

Migrant Domestic Workers Cooperatives in New York City

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Since the early 21st century, the movement to organize migrant domestic workers has been largely developed in the US. The workers' collective bargaining has made important achievements, such as the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights (enacted in seven states between 2010 and 2016), and legislation to establish a new Division of Paid Care to implement the Bill of Rights (enacted in New York City in 2016).

The nationwide mobilization in the US would have influenced international momentum such as the adoption of the Domestic Workers' Convention (C189) although the US has not ratified C189 till date. However, this movement to organize migrant domestic workers has also encountered roadblocks. One such involves the discrepancies between what organizers believe is going to trigger a movement and the domestic workers' perceptions of the organizers' attempts. The leaders of the movement must ask themselves as to how they can reach out to more domestic workers and support them while respecting workers' collective autonomy. From this perspective, this paper focuses on workers' cooperatives as a new method for empowering migrant domestic workers.

Several initiatives to help migrant domestic workers launch workers' cooperatives started in New York City in the 2000s. These initiatives were reported by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as offering migrant workers with "options for better lives" (ILO 2013). Since the New York City Worker Cooperative Development Initiative started in 2015, similar initiatives have increased. This paper will specifically explore the Carroll Gardens Association's launch of a Childcare Worker Cooperative between February and September 2016. It will also discuss to what extent this initiative meets the needs of participants and the impact that it has had on their lives.