GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICES

in the domestic and care work sector



SEDOAC

Empowerment Center for Domestic and Care Workers (CETHYC)

SEDOAC

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1. PRESENTATION



1.1. Background

The domestic and care work sector is one of the essential sectors for economic and social development in Spain. However, in our daily work at CETHYC, we see how the sector continues to be marked by precarious conditions and the violation of rights. We support women who, in many cases, face a lack of formal contracts, excessive working hours with constant availability and no real rest, and salaries below the legal minimum —conditions that limit their future prospects and hinder their access to key benefits such as retirement or unemployment benefits.

Added to this job instability are instances of racist discrimination and barriers to obtaining administrative regularization. This combination leaves many women workers in a state of extreme vulnerability to harassment, workplace abuse, or violence.

1.2. Legislative Milestones and the Role of SEDOAC

The signing of ILO Convention No. 189 and the entry into force of Royal Decree-Law 16/2022 marked a turning point in the improvement of their working conditions and Social Security coverage. These legal achievements are the result of the collective mobilization of migrant domestic workers.

SEDOAC has led this effort since its founding in 2008 as a response to the precarious and isolated conditions that domestic workers have historically faced. In its early days, meetings and counseling on labor rights and immigration issues became essential tools of resistance. It was formally established as a legally recognized organization, composed of and for the workers themselves. SEDOAC was conceived not only as a meeting place but also as a driving force for political awareness and social transformation. Our work is based on four strategic pillars: **Empowerment, Awareness-Raising, Networking, and Advocacy.**

11.3. Empowerment Center for Domestic and Care Workers (CETHYC)

The center's origins date back to the first Congress of Domestic and Care Workers (Madrid, 2016). USO Madrid and SEDOAC designed the "Home for Domestic Workers" project; this proposal was taken up by the Turin Group Platform, which was tasked with presenting it to Councilwoman Rommy Arce, who made a firm commitment to the group.

After three years of negotiations, an agreement was signed between the Usera District Council (Madrid City Council) and SEDOAC to take over management of the space, as agreed upon by the Turin Group. With its inauguration on July 1, 2019, the CETHYC made history as the *first Empowerment Center in Spain and Europe created exclusively to provide comprehensive and specialized support for the sector.*

We continue our commitment to domestic and care workers by developing guidance and training initiatives to improve their employability. Our daily work seeks not only to facilitate their entry into the workforce but also to empower them by providing tools that enhance their autonomy and improve their understanding of their rights.

In 2026, thanks to the support of the RIZA Project and co-financing from the European Union, we launched the project **"Democracy and Rights for Migrant Women and Domestic Workers."** The goal of this project is to promote gender equality and the social and political participation of migrant women in general—and domestic and care workers in particular—by raising awareness of their rights and strengthening their leadership and participation. It also aims to highlight the importance of this sector of the workforce in order to raise awareness and promote democratic principles in Spanish society.



2. INTRODUCTION



2.1. Purpose of the Guide

These good practices guide was developed as a technical and ethical response aimed at improving social and labor interventions with domestic and care workers. Based on a rights-based approach and the experience accumulated by the Empowerment Center for Domestic and Care Workers (CETHYC), its purpose is to share our experience working in this sector and to provide the relevant social actors with a set of useful tools for their work.

As mentioned, domestic and care work continues to be marked by precarious conditions and multiple forms of discrimination. These dynamics often remain invisible, and detecting them is the first major obstacle. There is an invisible barrier to identifying abuse, both for the victims themselves—who are often unaware that their rights are being violated—and for the key actors and professionals involved in third-sector services.

3. LEGAL INSTRUMENTS



3.1. Sector Data

Despite current regulatory reforms, the indicators reveal deep-seated inequality:

- **Feminization:** In Spain, 88.2% of workers are women (compared to 80% in Europe).
- **Profile:** Women of migrant origin are the driving force behind this sector, facing systemic barriers.
- **Job Insecurity:**
  - 79.2% work without a contract.
  - 70.8% earn very low salaries.
  - 44.4% lack adequate breaks.
- **Poverty:** According to Oxfam Intermón (2025), poverty affects 32.4% of female workers; the severe poverty rate is three times the national average.
- **Vulnerability and Violence:** The home remains a place of vulnerability; 63% of assaults are perpetrated by the employer.

Current Regulatory Framework

LEGISLATION	FEATURES
Ámbito internacional	
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	An international treaty adopted by Spain to promote effective equality between women and men and protect against any discrimination based on gender. Publish General Recommendation No. 19. It defines sexual harassment and recognizes it as a form of discrimination based on sex and an expression of violence against women.
International Organization of Labor (ILO), Convention No. 189	Ratified by Spain, it guarantees the labor rights of domestic workers and promotes the elimination of harassment in the workplace.
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), New York, December 19, 1966	Ratified by Spain on April 30, 1977, Article 2 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, origin, language, religion, birth, etc.
European Level	
The Istanbul Convention (2014)	The first European treaty that requires states to prevent, punish, and eradicate all forms of violence against women. It promotes real equality and comprehensive protection.
Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council	It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of sex in employment and occupation. It recognizes sexual harassment and harassment on the basis of sex as forms of workplace discrimination. It requires Member States to ensure effective channels for filing complaints, seeking redress, and imposing sanctions.
Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU	Article 21 prohibits all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on sex. Article 23 promotes equality between women and men in all areas, including the workplace.
European Social Charter, adopted in Strasbourg on May 3, 1996 (ESC)	Ratified by Spain on June 11, 2021. Article 20 establishes the principle of equality and prohibits discrimination; Article 24 provides for the right to compensation and redress for unjustified dismissal.

LEGISLATION	FEATURES
National Level	
The Spanish Constitution	In Articles 9.2; Article 10.1 (Dignity); Article 14 (Equality); Article 18.1 (Privacy); and Article 35.1.
Comprehensive Law No. 15/2022, of July 12, On Equal Treatment and Nondiscrimination	It recognizes the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination as a fundamental right, applicable to all people in every aspect of life. It establishes measures to prevent and sanction discrimination based on grounds such as racial or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, or other personal or social factors.
Law 31/1995, of November 8, on the Prevention of Occupational Hazards	Article 14 establishes the right to protection against occupational hazards and recognizes the right to effective protection in the area of occupational safety and health. Harassment is considered a psychosocial risk that must be prevented in the workplace.
Royal Decree 893/2024	It establishes the requirement for risk assessments in homes and the right to free medical examinations.
Royal Decree-Law 16/2022	The reform that equalizes unemployment benefits and eliminates dismissal without cause.

4. OBJECTIVES



- Provide a technical framework for intervention to improve the quality of career guidance.
- Promote a culture of respect and eradicate prejudice and structural abuses.

5. SOCIO-OCCUPATIONAL INTERVENTION MODEL



5.1. Administrative Status

The administrative status of the participants, determined directly by the identification document they carry, is the factor that defines the social and employment guidance pathway. This document serves as the primary criterion for correctly directing the intervention we will carry out from the very beginning, allowing us to guide those with a national identity number (DNI) or foreigner identification number (NIE) toward the official employment system and institutions, and those with a passport toward community, parish, and nonprofit support networks.

5.2. Methodological Approach

The methodology is based on individual and collective empowerment, valuing the experiences and knowledge of women workers and redefining gender roles and norms. The methodological approach is grounded in a feminist, anti-racist, and rights-based perspective. This rights-based perspective recognizes women not as passive users or beneficiaries of a service, but as rights-holders capable of analyzing their own situation, negotiating, and demanding what is rightfully theirs.

The work focuses on their self-identification as workers and citizens, strengthening their political participation. This involves avoiding the assistentialist mentality that often permeates support services and empowering the workers themselves to become active agents of individual change and social transformation.

5.3. Areas of Action

The support service is designed to improve participants' situations by providing access to information and individualized counseling related to finding or advancing in employment and training within the sector. It offers personalized support that focuses on the specific needs expressed by the participants.

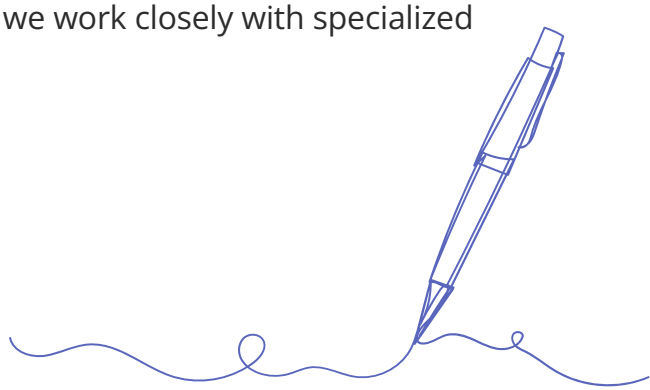
The main objective is to facilitate social and labor market integration and promote autonomy. To this end, the support is not limited to the workplace but also includes guidance on complementary issues (registration with local authorities, housing, equivalency -homologation- of educational titles, and administrative procedures), organized into two areas of action:

1. **Implementation of a specialized information and guidance space,** through pathways tailored to domestic workers, which includes an initial reception and assessment, the design and implementation of an intervention plan, and the provision of information, counseling, support, and referrals when appropriate.

2. **Development of group training activities** that comprehensively contribute to the acquisition of social and workplace skills, foster motivation and the improvement of personal skills, facilitate job placement, and support job retention. This training is also aimed at developing social skills, improving self-esteem and personal skills, as well as addressing the digital gap that hinders access to online job listings and the completion of administrative procedures.

5.4. Reception and Initial Interview

The initial interview takes place in a private and safe space, always with the goal of building trust from the beginning. We offer more than just a consultation; we provide comprehensive and personalized support. We take special care when working with people who are not fluent in Spanish. In these cases, we work closely with specialized organizations and professionals.



5.5. Assessment and Active Listening

We approach the assessment with sensitivity to identify:

- **Immediate needs:** Prioritizing urgent legal or social matters.
- **Comprehensive analysis:** Legal, family, economic, and social situation.
- **Strengths and future prospects:** The individual's abilities to foster their autonomy and vision for the future.

We use an assessment form that gathers the most relevant information about their personal situation, migration plans, and professional expectations. All counseling work and follow-up are based on the initial information provided. The initial assessment allows us to tailor each intervention to the individual's life plan and expectations. Given that our intervention typically occurs in a context of financial urgency and an immediate need for resources, it is essential at this stage to clarify the participants' expectations and needs in order to develop effective individual counseling and group activities.

5.6. Professional Attitude, Ethics, and Empathy

We live in a reality where precariousness and abuse have been normalized for far too long. That is why the way we provide support is crucial. For this support to be transformative and bring about real change, our approach—and that of anyone accompanying this process—must be rooted in:

- **Non-judgment:** Avoid reproaches or comments that judge or blame.
- **Intersectional approach:** Recognize structural barriers (immigrant status, racism) to prevent revictimization.
- **Empathetic listening:** Many situations of abuse are traumatic and difficult to put into words; it is necessary to practice empathetic listening and to respect people's pace and silence as a form of communication.

5.7. Examining Biases and Stereotypes

Institutional structures and care services are not neutral; they are permeated by stereotypes and biases that—often unconsciously—manifest themselves in everyday practices. These behaviors undermine the effectiveness of interventions, as they perpetuate inequalities and forms of violence that shape women's expectations, their requests for help, and their relationship of trust with professional staff.

As professionals, we must acknowledge that we are not immune to participating in these dynamics. In fact, in contexts of vulnerability, we often fall into the trap of believing that we have fewer prejudices than others and struggle to identify our own biases. Recognizing this limitation is the first step toward providing carefree of discrimination. We suggest:

1. Identify automatic labels before the interview.
2. Listen to what she says, not what you think she "should" say.
3. Frame the problem in terms of social structure, not the individual.

CETHYC's Comprehensive Intervention Model

CETHYC's comprehensive intervention model is structured as a bidirectional strategic resource, designed to offer both domestic and care workers and employers a specialized service providing information, guidance, and personalized counseling.

The intervention is not limited to technical guidance on local social and employment resources; the center is fundamentally conceived as a space for personal growth, where the acquisition of skills, mutual care, and the development of abilities that strengthen workers' autonomy are promoted. It is guided by the following principles:

- **Interrelated Issues:** The needs of the women that attend are not viewed in isolation but are interrelated: job search, mental and physical health, workplace conflicts, and administrative status are issues that are understood and addressed holistically.
- **Flexibility:** Flexibility in scheduling training sessions and workshops and in designing pathways, considering that the realities of the sector affect attendance and participation in activities.

- **Adaptation:** Adapting traditional methodology to the specific needs of the sector, addressing urgent needs when required.

- **Co-creation:** The co-creation and design of the center's programming are approached proactively, valuing the knowledge, perspectives, ideas, and needs of the women who attend, while also fostering a participatory methodology in the development of activities by the domestic workers themselves.

- **Self-Care:** Emphasizing self-care by highlighting the benefits of participating in recreational and leisure activities, for a truly comprehensive approach that prioritizes emotional and physical well-being.

- **Gateway:** Conceiving the center as a gateway to many other referral resources in the city that are unknown to domestic workers, which requires collaborative efforts within the district and the Community.

Initiatives aimed at addressing the specific needs and barriers to employment faced by domestic and care workers focus on **strengthening their employability and autonomy.** These interventions include both guidance on local employment resources and the development of social, workplace, and digital skills—all of which are essential for securing and retaining employment. Likewise, the assessment of prior training, the educational credentials homologation process, and work experience are keys to designing a personalized pathway that includes transferable skills and specific job training. Finally, the process is carried out through specialized counseling and close coordination with the local network of complementary resources, ensuring comprehensive and consistent support.



6. TOOLS AND PROFESSIONALIZATION



Supporting domestic and care workers requires training them in the use of key resources that validate their experience and ensure decent, formal employment.

6.1. Digital Resources and Administrative Models

- **Using Importass (Home):** Access to Importass (Home) to review their work history and independently verify their employment registrations and contributions.
- **Basic employment documentation:** Standard employment contract templates, time-sheet templates, and current salary scales.
- **Professional use of digital channels (WhatsApp):** Guidance on how to use WhatsApp as a formal communication channel during the job placement process (sending resumes, confirming interviews, and tracking agreed-upon terms).

6.2. Professional Qualification (Accreditation of Competencies)

The recognition of prior experience is essential for the social and labor market integration and professional development of migrant women workers. Through the Competency Accreditation Procedure, work experience acquired through informal channels is recognized for the purpose of obtaining a Professional Certificate.

This is an official process managed in a decentralized manner at the national and autonomous levels:

- **National Level:** Access to the process is permanently open through autonomous online portals.
- **Community of Madrid:** The autonomous administration is responsible for evaluating and officially recognizing professional competencies acquired through work experience or non-formal training pathways. The process remains a permanently open application period via the online portals.

The administration, registration, and issuance of professional certificates and accreditations are handled by the Subdirectorate General for Professional Qualification and Accreditation of the Community of Madrid, attached to the Regional Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Employment, located at Vía Lusitana, 21, 28025 Madrid. The units of competence for the open and ongoing call for applications can be viewed at the following link:

https://www.comunidad.madrid/servicios/empleo/acreditacion-experiencia-laboral#panel-273863

6.3. Pilot Program – Agreement on the Signing of a Bilateral Protocol

The Embassy of Ecuador in Spain signed a memorandum of understanding with the Community of Madrid regarding the recognition of professional qualifications for Ecuadorian citizens. This agreement allows Ecuadorian citizens in Madrid to certify their work experience gained in Ecuador or Spain, without the need for a formal title, with a focus on sectors such as construction, technology, administration, hospitality, and healthcare.



7. NETWORKING



To address the realities faced by domestic and care workers, inter-institutional and community-based efforts are essential. They allow us to respond comprehensively to the complex realities faced by migrant workers in this sector, where job precarity is intertwined with administrative barriers, structural racism, and invisibility.

Close coordination with specialized organizations, social services, consulates, and local resources is the foundation for ensuring that no worker is left alone or unprotected.

8. ELEMENTS THAT DEFINE GOOD PRACTICE AT CETHYC

CETYC is a pioneering center in Spain, created by and for domestic and care workers. Those who are part of the center and pass through its doors highlight the transformative value of our work in four key areas: the importance of having a space of one's own, comprehensive support, the centrality of care, and individual and collective empowerment.



8.1. Spatial Dimension

- To provide a physical space for domestic and care workers that serves as reference in labor sector where some of the women employed are in an irregular administrative situation and perceive the streets as unsafe due to police presence and racist raids.
- To function as a home-like space and meeting place—a refuge for many workers who have nowhere else to go on weekends, so they make the center their own.
- To raise awareness of the situation in this labor sector by bringing it out of the privacy of people's homes and into a space open to the participation of other actors and organizations not directly related to the domestic and care work sector.

- To facilitate the planning and stability of the programs intended to be carried out, avoiding dependence on the limited use of other spaces.
- To symbolically stake a claim in the political arena, as a key space for social and political organizations—including feminist and anti-racist groups—as well as for institutional political actors.

8.2. Service Dimension

- Domestic work and caregiving constitute a labor sector governed by regulations that have historically set it apart from other types of work; therefore, it requires an approach focused on its specific characteristics, one that remains up to date with recently enacted legislative changes.
- The interplay between the various axes of oppression and processes of vulnerability experienced by domestic workers makes it essential that the care they receive be holistic. For this reason, the legal, labor, immigration, social and labor integration, and psychological dimensions cannot be addressed as isolated and separate areas.
- Direct engagement with the workers is essential; it is imperative to continue facilitating their participation in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the Center's activities, with the women themselves taking the lead.
- Coordination and communication by the technical team are essential for identifying the workers' needs and acting jointly to address cases in a comprehensive manner.
- Support for employers is fundamental in cases where a lack of knowledge of the law prevents them from upholding the workers' labor rights.

8.3. Care and Collective Empowerment Dimension

- Strengthening the self-esteem of the women who come to the center is key to addressing the social and community dimensions.
- In the process of collective empowerment and self-care, it is very important to learn techniques for managing work-related burnout and to foster personal development through leisure, art, and the friendships formed at the center.
- The center serves as a space for political engagement, delving into the structural causes of inequality in the sector and promoting the empowerment and political participation of workers in the defense of their rights.
- The design and implementation of the center's project are the responsibility of migrant women who have worked as domestic and care workers, which has a very positive impact in terms of representation and also serves as a role model for the women who come to the center.



9. CONCLUSIONS



An analysis based on the experience of the Empowerment Center for Domestic and Care Workers (CETHYC), managed by SEDOAC, shows that social and labor interventions with migrant women and workers in this sector require:

- A specialized technical service model that breaks with traditional bureaucratic fragmentation, given that job precarity, psychological trauma resulting from exploitation, immigration barriers, and social and labor integration are interconnected.

- It concludes that there is an urgent need to uphold the principle of co-participation. Women are not passive beneficiaries; they are the protagonists in the planning and evaluation of the program, ensuring that the center faithfully responds to legislative changes and the sector's real needs.

- Education -Pedagogy- for Employers: Best practices are not limited to training groups in vulnerability situations but also involve preventive measures such as advising employers, recognizing that compliance with labor rights is often hindered by a lack of legal knowledge.

The intervention cannot be based on an assistentialist approach, but rather on the restoration of dignity and human rights through collective empowerment. Comprehensive care requires coordination and communication with complementary resources.

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