a lot. That's why I became a member of the organization.

QUESTION: do you know anything about the domestic workers bill of rights? If you do, please explain how you've applied it to your life and work.

16:08 On that stop we don't have any rights. We would like someone who would be vigilant, because a domestic worker is different to a day laborer. A domestic worker means you're full time at a home. Maybe they do have rights, but we don't have anyone to back us up, because it's just for a few hours.

QUESTION: What would you like to see in the future in relation with the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, or with other protections for domestic workers?

16:47 I would like to get support for all the women who are there, a good salary, so that we are respected and have some kind of support, or maybe ask many questions. That I would like.

QUESTION: Why is the support of the Worker's Justice Program and other groups for domestic workers important?

17:16 The Worker's Justice Program it's very important to me because I've learned a lot from them in all the workshops and meetings.

QUESTION: What do you want politicians to know about domestic workers?

17:39 I would like them to know that we are also valuable and deserve the same respect as those women who work full time at a home. Because there at the stop we don't get any support. We don't have any back up, any rights.

QUESTION: What kind of education or training would you like to get? (repeats it)

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18:14 I would like to learn and educate many colleagues who are, there to join organizations like the Project. There they educate us with the workshops and all. For example, let the employers know our rights.

QUESTION: What training did you get at the Worker's Justice Project?

18:51 I've learned many things; for example, to require them (the employers) to give me a mop, a fixed salary. I've learned leadership. I've learned to make organic products. I've learned technology. I've learned many important things.

QUESTION: Do you have any final thoughts you would like to share? (explains)

19:41 I would like to exhort other women to go to organizations, because there is where we learn about our rights.

<<They break and discuss her answers and ask her to provide more information about what it's like to work at the stop. She agrees and asks for the questions to be repeated.>>

22:06 QUESTION: Could you describe me the stop for those who don't know it? And could you also explain what's a female day laborer?

22:15 The stop is a one block corner. There are many women there. The street is Marcy Ave. and Division. There are about 100 women. It's a place where we get a lot of sun and a lot of cold. We don't have a bathroom. The employers take advantage with our salaries, and our time. They'd tell us 5 hour but then it's actually 2.

QUESTION: And could you also explain what's a female day laborer?

23:05 A female day laborer, is us, the women who go there to wait for someone to pick us up and take us to a place to work. We are exposed to many situations.

QUESTION: When was the first time that you went to the stop? How did you find it?

23:30 The first time I was there I was brought by a friend because I need work and it was about two years ago.

QUESTION: What's the daily routine at the stop when you get there? What happens while you're there? What are your responsibilities when you go work? What's the routine like at the parade?

24:06 The routine at the stop is being there waiting for an employer to come. Just stand there the whole time, that's the routine.

QUESTION: What are your responsibilities when you go work?

24:29 The responsibilities are to try to meet the employers expectations. Look up the address where we are going to, and just look after one another. Take care of each other. That's our responsibility.