

**Implications of Covid-19 on the lives of domestic workers in Jordan,  
Kuwait, and Qatar**

**International Domestic Workers Federation**

**November 2020**



## Table of Contents

	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Migrant domestic workers in the MENA region</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Research design</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Limitations</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>8</b>
i.	Demographic background	8
ii.	Employment status	11
iii.	Covid-19	16
iv.	Community groups	20
v.	Assistance	23
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>Annex I</b>	<b>26</b>

## Executive Summary

As the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region grapples with the Covid-19 virus, governments across the region continue to implement public health measures in response to their respective national developments. Some countries, such as Qatar and Egypt, are experiencing a significantly lower number of daily cases while others, such as Jordan and Lebanon, continue to experience a sharp surge. Countries in the region are highly dependent on migrant labor and almost all domestic workers in the region are migrants. The impact of the virus, as well as the public health measures associated with it, is expected to extend to the communities of migrant workers and to affect them disproportionately.

Domestic workers in the MENA are bound by the Kafala system, a set of regulations that tie the employees' work permit and residency to their employers' sponsorship and excludes them from the protections of labor laws. They are often subjected to different types of physical and mental abuse<sup>1</sup> at the hands of their employers and have less access to social and economic support networks. Given the urgency of the working and living conditions of domestic workers in the region, as well as the rapidly changing nature of the Covid-19 virus, there is a strong need to understand the changes that domestic workers are experiencing. The following study explores the lives of domestic workers in Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar- the MENA countries that IDWF is operational in-, in order to learn more about their conditions under Covid-19. The study looks at domestic workers' living situations, their health conditions, and their working conditions. It focuses on challenges created within the workplace and the types of measures and assistance that have been provided.

The study consisted of a quantitative questionnaire that was implemented with approximately 200 domestic workers in each of Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar. The data collectors were trained volunteers, many of whom were domestic workers themselves. The domestic workers interviewed within each of the three countries come from a range of nationalities, usually travelling to the MENA region from countries in Africa and Asia. The sample is representative of these nationalities and their sizes in each of the countries. The participants in the study are what can be considered a hidden population; i.e. one where participants may be difficult to reach. In order to mitigate this challenge, the study used the snowballing recruitment method. Each data collector was given a target number of participants from within his/her nationality and was asked to complete it through reaching out to people from his/her network. In keeping with Covid-19 safety regulations, all data collection took place remotely.

The study revealed that domestic workers across the three countries tend to be completely reliant on their jobs as a main source of income and that the majority also happen to be the sole provider in their families. When it comes to Covid-19, only a relatively small number of people have lost their jobs due to the pandemic or its related regulations. However, those who are still working are experiencing a number of changes on both a professional and personal level. Domestic workers have been forced to stay inside their employer's home, work longer hours, or work less and receive less of their salaries. They also reported on other emerging concerns such as physical and mental health issues. The economic status and public health measures of the three countries in question produce their own set of challenges; domestic workers reported an increase in the prices of basic goods and difficulties in sending money home. In an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19, employers have been implementing protection measures in the workplace and providing domestic workers with hygiene and personal protection equipment.

Covid-19 has imposed a number of serious consequences on the health systems and economies of the countries involved. With the region's high reliance on migrant labor, it is unsurprising that migrant and migrant domestic workers have experienced additional challenges under the pandemic which add to the existing difficulties that they face at work. While the majority of domestic workers have been able to keep their jobs throughout the pandemic, they still encounter a number of work and non-work-related challenges as a result of government-imposed lockdowns and decisions taken by their employers. Given that the pandemic and its associated regulations are changing at a rapid pace, the experiences of domestic workers are also likely to shift and therefore warrant further examination.

---

<sup>1</sup> Aoun Rana, *COVID-19 Impact on Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the Middle East* (Interagency Standing Committee, 2020) [Full Report](#)

## I. Introduction

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been grappling with the Covid-19 virus for approximately ten months. Governments across the region were quick to implement public health measures at the early stages of the pandemic and individual countries have been continuously adjusting their measures in response to national developments. While some, such as Qatar and Egypt, are experiencing a significantly lower number of daily cases, others, such as Jordan and Lebanon, are experiencing a sharp surge.

Covid-19, along with the government-imposed restrictions to fight it, has placed immense pressure on the health systems and economies of the region. Healthcare systems in the region lack the preparedness to handle such a pandemic in terms of both resources and technical capacity. Given the high transmission rate of the virus, hospitals have been struggling with equipment shortages and the lack of adequate personnel training<sup>2</sup>. While countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have relatively higher quality healthcare, some no longer have the capacity to admit confirmed cases<sup>3</sup>. In addition to that, the MENA region had the highest unemployment rate in the world prior to the pandemic. Covid-19 regulations such as closures of businesses and curfews have made it even more difficult for people to find and sustain jobs. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has estimated that 8 million jobs were lost in the second quarter of 2020<sup>4</sup> alone. The regional economy is also expected to contract by 5.7% by the end of the year<sup>5</sup>.

Countries in the MENA are highly dependent on migrant labor. There are approximately 1.6 million migrant domestic workers in the region alone<sup>6</sup> and almost all domestic workers in the region are migrants. In some of the MENA countries, migrant workers are bound by the Kafala system, a set of regulations that tie the workers' work permit and residency to their employers' sponsorship. As such, they are excluded from the protections of labor law and are often subjected to different types of physical and mental abuse<sup>7</sup> at the hands of their employers. The challenges that domestic workers face are likely to have intensified since the start of the pandemic. The state of regional economies may have an impact on both working conditions and salaries. Moreover, domestic workers, as well as migrant workers living in industrial camps, have faced additional restrictions to movement by their employers. Because they have less access to social and economic support<sup>8</sup> networks, domestic workers are likely to be affected by the virus disproportionately.

Given the urgency of the working and living conditions of domestic workers in the region, as well as the rapidly changing nature of the Covid-19 virus, there is a strong need to understand the changes, if any, that domestic workers are experiencing. In an effort to gain greater insight into their current conditions, the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) has conducted a study that explores the lives of domestic workers under Covid-19 in Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar. These three countries were selected because they are among the MENA countries that IDWF is operational in. The study looks at domestic workers' living situations, their health conditions, and their working conditions. It focuses on challenges created within the workplace and the types of measures and assistance that have been provided. The findings below may serve to inform stakeholders of emerging issues that may warrant further research and/or action.

## II. Background

The context of Covid-19 differs significantly between the countries considered in this study. The virus was first reported in Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar around the same time- all within the month of March- but their individual number of cases has been fluctuating in intensity since then. At the time of writing, Jordan records 211,000 cumulative cases. Kuwait and Qatar record 142,000 and 139,000 cases respectively.

---

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, *Covid-19 strategic preparedness and response plan* (2020), 3. [Full Report](#)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> World Food Programme, *Impact of Covid-19 in the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe Update #5* (2020), 6. [Full Report](#)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Kagan Sofia, *Domestic workers and employers in the Arab States: Promising practices and innovative models for a productive working relationship- ILO white paper* (Beirut, Lebanon: International Labor Organization, 2017). [Full Report](#)

<sup>7</sup> Aoun Rana, *COVID-19 Impact on Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the Middle East* (Interagency Standing Committee, 2020) [Full Report](#)

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization, *Covid-19 strategic preparedness and response plan* (2020), 3.

Governments' responses are continuously being amended within each of the countries. In March, Jordan implemented a strict lockdown of closed borders, curfews, and a ban on public gatherings<sup>9</sup>. The number of cases remained very low for the following months and measures were eased in July. It was not until September that cases began to increase rapidly, reaching 900 on the 23rd compared to only 64 cases on the 3rd. As such, the government re-imposed a nationwide lockdown at the start of November. The situation in Kuwait has been very different. The number of cases has been fluctuating repeatedly since the end of April. The highest number of 1,072 cases was recorded on May 29. The lowest, on July 19, was 300. The government imposed a strict curfew and suspended work in the public sector back in May<sup>10</sup>. Since then it has gradually eased its measures but has maintained a ban on public gatherings<sup>11</sup>. Finally, Qatar saw a sharp rise in the number of cases in March, which eventually reached a peak of 2,355 daily cases in May. The government immediately closed schools, universities and non-vital businesses, and banned travel from affected countries<sup>12</sup>. The daily count decreased significantly by July and has remained stable and relatively low, the lowest being 168 on August 30th. It has since relaxed much of its measures through a gradual four-month plan that had started on June 15 and still maintains a relatively low number of cases<sup>13</sup>.

Unsurprisingly, the pandemic has put a strain on the health systems and economies of the region but countries have been affected in different ways. Jordan has a relatively well-equipped health system compared to the region. However, prior to the pandemic, it only had limited preparedness for emergency response<sup>14</sup>. In October, the Minister of Health warned of hospital overcrowding should the numbers of cases keep rising<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, as a second lockdown is enforced, there is concern over the state of the economy which, according to the ILO, is expected to contract by 6% this year.

The situation differs in the GCC where countries have been investing extensively in health care over the past 25 years<sup>16</sup>. By WHO standards, almost all of the countries had a relatively sustainable capacity to respond to the pandemic<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, their economies have not fared well. In addition to the impact of the pandemic itself, Kuwait and Qatar have also taken a hit from the sharp decrease in oil prices. According to the IMF, their economies are projected to fall by 4.5% and 8.1% respectively over 2020<sup>18,19</sup>. Despite this decline, both governments have still been able to distribute financial support to businesses and to national private sector employees<sup>20,21</sup>.

### III. Migrant domestic workers in the MENA region

Migrant workers, including domestic workers, are present in relatively large numbers in regional countries. The table below offers a snapshot of the numbers of migrant and domestic workers in the countries of concern to this study:

---

<sup>9</sup> Werman Alexander, "Jordan's resign economic challenges in the time of Covid-19", *Middle East Institute*, August 27, 2020. [Link to article](#)

<sup>10</sup> "Coronavirus: Kuwait to impose full lockdown, curfew for 20 days starting May 10", *Alarabiya*. November 12, 2020. [Link to article](#)

<sup>11</sup> "Kuwait warns against gatherings, mulls possibility of stricter measures to stop virus spread", *Gulf Business*. October 12, 2020. [Link to article](#)

<sup>12</sup> "Qatar to lift coronavirus restrictions in four phases", *Aljazeera*. June 8, 2020. [Link to article](#)

<sup>13</sup> "Controlled Lifting of Covid-19 Restrictions Plan", Ministry of Public Health, accessed on November 12, 2020. [Link to webpage](#)

<sup>14</sup> World Bank. *Jordan Covid-19 Emergency Response*. April 19, 2020. [Full Report](#)

<sup>15</sup> "Jordan enters 48-hour nationwide coronavirus lockdown", *Aljazeera*. November 9, 2020. [Link to article](#)

<sup>16</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Covid-19 crisis response in MENA region* (OECD, 2020). [Full Report](#)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "Kuwait and the IMF", International Monetary Fund, accessed on November 12, 2020. <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/KWT>

<sup>19</sup> "Qatar and the IMF", International Monetary Fund, accessed on November 11, 2020. <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/QAT>

<sup>20</sup> Mula, Yasmina, "Covid-19: 70,000 Kuwaitis to receive financial support from the government", *Gulf News*. July 8, 2020. [Link to article](#)

<sup>21</sup> "Qatar: Government and institution measures in response to Covid-19", KPMG, accessed on November 1, 2020. [Link to article](#)

Country <sup>22</sup>	Migrant workers <sup>i</sup>	Migrant domestic workers <sup>ii</sup>
Jordan	315,000	50,000
Kuwait	3,400,000	660,000
Qatar	2,000,000	173,000

The majority of domestic workers in the region are women from Asian and African countries such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Kenya. The Kafala system- which ties the workers' visa to his/her employer- excludes domestic workers from most labor laws and keeps the safeguarding of their rights at the discretion of the employer. This has made them subject to dire working conditions and to different types of abuse on the behalf of employers. Extended working hours, lack of time off, withholding or delaying salaries, confiscating passports, and physical and sexual abuse are some of the commonly reported violations of workers' rights<sup>23</sup>.

Some regional countries have recently introduced legal reforms to protect the rights of domestic workers. Qatar, for example, introduced the Domestic Workers' Law in 2017. The law limits working hours and regulates time off and paid holidays. More legal reforms were introduced in August 2020 but had not yet come into effect at the time of writing<sup>24</sup>. Accounts from domestic workers shared with Amnesty International and published in October of 2020 showed that long working hours and minimal breaks are still common and that many employers continue to confiscate employees' passports<sup>25</sup>. Kuwait issued similar measures in 2015 and Jordan had previously included domestic workers under its national labor law in 2008<sup>26,27</sup>. While positive steps towards the protection of domestic workers' rights, these reforms should be coupled with stringent enforcement mechanisms if they are going to lead to changes in the lives of workers.

Government-imposed Covid-19 regulations are likely to exacerbate the living and working conditions of domestic workers in the region. Lockdown and curfews have limited freedom of mobility further, especially for those who live with their employers. This alone poses a number of additional risks. As Rothna Begum writes for Human Rights Watch, if required to stay indoors, live-in domestic workers may be forced to work on their days off<sup>28</sup>. Employers may even take advantage of the virus to keep workers from leaving the house even after government measures are lifted. Moreover, when more household members are forced to stay at home during the day, work demands are likely to increase. Domestic workers are likely to be responsible for all the extra cleaning measures the household decides to take.

Families who are themselves facing economic challenges may delay, reduce, or withhold domestic workers' salaries. This practice, which precedes the pandemic, might be worsened as economies in the region struggle to cope<sup>29</sup>. For workers who do not live with their employers, this adds the challenge of meeting rent payments and providing for themselves. Similarly, employers who no longer want to bear the cost of domestic work may fire employees or ask them to leave. In this case, domestic workers are left to find accommodation and work on their own, and risk losing their sponsorship<sup>30</sup>.

Domestic workers' access to health services also depends on the employers' initiative. With lockdown measures in place, employers may place even stricter restrictions on their employees' access to medical attention.

<sup>22</sup> Numbers only capture officially document migrant workers

<sup>23</sup> Begum Rothna, "Domestic workers in the Middle East risk abuse amid Covid-19 crisis", *Human Rights Watch*, April 6, 2020. [Link to article.](#)

<sup>24</sup> "Qatar: New laws to protect migrant workers are a step in the right direction", *Amnesty International*, August 30, 2020. [Link to article.](#)

<sup>25</sup> "Qatar: domestic workers share harrowing accounts of abuse and exploitation", *Amnesty International*, October 20, 2020. [Link to article.](#)

<sup>26</sup> Human Rights Watch. *Walls at Every Turn: Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers through Kuwait's Sponsorship System* (New York, NY, USA: Human Rights Watch, 2010). [Full Report](#)

<sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch. *Domestic Plight: How Jordanian Laws, Officials, Employers, and Recruiters Fail Abused Migrant Domestic Workers* (Human Rights Watch, 2011). [Full Report](#)

<sup>28</sup> Begum Rothna, "Domestic workers in the Middle East risk abuse amid Covid-19 crisis", *Human Rights Watch*, April 6, 2020. [Link to article.](#)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Aoun Rana, *COVID-19 Impact on Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the Middle East* (Interagency Standing Committee, 2020) [Full Report](#)

Moreover, as they are usually sent out to perform household chores such as grocery shopping, domestic workers may face an increased risk of contracting the virus<sup>31</sup>.

With the pandemic showing no signs of slowing down, the experiences of domestic workers require additional exploration. Given the ever-changing nature of the situation, it is likely that domestic workers may face additional barriers along the way. Identifying the main challenges and the support networks available can help inform the efforts of community groups and other actors working on alleviating the burden of the pandemic. To this end, this study offers a look at the employment conditions of domestic workers, the preventive measures available to them, as well as the challenges that they are facing at work and outside of it due to the pandemic.

#### **IV. Research design**

The data collected for this study was collected through a quantitative questionnaire administered with domestic workers in each of the three countries [questionnaire attached in Annex I]. Sticking with the objective of learning about the lives and work of domestic workers under Covid-19, the questionnaire consisted of three main sections: A) personal information, B) employment status, and C) Covid-19 situation. Under Section B, questions explored issues such as the type of work a respondent does, their type of employer (agency or individual), and the duration of their employment. Under Section C, the focus is on changes experienced at work due to the virus, the prevention measures taken in the workplace, and the challenges experienced at work and outside of it.

The sample size for the study was set at 200 domestic workers per country. A number of factors were taken into consideration when determining its size. IDWF had previously conducted a similar study in Latin America. The experiences and limitations of this study were taken into account when planning the current sample size, along with the number of data collectors and the timeframe available for data collection, i.e. four weeks. In addition to that, many of the data collectors are domestic workers themselves with full time jobs. The sample size also took their time-constraints into consideration as well as the possibility that they would be collecting data in the evenings or on weekends.

Domestic workers within each of the three countries come from a range of nationalities, usually travelling to the MENA region from countries in Africa and Asia. The samples for Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar are representative of these nationalities and their sizes in each of the three countries. The study relied on the snowballing method for recruiting respondents. Data collectors were given a target number of respondents- each from his/her own nationality- that they needed to reach. They were asked to call people they know from within their community and to fill questionnaires with them. From these same respondents, they were also asked to request numbers of other community members who would be interested in participating. Data collectors would make calls to these new contacts accordingly. This process was repeated until they each reached the final target assigned to them.

In most cases, data collectors were domestic workers- some of whom are members of IDWF affiliates- or migrant community leaders who support IDWF within each of the countries. They also represented different nationalities, reflecting the distribution of the nationalities selected for the sample. Data collectors received group training sessions on the country level that covered the study objectives, data collection techniques, and questionnaire practice. In addition to that, they attended smaller group practice sessions following the training. They each conducted questionnaires with respondents from their own country of origin or who spoke the same languages they do.

The questionnaire was written in English but was also translated to the different languages spoken among respondents. Each data collector received a copy of the survey in English and a copy of it in their native language. Upon conducting the questionnaires, they had the option of speaking to respondents in either of the languages. However, data entry itself took place in English. The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms. In order to keep with Covid-19 safety measures, and taking into consideration the movement restrictions that data collectors face, questionnaires were conducted over the phone. Collectors interviewed respondents and entered the responses into the online form.

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



## V. Limitations

There is no official data on the number of domestic workers' nationalities within each of the three countries. In order to get an approximate estimate of the nationalities and the size of their population in each country, IDWF consulted with stakeholders from within the sector such as community groups, civil society groups, and domestic workers' organizations. Based on these estimates, the study's target number of respondents per nationality reflected, to the best extent possible, the distribution of nationalities in the country. Moreover, many of the domestic workers that the study team was able to reach were part of organized groups or networks. As such, the sample itself is not necessarily representative of the overall population of domestic workers in each country.

A number of additional challenges occurred during training and data collection. In the first training session of each country's team, it became clear that some of the data collectors have low English language proficiency. In order to accommodate for everyone in the group, the trainers arranged for those who were uncomfortable using English to work with others who speak both their native language and English proficiently. Similarly, as mentioned above, the questionnaire was translated into all of the languages associated with the nationalities involved in the study. Each data collector was given a copy of it in English and another in their native language.

All of the data collectors were volunteers who are either domestic workers or migrant community leaders. They had little to no experience with data collection and some required more support than others. In order to ensure their preparedness for the study, the trainers conducted individual practice sessions with the data collectors who needed it. Moreover, they were provided with close support and continuous follow up throughout data collection. Being full time employees, data collectors' working hours were limited to the evenings and weekends. This made it difficult for some to reach their target number of questionnaires within the scheduled time frame. In order to facilitate their work, the deadline for data collection was extended by one week. It is important to note that of those invited to participate in the study and attend the training, some domestic workers refused to continue working on the study.

Finally, participants in the study can be considered what is known as a hidden population in research sampling. A hidden population is one where participants are difficult to reach because of lack of enough information, in this case lack of documentation, and because their participation might imply certain risks. One of the main ways around this is to employ the snowballing technique mentioned above. It was domestic workers themselves that recruited and interviewed respondents who were members of their own community. The snowballing effect was critical to reaching the intended sample and to alleviating respondents' concerns about any risks that may be involved in the study. The majority of data collectors were able to reach their final target. However, it is important to mention that some domestic workers expressed concern about their employers' reaction to their participation and therefore refused to complete the questionnaire.

## VI. Findings

### i. Demographic background

The sample size for Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar was 221, 210, and 206 respectively. As mentioned above, the sample considered for each country aimed to represent the main nationalities of domestic workers as well as the approximate size of each. Domestic workers in the Arab world are usually migrants from African or Asian countries. In Jordan and Kuwait, the majority come from Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Philippines, India, and Indonesia (Table 1). There is a smaller number of migrants coming in from Africa, but, among those, Ethiopia tends to be the main nationality present. Qatar however, has a greater representation of migrant workers from both Ethiopia and Kenya, with 18% and 21% of the sample respectively.

Table 1: Nationality

Country of origin	Jordan (N=221)	Kuwait (N=210)	Qatar (N=206)
Bangladesh	8%	-	8%
Burkina Faso	-	7%	-
Ivory Coast	-	8%	-
Ethiopia	10%	17%	10%
Ghana	3%	-	-
India	-	20%	8%
Indonesia	26%	-	11%



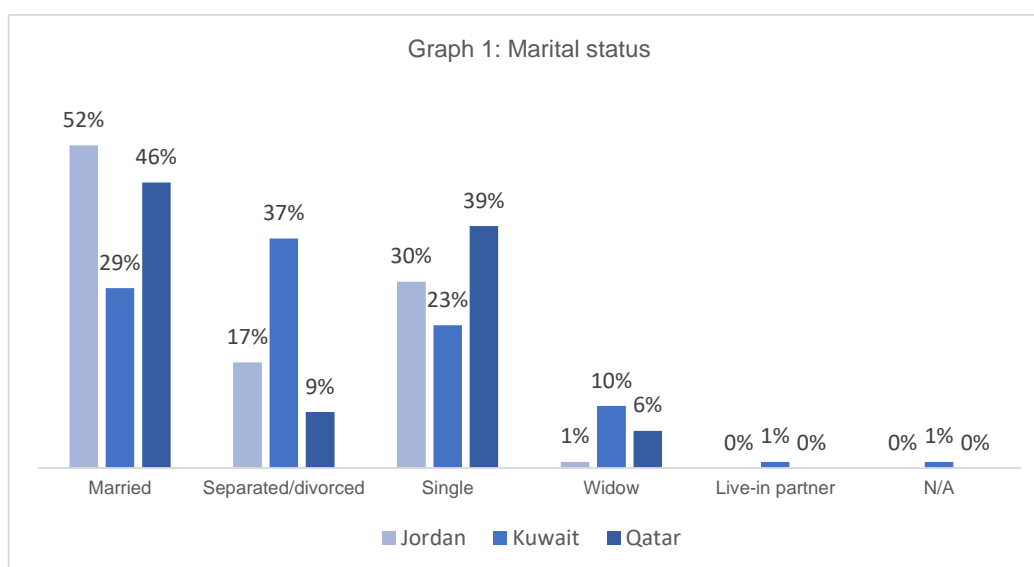
Kenya	1%	-	21%
Madagascar	-	7%	-
Nepal	-	9%	11%
Nigeria	1%	-	-
Philippines	23%	23%	21%
Sri Lanka	18%	17%	9%
Uganda	10%	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%

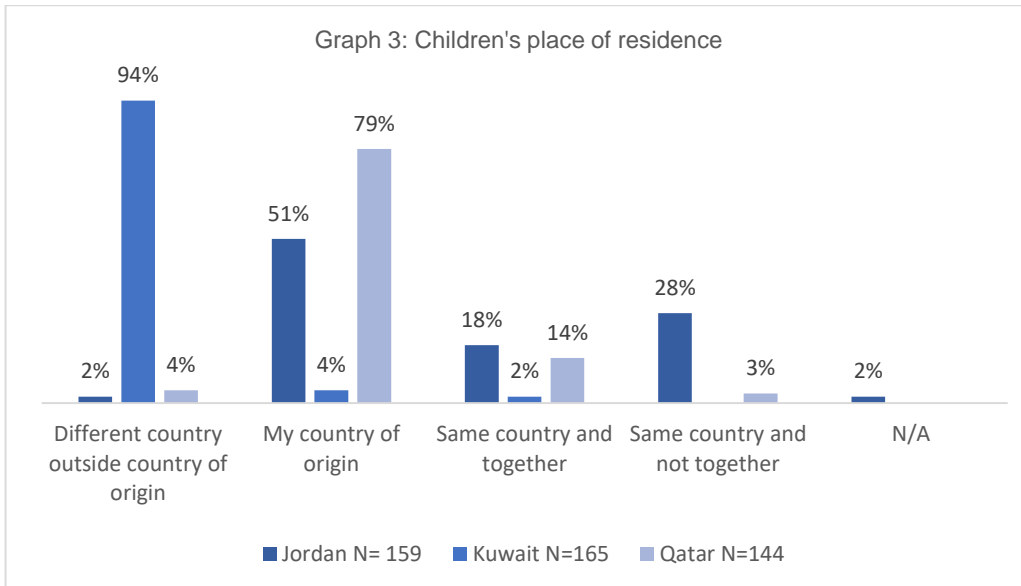
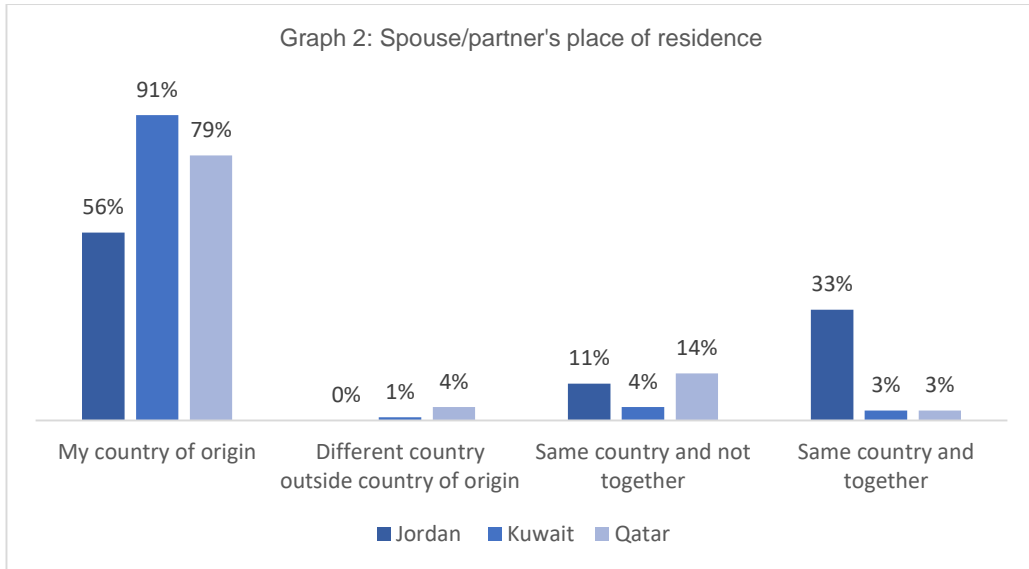
The domestic workers in all three countries are generally female (97% in Jordan, 90% in Kuwait, and 73% in Qatar). Across the three countries, the age of participants ranged from 21 to 68, with their average ages ranging from 37.7 to 39. Those belonging to the younger age groups make up the largest part of each country sample (Table 2).

Table 2: Age groups

Age group	Jordan (N=221)	Kuwait (N=210)	Qatar (N=206)
31-40	26%	29%	32%
41-50	33%	37%	40%
51-60	24%	23%	17%
61 and above	14%	10%	6%
No answer	0%	1%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Domestic workers are typically living away from their nuclear families. The largest number of domestic workers in each country is married, followed by those who are single and those who are separated or divorced (Graph 1). Those who are married or partnered seldom live with their partners as the latter usually live back in their country of origin. Only a small number live with their partners in the same country, or even within the same place of residence (Graph 2). Similarly, while 72%, 79%, and 70% of domestic workers in Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar have children, the latter mostly live back in the workers' country of origin (Graphs 1, 2, & 3).





In Jordan and Kuwait, only 28% and 18% of the domestic workers reported having a chronic medical condition. In Qatar, this number rose to 40%. The number of conditions they revealed are listed in Table 3 below. Diabetes, high blood pressure, mental health, and respiratory issues were the most frequently reported conditions.

Table 3: Medical conditions

Medical Condition [multiple response]	Jordan (N=67)	Kuwait (N=38)	Qatar (N=82)
Bone or joint conditions	15%	24%	34%
Diabetes	43%	8%	11%
High blood pressure	30%	45%	24%
Mental health (anxiety disorders, depression, others)	3%	26%	30%
Overweight	2%	16%	6%
Respiratory (Asthma, allergies, sinusitis, others)	17%	39%	30%
Heart Condition	2%	0%	0%
Others	0%	16%	3%

Across the three countries, most domestic workers with medical conditions are receiving treatment (83% in Jordan, 63% in Kuwait, and 56% in Qatar). Treatment is covered by either him/herself or by the employer. In Kuwait and Qatar, the employer is more involved in the treatment of the domestic worker as 50% of them cover the costs in both of the countries. On the other hand, only 11% of employers in Jordan cover medical costs.

**Table 4: Who covers domestic workers' medical treatment?**

<b>Who covers medical treatment?</b>	<b>Jordan (N=64)</b>	<b>Kuwait (N=24)</b>	<b>Qatar (N=46)</b>
I cover the cost	79%	46%	33%
No one, I am not currently receiving treatment	8%		4%
My employer covers the cost	11%	50%	50%
Health insurance company	2%		13%
Family		4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Qatar, domestic workers, whether living with their employer, in a rented residence, or with the agency or company they work for, mostly occupy a living space with 4 to 6 people including themselves (51%). In Kuwait, a higher number share their living space with a relatively larger number of people; 44% of respondents reported living in a place that houses 6 to 8 people. In contrast, the percentage of domestic workers living with small numbers of people increases in Jordan, with a high percentage living with only 1 to 4 people.

**Table 5: Number of people in place of residence (including respondent)**

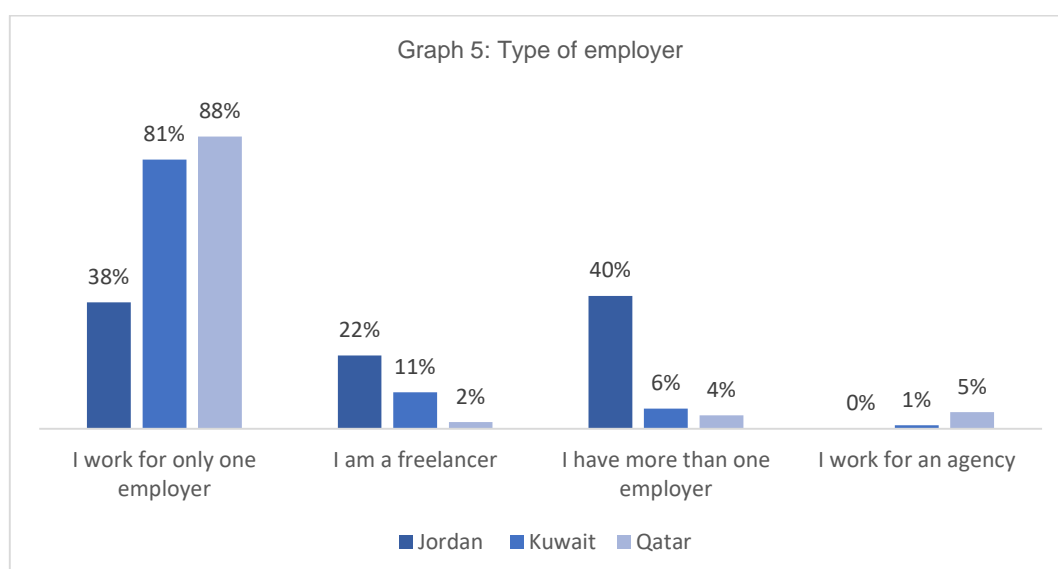
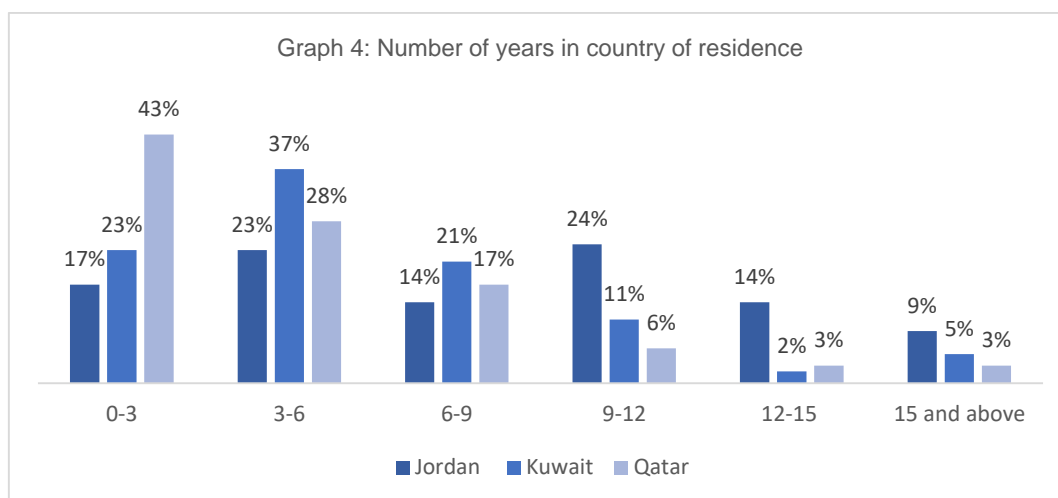
<b>Number of people</b>	<b>Jordan (N=221)</b>	<b>Kuwait (N=210)</b>	<b>Qatar (N=206)</b>
1	27%	1%	5%
2	26%	2%	3%
3	11%	6%	7%
4	11%	5%	13%
5	11%	10%	20%
6	6%	16%	17%
7	3%	13%	11%
8	2%	15%	6%
9 and above	1%	30%	18%
N/A	1%	1%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## ii. Employment Status

Domestic work is the main source of income for almost all of the domestic workers. Only 5% of the respondents in Qatar have an additional source. Among the few who do have another source of income, this was either in the form of an online business or a small business in the domestic workers' country of origin. In addition to that, migrant domestic workers tend to be the main breadwinners within their household. This is true for 94% of people in Jordan, 82% in Kuwait, and 68% in Qatar.

Results showed that the majority of domestic workers in the region have been living and working there for 9 years or less. In Qatar, 88% have been in the country for that long, with 43% of them having been there for less than three years. While 53% have been in Jordan for 9 years or less, 47% have been there for 9 or more (Graph 4). This indicates that domestic workers have been increasingly working in the GCC area over more recent years. Moreover, the majority of workers surveyed in this study work for only one employer, as opposed to being a freelancer, working for an agency, or for multiple employers. This number is lowest in Jordan however where 38% work for one employer but another 40% work for more than one (Graph 5). This also means that a large number of workers in Kuwait and Qatar live with their employer as opposed to on their own; 81% and 80% respectively. In Jordan however, only 24% do so. As such, most of the domestic workers in Jordan, i.e. 73%, have to commute to work. While 52% of them take one hour or less to get to and from work, up to 21% have a relatively long commute of more than two hours on a daily basis. This is usually the case for domestic workers

who use public buses as there is usually a long wait for the bus and traffic is heavy during both morning and afternoon rush hours.



The salaries of domestic workers are often in the range of 300 to 500 USD. Jordan shows a higher percentage of workers earning '500 to 700 USD' and 'over 700 USD' than Kuwait and Qatar.

Table 6: Monthly salary in US Dollars

Number of people	Jordan (N=221)	Kuwait (N=210)	Qatar (N=206)
0-100 USD	-	-	2%
100-200 USD	1%	3%	7%
200-300 USD	9%	17%	11%
300-400 USD	10%	51%	24%
400-500 USD	36%	26%	33%
500-700 USD	14%	0%	9%
Over 700 USD	7%	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	24%	0%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

There tends to be variation in salary range among the different nationalities of domestic workers (Table 7). In Jordan, the majority of Bangladeshi domestic workers receive salaries between 100 and 300 USD. Workers from Indonesia are the best paid given that 72% of them fall under the highest salary band of 700 USD and above. However, as mentioned in Section V above, such a finding may be due to the sample being somewhat

skewed towards the certain groups/networks that the data collectors had access to. In Kuwait, the majority of workers from several of the countries fall under the 300 to 400 USD range. Domestic workers from the Philippines, India, and Ethiopia are the best paid with 98%, 88%, and 91% earning between 300 and 500 USD. In Qatar, domestic workers from Kenya are paid in lesser amounts compared to others in the country; 59% receive salaries ranging from 0 to 300 USD.

Table 7 a, b, c: Monthly salary in US Dollars

**a) Jordan:**

Country of origin	0-100 USD	100-200 USD	200-300 USD	300-400 USD	400-500 USD	500-700 USD	Over 700 USD	Total
Bangladesh (N=18)	-	61%	28%	-	-	-	-	100%
Ethiopia (N=22)	-	-	-	82%	9%	-	9%	100%
Ghana (N=7)	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-	100%
Indonesia (N=57)	-	-	-	23%	5%	-	72%	100%
Kenya (N=2)	-	9%	-	100%	-	-	-	100%
Nepal (N=1)	-	-	100%	-	-	-	-	100%
Nigeria (N=2)	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-	100%
Philippines (N=51)	-	-	4%	18%	41%	29%	8%	100%
Sri Lanka (N=40)	5%	15%	35%	33%	5%	-	8%	100%
Uganda (N=21)	-	10%	-	71%	19%	-	-	100%

**b) Kuwait:**

Country of origin	0-100 USD	100-200 USD	200-300 USD	300-400 USD	400-500 USD	500-700 USD	Over 700 USD	Total
Burkina Faso (N=14)	-	-	-	7%	86%	-	7%	100%
Ivory Coast (N=16)	-	6%	63%	31%	-	-	-	100%
Ethiopia (N=36)	-	-	6%	69%	22%	3%	-	100%
India (N=41)	2%	5%	5%	68%	20%	-	-	100%
Madagascar (N=15)	-	-	33%	60%	7%	-	-	100%
Nepal (N=19)	-	-	16%	68%	16%	-	-	100%
Philippines (N=49)	-	-	-	51%	47%	-	2%	100%
Sri Lanka (N=20)	-	20%	70%	10%	-	-	-	100%

**c) Qatar:**

Country of origin	0-100 USD	100-200 USD	200-300 USD	300-400 USD	400-500 USD	500-700 USD	Over 700 USD	Prefer not to say	Total
Bangladesh (N=17)	-	-	12%	12%	53%	18%	6%	-	100%
Ethiopia (N=21)	10%	10%	14%	43%	14%	5%	-	5%	100%
India (N=17)	-	-	12%	24%	29%	29%	6%	-	100%
Indonesia (N=22)	-	5%	5%	32%	55%	5%	-	-	100%
Kenya (N=43)	7%	26%	26%	30%	7%	-	-	5%	100%
Nepal (N=22)	-	5%	14%	27%	41%	9%	-	-	100%
Philippines (N=43)	-	-	-	5%	47%	7%	-	42%	100%
Sri Lanka (N=19)	-	-	-	32%	32%	21%	-	16%	100%

Time off is not consistent across the three countries. Kuwait provides the least amount of time off with 22% of the domestic workers taking one day a week and 34% not being allowed any time at all. Among those who work for and live with one employer, 33% do not get time off. The same applies to 35% of those who live with their employers in Qatar. This distribution is broken down in Tables 8 and 9 below. One group of workers in Jordan revealed that they are able to take time off whenever they decide to. All of them happen to work for more than one employer and live outside of their employer's home.

Table 8: Amount of time off allowed

Amount of time off	Jordan (N=221)	Kuwait (N=210)	Qatar (N=206)
Anytime	19%	1%	-
I do not get any time off	6%	34%	33%
More than one hour a day	10%	15%	2%
One day a week inside or outside of the house	44%	19%	55%
One day a week inside the house	7%	4%	7%
One hour or less per day	2%	10%	-
Two days a week	11%	-	1%
One day per month	-	10%	-
Two days a month	-	5%	-
When I finish my work	-	1%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 9 a, b, c: Amount of time off allowed by type of employer

a) Jordan:

Amount of time off	I am a freelancer (N=46)	I have more than one employer (N=88)	I work for an agency (N=1)	I work for only one employer (N=86)
Anytime	-	48%	-	-
I do not get any time off	-	1%	-	14%
More than one hour a day	-	23%	-	1%
One day a week inside or outside of the house	2%	-	-	-
One day a week inside the house	63%	16%	100%	62%
One hour or less per day	2%	7%	-	10%
Two days a week	-	3%	-	2%
One day per month	33%	2%	-	9%
Two days a month	-	-	-	1%
When I finish my work	-	-	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

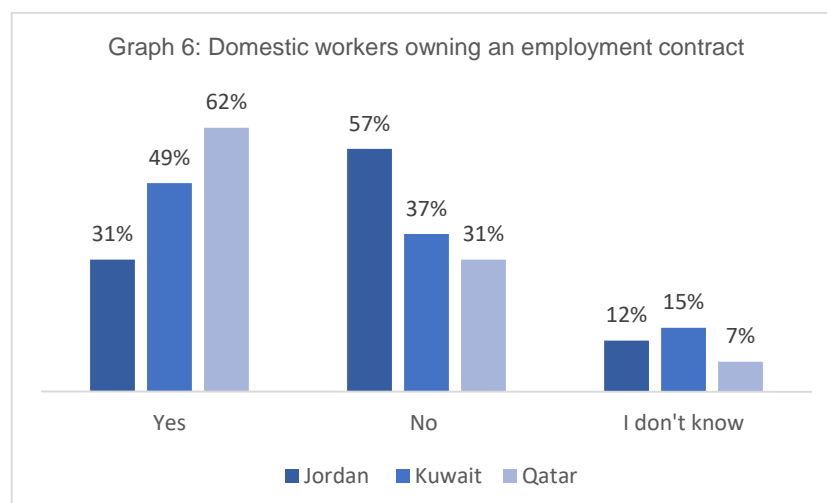
b) Kuwait:

Amount of time off	I am a freelancer (N=24)	I have more than one employer (N=12)	I work for an agency (N=3)	I work for only one employer (N=171)
Anytime	-	-	-	2%
I do not get any time off	29%	58%	67%	33%
More than one hour a day	54%	-	-	11%
One day a week inside or outside of the house	13%	25%	33%	19%
One day a week inside the house	-	8%	-	4%
One hour or less per day	-	8%	-	13%
Two days a week	-	-	-	1%
One day per month	-	-	-	12%
Two days a month	-	-	-	6%
When I finish my work	4%	-	-	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

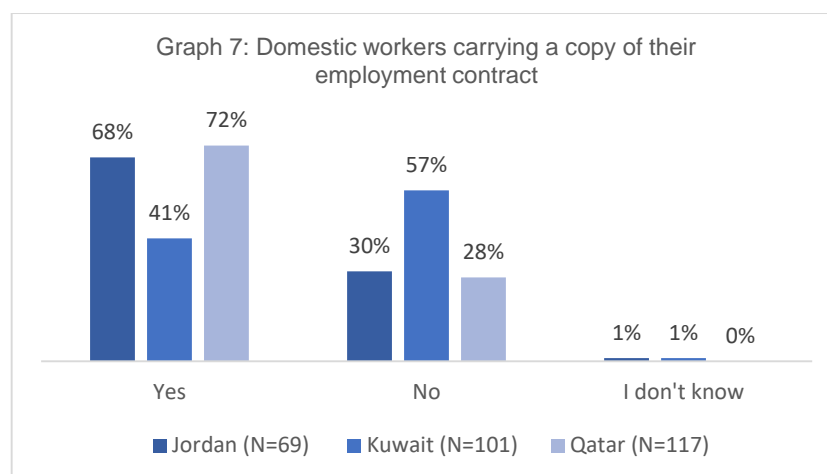
c) Qatar:

Amount of time off	I am a freelancer (N=4)	I have more than one employer (N=9)	I work for an agency (N=11)	I work for only one employer (N=182)
Anytime	-	-	-	-
I do not get any time off	25%	22%	18%	35%
More than one hour a day	-	11%	9%	1%
One day a week inside or outside of the house	50%	44%	73%	54%
One day a week inside the house	-	11%	-	7%
One hour or less per day	-	-	-	1%
Two days a week	-	11%	-	1%
One day per month	-	-	-	-
Two days a month	-	-	-	1%
When I finish my work	-	-	-	-
Other	25%	-	-	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Results from Qatar revealed that 62% of domestic workers have an employment contract (Graph 6). In Jordan and Kuwait, less than half of the study respondents reported having a contract. Apart from there being a very low number of contracts, it is also striking that some domestic workers are not aware of whether they have one or not. Almost all of those who have a contract have one in a language that they understand but they do not all necessarily have a copy of it (Graph 7). Alternatively, residency permits were more common in Kuwait and Qatar where 87% and 96% of domestic workers are carrying a valid permit. On the other hand, as with contracts, workers in Jordan have a relatively lower number of valid residency permits, i.e. 59%. Finally, despite the presence of certain government laws and regulations pertaining to migrant domestic workers in all three countries, awareness of these laws is very low. When asked whether there is a specific law on domestic work in the country they reside, 50% responded 'yes' in Jordan, and 49% and 45% did so in Kuwait and Qatar.







In addition to contracts and residency permits, Table 10 below showcases a list of all the official documents carried by the domestic workers surveyed in this study. Crossing the data by nationality revealed that domestic workers from the Philippines across the three countries carry documents in larger numbers than the rest of the nationalities, especially when it comes to passports, work permits, and residency permits.

**Table 10: Official documents carried by domestic workers [multiple response]**

Documents [multiple response]	Jordan (N=221)	Kuwait (N=210)	Qatar (N=206)
ATM Card	15%	2%	18%
Health card	22%	3%	66%
Passport	55%	19%	16%
None	98%	30%	10%
Official ID	38%	33%	69%
Residency	74%	52%	37%
Work permit	81%	23%	24%

iii. Covid-19

Domestic workers are exposed to a range of news sources through which they get information on Covid-19 developments. Social media and friends and family tend to be among the most frequent sources that they turn to (Table 11). Given the wide options of news sources, most domestic workers in Jordan and Kuwait– 97% and 80% in each country- are aware that the government of their country of residence is in fact taking Covid-19 prevention measures. However, it is striking that in Qatar only 45% said that the government is in fact taking measures versus 53% saying that they did not know whether it was or not.

**Table 11: Sources of Covid-19 related news [multiple response]**

Sources of Covid-19 related news [multiple response]	Jordan (N=221)	Kuwait (N=210)	Qatar (N=206)
Community organizations	30%	17%	6%
Employers	47%	61%	1%
Friends and family	70%	64%	11%
Social media	74%	62%	56%
News	48%	15%	41%
No sources	1%	-	-

Since the start of the pandemic, domestic workers have experienced a number of changes in employment conditions. Although not many have lost their jobs, many have been subjected to new regulations by their employers such as working less hours, receiving a reduced salary, and remaining in quarantine (Graph 8). Jordan, which has the highest percentage of domestic workers working for more than one employer, also

happens to have the highest percentage of those who have lost their jobs. Alternatively, those who work for only one employer, be it in Jordan, Kuwait, or Qatar, have mostly been able to continue working.

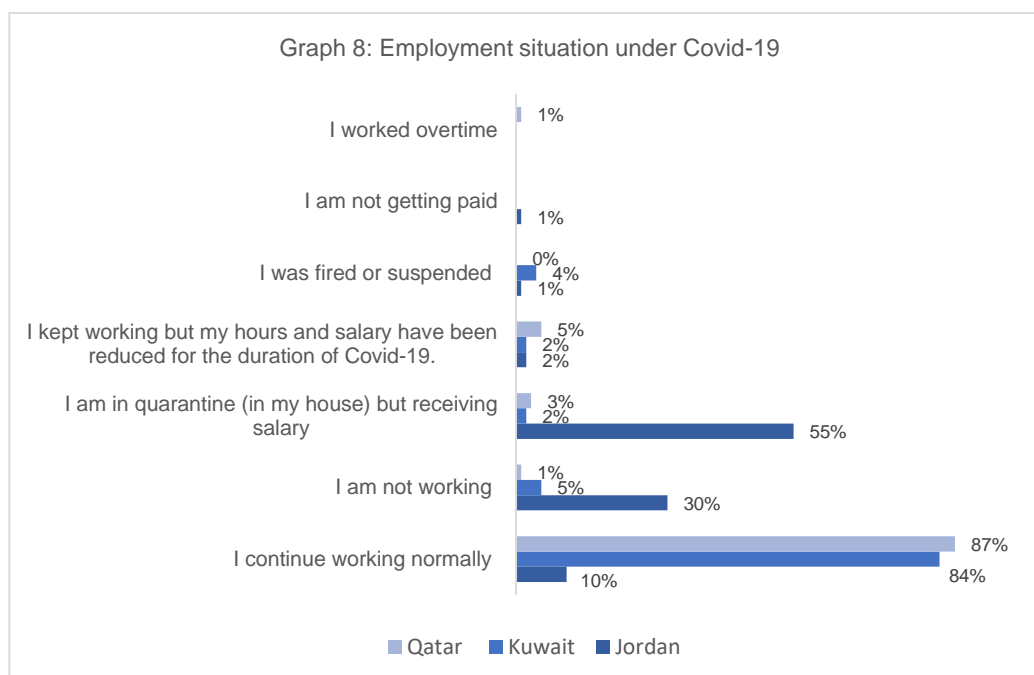


Table 12: Employment situation by employer type

a) Jordan

Employment Situation	Employer type			
	I am a freelancer	I have more than one employer	I work for an agency	I work for one employer
I continue working normally	61%	38%	0%	71%
I am not working	15%	56%	50%	13%
I am in quarantine (in my house) but receiving salary	17%	2%	0%	13%
I kept working but my hours and salary have been reduced	0%	2%	50%	2%
I was fired or suspended	7	-	-	-
I am not getting paid	-	1	-	2
I worked overtime	-	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100

b) Kuwait

Employment Situation	Employer type			
	I am a freelancer	I have more than one employer	I work for an agency	I work for one employer
I continue working normally	17%	83%	50%	95%
I am not working	35%	-	-	1%
I am in quarantine (in my house) but receiving salary	4%	-	-	2%
I kept working but my hours and salary have been reduced	13%	8%	-	1%
I was fired or suspended	30%	8%	50%	-
I am not getting paid	-	-	-	-
I worked overtime	-	-	-	1%

Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
-------	------	------	------	------

### c) Qatar

Employment Situation	Employer type			
	I am a freelancer	I have more than one employer	I work for an agency	I work for one employer
I continue working normally	-	56%	64%	90%
I am not working	-	-	18%	2%
I am in quarantine (in my house) but receiving salary	100%	22%	9%	2%
I kept working but my hours and salary have been reduced	-	11%	9%	5%
I was fired or suspended	-	11%	-	-
I am not getting paid	-	-	-	1%
I worked overtime	-	-	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Those who considered that they 'continue working normally' also revealed that regardless of their employment status, they have still endured longer working hours, or have had to work less hours and receive less of their salaries. It is likely that the former is due to household members being at home for longer periods of time to and children not attending school during lockdown, thus creating an additional amount of work. Some employers have forced their employees to either remain indoors or to take the Covid-19 PCR test. A detailed list of the changes experienced under the pandemic per country is presented in Table 13 below.

**Table 13: Changes experienced while remaining at work**

Changes experienced while remaining at work <i>[multiple response]</i>	Jordan (N=63)	Kuwait (N=101)	Qatar (N=73)
I am allowed less or no breaks/days off	35%	8%	16%
I have been forced to stay at my employer's house during the quarantine period.	5%	39%	3%
I kept working but my hours and salary have been reduced for the duration of Covid-19.	29%	-	-
I work more hours but am not paid for them	-	47%	45%
My employer asked me to take the coronavirus test.	27%	5%	25%
I work more hours but get paid overtime	2%	-	-
I am not working	2%	-	-
My employer asked me to use my vacation time or my 13th salary was affected.	3%	-	-
Other	-	2%	5%
I have less work to do	-	-	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Employers have been providing the domestic workers who remained at work with hygiene and personal protection equipment; 94% have been doing so in Jordan, 92% in Kuwait, and 86% in Qatar. This is a very positive finding when one looks at the experiences of domestic workers in other parts of the world. For example, a previous IDWF study revealed that only an average of 56% of workers were receiving PPE. Similarly, they are also taking Covid-19 protection measures in the workplace as a whole (Table 14b). These measures ranged from providing workers with masks, gloves, and sanitizers, to social distancing within the work place and Covid-19 testing. In Jordan, where more domestic workers live outside the home of their employers, 80% of those who commute to work reported that additional measures have been taken in order to ensure their safety on the way to and from work (Table 14c). These measures suggest that employers across the region have been taking steps towards safeguarding the health and safety of domestic workers. Fortunately, almost all the domestic workers surveyed in this study had not contracted Covid-19 (91% in Jordan, 91% in Kuwait, and 83% in Qatar).

However, it is important to note that in Qatar, 14% of domestic workers revealed that they have sensed Covid-19 symptoms but never got tested.

Table 14 a, b, c: Covid-19 protection measures

**a) Were hygiene and personal protection equipment provided by employer?**

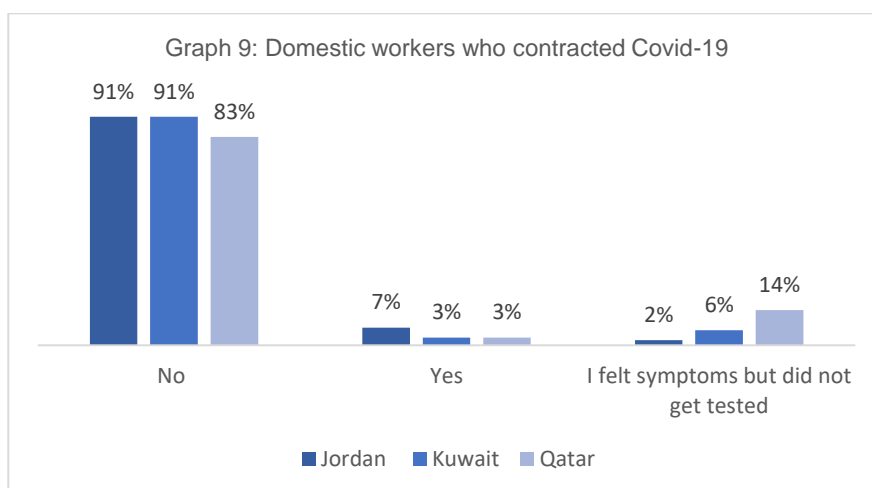
<i>Have you been given hygiene and PPE?</i>	Jordan (N=128)	Kuwait (N=185)	Qatar (N=191)
Yes	94%	92%	86%
No	4%	7%	14%
N/A	2%	1%	-

**b) Has your employer taken any Covid-19 prevention measures at work?**

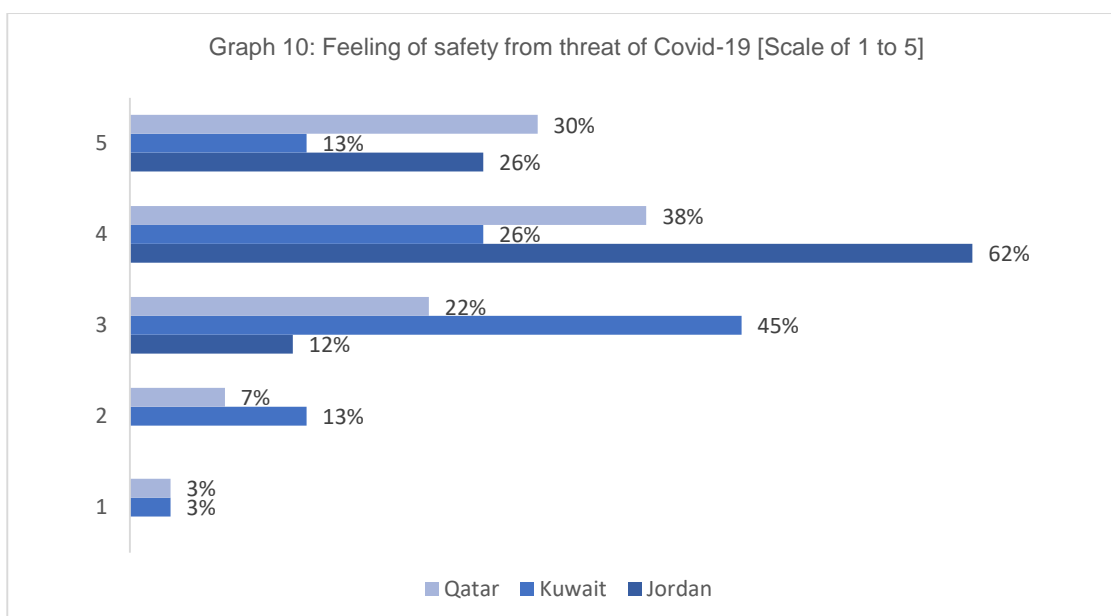
Has employer taken measures at work?	Jordan (N=128)	Kuwait (N=185)	Qatar (N=191)
Yes	81%	85%	70%
No	17%	15%	30%
N/A	2%	-	-

**c) Have any measures been taken in order to ensure your safety while commuting to your workplace?**

Measures taken during commute	Jordan (N=84)	Kuwait (N=26)	Qatar (N=75)
Yes	80%	77%	93%
No	12%	19%	5%
N/A	8%	4%	2%



When asked to rank from 1 to 5 how safe they felt from the threat of Covid-19- '1' being not safe at all and '5' being very safe- domestic workers in Kuwait revealed the least feeling of safety. A relatively high percentage of them reported a score of '3'. Jordan and Qatar fared better; a total of 88% reported a '4' or '5' in Jordan and 68% did so in Qatar (Graph 10).



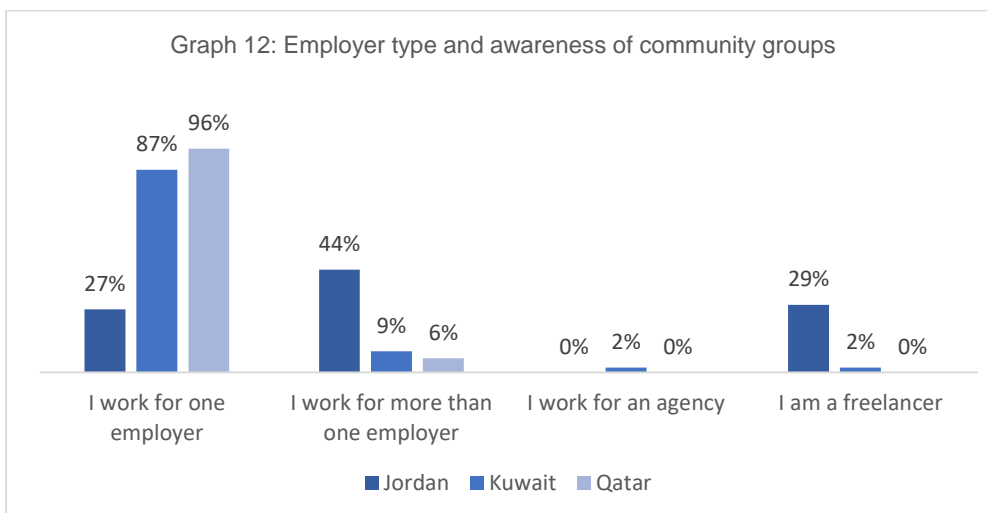
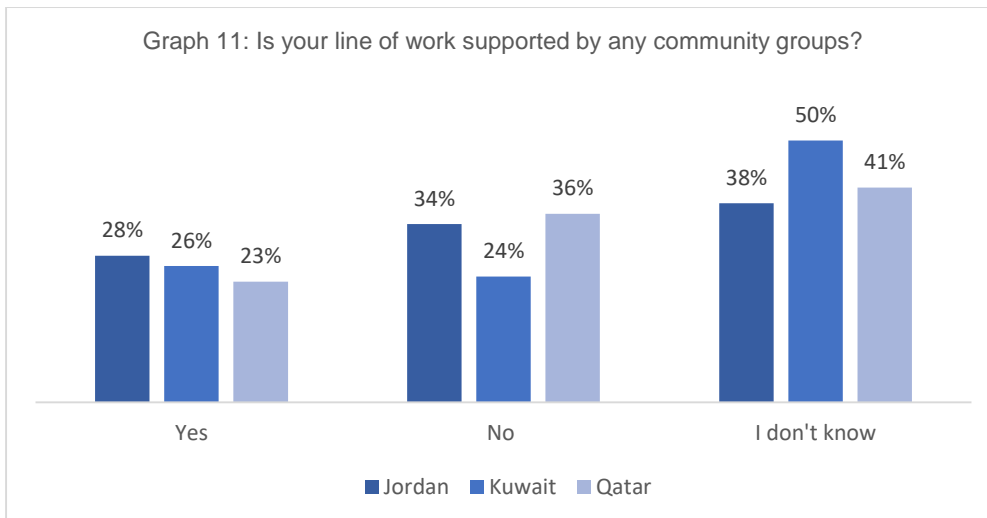
The changes that domestic workers are experiencing during the pandemic extend beyond employment conditions to encompass other issues such as mental and physical health, financial challenges, and difficulty staying in touch with friends and family. It is noteworthy that difficulty sending money home was reported by a high percentage of domestic workers in the three countries which is likely due to the restrictions on movement imposed by lockdowns. In Kuwait, this has affected up to 74% of domestic workers. This is likely to worsen as cases across the region maintain a steady incline and governments continue to impose different forms of lockdowns and curfews. Other important challenges experienced by domestic workers were the increased prices of basic goods and increased tension at one's place of residence.

Table 15: Additional changes experienced due to Covid-19

Additional changes [multiple response]	Jordan (N=221)	Kuwait (N=210)	Qatar (N=206)
Increased prices of basic goods	37%	35%	36%
Changes in your mental health	8%	34%	19%
Difficulty accessing medicine/medical services	16%	16%	12%
Difficulty sending money home	43%	74%	40%
New health-related conditions	8%	10%	4%
Increased tension at your place of residence	28%	43%	17%
Difficulty staying in touch with family and friends	23%	27%	19%
No changes	5%	10%	-
Other	-	2%	-
N/A	8%	-	-

iv. Community groups

Although community groups that support migrant domestic workers are present in all three countries, only a minority of workers in each country are aware of the existence of such groups, i.e. 28%, 26%, and 23% in Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar respectively. The majority of those who answered 'yes' in Qatar and Kuwait are domestic workers who have only one employer.



It is interesting to note that awareness of these groups differs across nationalities. For example, in Jordan, nobody from Ethiopia or Indonesia had any knowledge of these groups, whereas the majority of domestic workers from Sri Lanka did. It is worth noting that the affiliate of IDWF in Jordan do have members from Ethiopia. This finding may then be specific to the group interviewed for the study or may be related to the way in which the affiliate portrays themselves to the community.

In Kuwait, the highest number of domestic workers who were aware of community groups were from the Philippines. In contrast, only a minor number of those from Ethiopia or Sri Lanka are aware of them. This may suggest that communities within certain nationalities have formed stronger networks than others and that their members may be better connected to one another and to community groups.

Table 16 a, b, c: Awareness of community groups by nationality

a) Jordan:

Country of origin	Do community groups exist in your country of residence?			
	Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Bangladesh (N=18)	89%	11%	0%	100%
Ethiopia (N=22)	0%	0%	100%	100%
Ghana (N=7)	57%	0%	43%	100%
Indonesia (N=57)	0%	65%	35%	100%
Kenya (N=2)	50%	0%	50%	100%
Philippines (N=51)	24%	43%	23%	100%
Sri Lanka (N=40)	50%	33%	50%	100%
Uganda (N=21)	38%	5%	38%	100%

b) Kuwait:

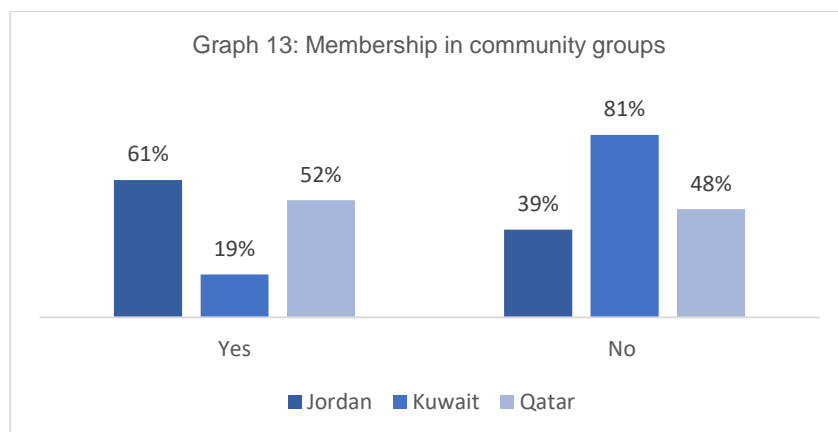
Country of origin	Do community groups exist in your country of residence?			
	Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Burkina Faso (N=14)	0%	64%	36%	100%
Ivory Coast (N=16)	13%	0%	88%	100%
Ethiopia (N=36)	14%	11%	75%	100%
India (N=41)	26%	0%	71%	100%
Madagascar (N=15)	53%	0%	47%	100%
Nepal (N=19)	0%	95%	5%	100%
Philippines (N=49)	53%	2%	45%	100%
Sri Lanka (N=20)	5%	90%	5%	100%

c) Qatar:

Country of origin	Do community groups exist in your country of residence?			
	Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Bangladesh (N=17)	0%	59%	41%	100%
Ethiopia (N=21)	33%	14%	52%	100%
India (N=17)	12%	47%	41%	100%
Indonesia (N=22)	5%	55%	41%	100%
Kenya (N=43)	28%	30%	42%	100%
Nepal (N=22)	41%	45%	41%	100%
Philippines (N=43)	33%	16%	33%	100%
Sri Lanka (N=19)	0%	53%	47%	100%

Over half of the domestic workers in Jordan (N=62) and Qatar (N=46) who have awareness of these groups are members themselves, 61% and 52% respectively, but only 19% of those in Kuwait (N=55) do. It is possible then that they have less access to community groups which could be due to different factors such as their working hours or the regulations of their employers. As mentioned above, only a small number of domestic workers have awareness of laws relating to their line of work in their countries of residence. It was interesting to find that membership in community groups did not correlate with this awareness.

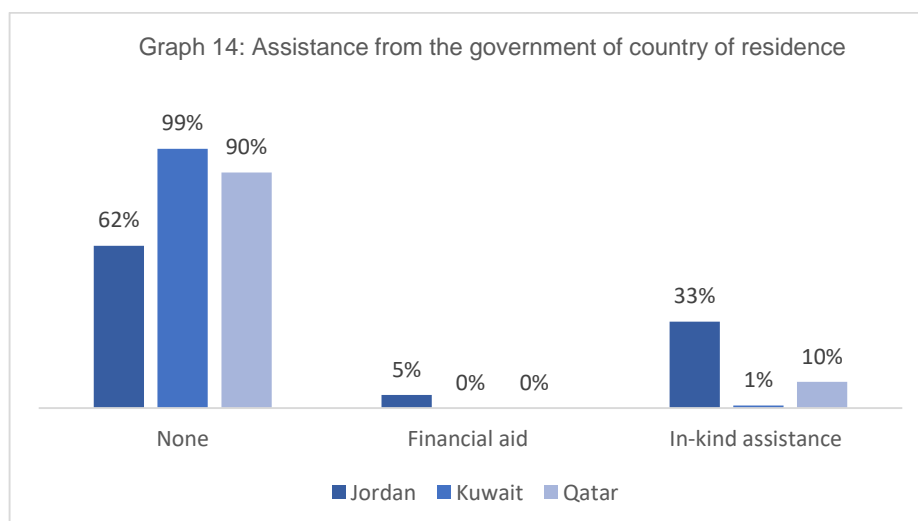


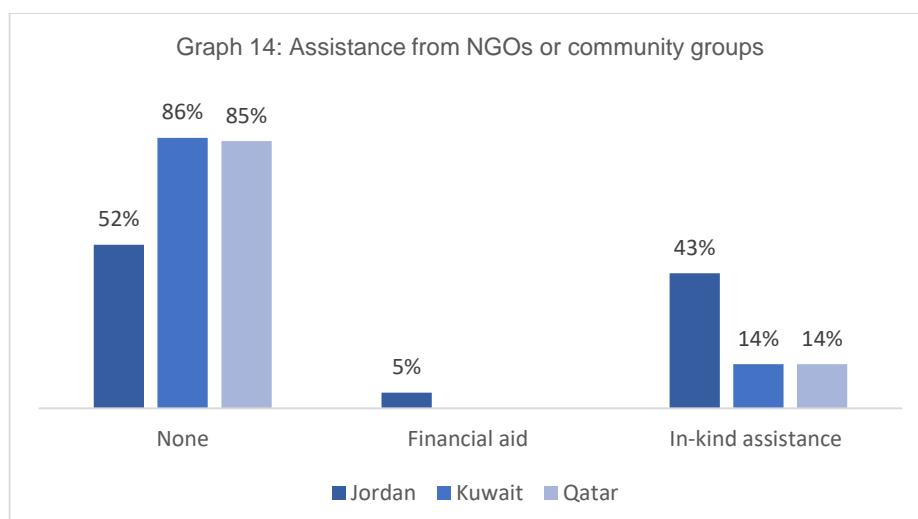


Members of such community groups are well-informed about their activities and services; 63%, 91%, and 72% in Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar asserted that the groups are acting to protect his/her health and rights. Although in small numbers, all of the members of groups from the Philippines exhibited knowledge of the work that their community groups are doing. This is only reflected otherwise with Bangladeshi community group members in Jordan. Finally, most members of community groups also reported knowing how to reach out to them in case they have any complaints or requests for assistance.

v. Assistance

Since the start of the pandemic, domestic workers have been receiving minimal support from both the governments of the countries they live in and from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community groups. The country governments have been supporting migrant domestic workers to different extents. Government assistance has reached a very small percentage of workers in Jordan and Qatar- 39% and 10% respectively-, and none at all in Kuwait. NGOs and community groups have reached a greater number of people, yet still only a minority in Kuwait and Qatar. 48% of domestic workers in Jordan received support in the form of financial or in-kind assistance, however, only 14% received such assistance in each of Kuwait and Qatar.





When it comes to both government and NGO/community group assistance in Jordan, the only nationalities receiving assistance were Indonesia, Bangladesh, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. This may imply that the governments of these nationalities and/or the community groups that support them may be making a greater effort when it comes to advocacy. In relation to the findings on community groups, the findings show that awareness of and membership in these groups does not correlate with one's access to assistance. Similarly, the validity of one's residency does not seem to affect one's access to assistance in any of the countries.

Table 17: Residency permits and receiving assistance from governments

Assistance from the government	Do you have a valid residency permit?					
	Jordan		Qatar		Kuwait	
	Yes (N=130)	No (N=90)	Yes (N=197)	No (N=9)	Yes (N=182)	No (N=28)
None	66%	56%	90%	78%	99%	96%
In-kind assistance	26%	44%	9%	22%	1%	4%
Financial aid	8%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%

Table 18: Residency permits and receiving assistance from NGOs/community groups

Assistance from NGOs/community groups	Do you have a valid residency permit?					
	Jordan		Qatar		Kuwait	
	Yes (N=131)	No (N=87)	Yes (N=197)	No (N=9)	Yes (N=182)	No (N=28)
None	57%	47%	87%	78%	88%	68%
In-kind assistance	39%	53%	14%	22%	21%	32%
Financial aid	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

## VII. Discussion:

Domestic workers across the three countries tend to be completely reliant on their jobs as a main source of income and the majority also happen to be the sole provider in their families. Some discrepancies exist in the amount of pay that is earned by domestic workers from different nationalities. While some groups earn up to 700 USD a month, others may be earning as low as 100 to 300 USD a month. These differences exist in all of Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar. This could be linked to stronger advocacy on the part of the governments of certain countries, and/or community groups working on behalf of these nationalities. Employment contracts and residency permits, both critical documents in the protection of domestic workers' rights, are only present in low numbers across Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar. In Jordan, only 59% carry a valid residency permit. Fortunately, legal documents did not seem to influence one's access to assistance from the governments of their countries of residence.

The findings of the study have shown that although a relatively small number of people have lost their jobs due to Covid-19, those who are still working are experiencing a number of changes on both a professional and

personal level. Data from the three countries suggests that domestic workers who work for only one employer have been the least likely to lose their job during the pandemic. In Jordan, a relatively higher percentage of domestic workers work for more than one employer. The highest percentage among them have lost their jobs. Maintaining one's job has not come without additional challenges. Domestic workers have in some cases been forced to stay within the employer's house during quarantine, and in some cases to work longer hours. On the other hand, some have been working less hours and earning less of their salaries. The implications of Covid-19 extend beyond working conditions alone. Domestic workers are facing a number of difficulties outside of the workplace that have a direct impact on their quality of life, such as new physical and mental health concerns as well as tensions in their places of residence. The economic status and public health measures of the three countries in question produce their own set of challenges; domestic workers reported an increase in the prices of basic goods and difficulties in sending money home. Given that their jobs are a main source of income for both them and their families, these changes may have immediate consequences that require urgent action.

In an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19, employers have been implementing protection measures in the workplace and providing domestic workers with hygiene and personal protection equipment. This is true for the majority of respondents across the three countries. Fortunately, almost none of the workers have contracted the virus. One finding that stands out is that 14% of domestic workers in Qatar have at one point felt symptoms but did not take the test. This poses a new question of how well domestic workers are able to access testing and what factors influence their ability to do so. Similarly, only a small percentage of domestic workers are receiving any assistance from the governments of the countries they reside in. Given the challenges that this study revealed, governments across the region may consider revising how they are supporting migrants and migrant domestic workers, if at all.

Domestic workers' awareness of and access to community groups differs among nationalities. For example, no one from Ethiopia or Indonesia in Jordan was aware of the presence of community groups that support their type of work. On the other hand, 89% of domestic workers from Bangladesh did assert the presence of such groups. In Kuwait, most the workers from Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, and India do not know whether such groups exist. This points to different levels of outreach and access across nationalities within the same countries. In addition to that, group membership is relatively low. In Kuwait, it only reached 19%. This warrants further investigation into the factors that affect domestic workers' exposure to community groups and access to membership.

### **VIII. Conclusion:**

While the number of Covid-19 cases has started to decline in certain countries in the MENA region, the virus continues to spread within others. It has so far imposed serious consequences on the health systems and economies of the countries involved, many of which had been struggling prior to its arrival. With the region's high reliance on migrant labor, it is unsurprising that migrant and migrant domestic workers have experienced additional challenges under the pandemic, something that compounds the existing difficulties that they face within their jobs. In an effort to gather insight on domestic workers' conditions under Covid-19, this study inquired about issues pertaining to work-related changes, safety measures, types of challenges faced, and assistance available.

While the majority of domestic workers have been able to keep their jobs throughout the pandemic, they still encounter a number of work and non-work-related challenges as a result of government-imposed lockdowns and decisions taken by their employers. Some have faced restrictions on mobility, reductions in pay, and difficulties sending money home. For many, their current jobs are their only source of income and they also happen to be the main breadwinners in their families. In addition to the economic burden, one finding that emerged among a small group of domestic workers was that they were unable to access Covid-19 testing when they needed it.

As the pandemic and its associated regulations continue to change at a rapid pace, the experiences of domestic workers may also shift. It is important to acknowledge that domestic workers are likely to be disproportionately affected by this crisis and that there is a need to further explore the factors that contribute to their challenges. In addition to that, only minimal assistance has been provided to domestic workers during the pandemic, be it through governments or through NGOs. Consequently, findings from this study may serve to inform the work of community groups, NGOs, and other stakeholders that are looking to support migrant domestic workers through direct assistance or advocacy.

## Annex I:

### Questionnaire

#### A – PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Name of data collector:
2. Email address of data collector
3. Phone number of data collector
4. Did the respondent agree to participate?
5. Country of origin:
  - India
  - Philippines
  - Sri Lanka
  - Ethiopia
  - Madagascar
  - Nepal
  - Kenya
  - Indonesia
  - Ghana
  - Bangladesh
  - Uganda
  - Other (specify):
6. Country of residence:
  - Jordan
  - Kuwait
  - Qatar
7. City/region of residence?
  - Amman
  - Outside Amman
    - Al Asimah
    - Jahra
    - Hawalli
    - Farwaniyah
    - Mubarak Al-Kabeer
    - Al-Ahmadi
  - Doha
  - Al Wakrah
  - Al Rayyan
  - Al Khor
  - Al Wajba
  - Other
8. Age:
9. Gender identity:
  - Woman
  - Man
  - Other
  - I'd rather not say
10. Marital status:
  - Married
  - Single
  - Separated or divorced
  - Widow
  - Live-in partner or in domestic partnership
11. If married or partnered, where does your partner live?
  - Same country and together
  - Same country but not together
  - My country of origin

- Different country outside the country of origin
12. Do you have children or stepchildren? Yes / No
13. If yes, where do your children live?
- Same country and together
  - Same country but not together
  - My country of origin
  - Different country outside the country of origin
14. Do you own or rent the property where you live?
- I own it
  - I rent it
  - It is owned by my partner or another member of the family
  - It is owned by the company that I work for
  - I live with my employer
15. How many people live in your current place of residence (including yourself)? [If in compound, how many live in the same room or apartment?]
16. Do you suffer or have suffered from any of the following chronic health conditions [select all that apply]?
- Diabetes
  - High blood pressure
  - Overweight
  - Bone or joint conditions
  - Mental health (anxiety disorders, depression, others)
  - Respiratory (Asthma, allergies, sinusitis, others)
  - Cancer
  - None
  - Other, please specify:
17. Are you currently having any medical treatment and/or taking any medication?  
Yes / No / I'd rather not answer
18. If yes, who covers the costs?
- I cover the cost
  - My immediate family (spouse, partner, children, siblings, parents...)
  - My employer covers the cost
  - Health insurance company
  - No one, I am not currently receiving treatment
  - Other, please specify:
19. Phone number of respondent [optional]:

## **B – EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

20. What kind of domestic work do you do [select all that apply]?
- Caregiver for elderly persons or people with disabilities
  - Nanny
  - Cleaning personnel
  - Cook
  - Housekeeper
  - Other, please specify:
21. Is this your main job and/or source of income? Yes / No
22. If not, what other job or source of income do you have? [Open-ended]
23. How long have you been working in this country?
- 0-3 years
  - 3-6 years
  - 6-9 years
  - 9-12 years
  - 12-15 years
  - Over 15 years
24. Are you the main breadwinner in your family?
- Yes, I am the main breadwinner in my family.
  - No, my income supplements the family income.
25. Employment arrangement:
- Live-in (live with employer)
  - Live-out

26. What kind of employer do you have? [select all that apply]
- I work for only one employer.
  - I work for multiple employers.
  - I work for an agency.
  - I am a freelance worker.
27. What is your monthly income (approximately)?
- 0-100 USD
  - 100-200 USD
  - 200-300 USD
  - 300-400 USD
  - 400-500 USD
  - 500-700 USD
  - Over 700 USD
28. If you do not live with your employer, on average, how long does it take you to get to and from your workplace/s (in minutes)?
29. What is the amount of time off that you are allowed?
- One hour or less per day
  - More than one hour a day
  - One day a week inside the house
  - One day a week inside or outside of the house
  - I do not get any time off
  - Other, specify
30. Do you have a written employment contract? Yes / No / I don't know
31. If yes, is it in a language that you understand? Yes / No / I don't know
32. If yes, do you have a copy of the contract? Yes / No / I don't know
33. Do you have the following in your possession? [select all that apply]
- Official ID
  - Passport
  - Health card
  - ATM card
  - Work permit
  - Residence
  - None
34. Is there a specific law on domestic work in your country? Yes / No / I don't know

### **C - COVID-19 SITUATION**

35. Are there quarantine/ social distancing measures in your country? Yes / No / I don't know
36. How do you access information to Covid-related updates and measures [select all that apply]?
- News
  - Social media
  - Employers
  - Friends and family
  - Community organizations
  - Others, specify:
37. Which of the following options best describes your employment situation during Covid-19 [single choice]?
- I continue working normally.
  - I am in quarantine (in my house) but I am still receiving my salary.
  - I was fired or suspended.
  - I kept working but my hours and salary have been reduced for the duration of the crisis.
  - Other (specify):
38. If your salary has been reduced during the crisis, please indicate the deducted amount (Expressed in USD): [Open/ optional]
39. Have you experienced any other changes at work during COVID-19?
- I work more hours and I am not paid for them.
  - I am allowed less or no breaks/days off
  - I have been forced to stay at my employer's house during the quarantine period.
  - I have experienced some kind of violence or ill treatment from my employer/s.
  - My employer asked me to take the coronavirus test.

- My employer asked me to use my vacation time or my 13<sup>th</sup> salary was affected.
  - Other (specify):
40. Have you experienced any other changes at work during COVID-19? [Select all that apply]:
- I work more hours and I am not paid for them
  - I am allowed less or no breaks/days off
  - I have been forced to stay at my employer's house during the quarantine period
  - I have experienced some kind of violence or ill treatment from employer/s
  - My employer asked me to take the coronavirus test
  - My employer asked me to take my vacation time or my 13<sup>th</sup> salary will be affected
  - There have been no changes
41. If you have continued working during this time, please answer the following questions:
- If you have been working during this time, have you been given hygienic products and personal protection equipment? Yes / No / I have not been working
  - If you have been working during this time, have any measures been taken in order to ensure your safety while on your way to your workplace? Yes / No / I have not been working/ I live with my employer- do not commute
  - If you have been working during this time, have you been forced to share any space with and/or care for possibly infected people? Yes / No / I have not been working
42. Has your employer taken any Covid prevention measures at work? Yes / No  
If yes, what?
43. Have you personally taken any Covid prevention measures on your own at work? Yes/No  
If yes, what?
44. On a scale of 1 to 5- one being 'not safe at all' and five being 'very safe'- how safe do you feel from the threat of contracting Covid within the workplace?
45. Did you get Covid-19?
- Yes, I tested positive
  - I felt the symptoms but did not get a test
  - No
46. What other changes have you experienced due to Covid-19 [select all that apply]?
- Increased prices of basic goods
  - Difficulty accessing medicine/medical services
  - Difficulty staying in touch with family and friends
  - New health-related conditions
  - Difficulty sending money home
  - Changes in your mental health
  - Increased tension at your place of residence
  - Others, specify:
47. Did you get any help from the government of your country of residence during Covid-19? [select all that apply]
- No
  - In-kind assistance from government (food and other basic items)
  - Financial aid from government
  - Unemployment benefit
  - Cancellation of water / electricity bills
  - Support for rent from government
  - Others
48. Did you get any help from an organization or community group during Covid-19? [select all that apply]
- No
  - In-kind assistance from NGO/community group
  - Financial aid from NGO/community group
  - Support for rent from NGO/community group
  - Others
49. Is your line of work currently supported by any community groups in the city or country where you live?  
Yes / No / I don't know
50. If so, are you a member of any community groups? Yes / No
51. Are you aware of any actions taken by the community group in order to protect your health and your rights? I know it is taking some action / It is not doing anything / I don't know if it is doing anything
52. Do you know how to get in touch with the community groups to submit a complaint or ask for assistance? Yes / No



53. Do you give us permission to put you in touch with a group that represents you in your country of residence? Yes / No

54. Would you like to add any other comment? (Open/ optional)

---

<sup>i</sup> Numbers on migrant workers were retrieved from the following resources:

Jordan: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_554812.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_554812.pdf)

Kuwait: <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2020/8/12/kuwait-planning-to-deport-360-000-migrant-workers>

Qatar: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/24/qatar-little-progress-protecting-migrant-workers>

<sup>ii</sup> Numbers on migrant domestic workers were retrieved from the following resources:

Jordan: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_554812.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_554812.pdf)

Kuwait: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_429591.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_429591.pdf)

Qatar: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/10/qatar-domestic-worker-abuse-and-exploitation-report/>