

The Hope - התקווה

MIGRANT WORKERS



VULNERABLE STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND

If you've been to Israel lately, you might have seen Masada, the kotel, and the Tel Aviv nightlight. But did you notice the 180,000 migrant workers from the Philippines, China, Thailand and other countries, performing the agricultural and service jobs that help Israel thrive? They are also one of the most vulnerable groups in Israel; as non-citizens, non-Hebrew speakers, and non-Jews, they are often an invisible 'other.'

Further, their visas are issued to their employers, leaving migrants dependent on their employers for legal status, and vulnerable to exploitation. Work termination for any reason puts them at risk for detention and deportation.

THE JEWISH ISSUE

Leviticus 19:33-34 tells us that 'When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.'

Are we treating foreign workers as we would like to be treated? The Hotline for Migrant Workers says we could be doing better.

HOTLINE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

As the name 'Hotline for Migrant Workers' suggests, the organizations main approach is direct action - to educate workers about their rights and options through a telephone hotline serving 150-200 callers a month. They also plan to conduct 50 visits to detention centers, attend monthly hearings with Border Control Officers, distribute 1,000 rights flyers and conduct two group meetings and two enrichment sessions for detainees.

The Hotline for Migrant Workers also works through the courts, to provide para-legal representation for 300-500 detainees in interactions with authorities.

Programs

1. Safeguarding the rights of migrant workers facing detention and deportation.
2. Advancing alternative policy for employment of migrant workers, which contains protective measures and prevents conditions of binding.
3. Establishing permanent residency status for a small number of people who have spent extended periods of time in Israel and/or where special circumstances exist.

Inspired? Here's how you can get involved

The Hotline for Migrant Workers has a myriad of ways you can contribute to the cause, ranging from working on the telephone hotline, to visiting prisons, translation, and event planning!

Please see their website for more specific information: http://www.hotline.org.il/en_drupal/english/assist.htm