



# Advancing Protection for Families and Setting Professional Domestic Staffing Standards on the African continent.

A 7-year progress report by MAIDforME.

**February 2025**

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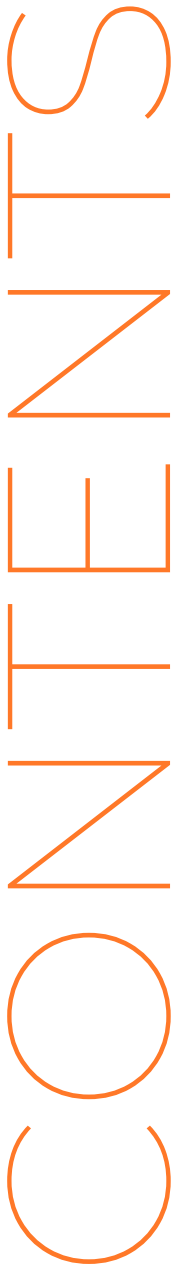
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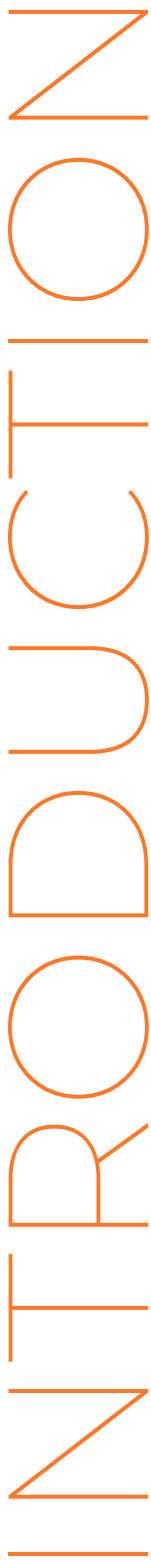
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MAIDforME kicked off formally in 2018, fueled by a bold vision: **to redefine how African families think of and engage with domestic staffing.**

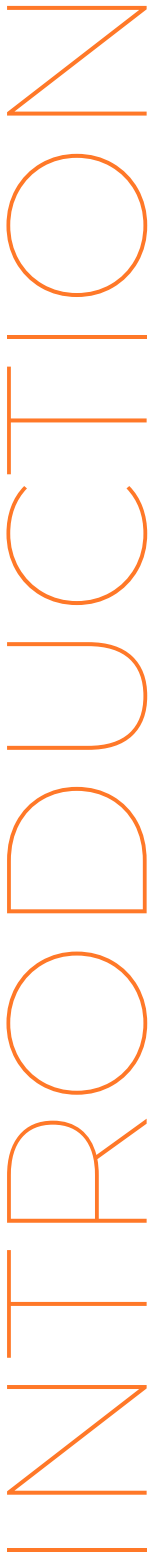
We saw an urgent need to bring professionalism to an industry that was growing rapidly yet remained largely informal, unregulated, and unsupported.

Our vision gained validation as workforce dynamics evolved. With more women entering the workforce, it created a huge demand for skilled domestic workers to support household operations.

Yet, we faced a serious challenge.

The lack of institutional oversight, minimal entry barriers, and the absence of robust systems made the domestic work industry vulnerable to exploitation and inefficiency. As demand grew, it became evident that the ecosystem was struggling to provide the trustworthy, well-trained professionals that families needed.

MAIDforME stepped in to address this gap by empowering the ecosystem with practical, ready-to-use tools. We designed these resources for immediate impact, empowering families to upskill their domestic staff, and at the same time, transform their household operations in real-time.



Over the past seven years, MAIDforME has pioneered innovative solutions, crafting resources and programs that not only guide and protect families but also elevate the domestic workforce.

Since 2020, we have championed comprehensive training and standardization designed to equip domestic staff—ensuring they have what it takes to meet the evolving needs of families across the continent.

Our actions have played a pivotal role in advancing the industry, even as we court broader government intervention.

Most recently MAIDforME has drawn upon the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Convention No. 189 – Decent Work for Domestic Workers framework. While this framework is designed to safeguard the rights of domestic workers, its ripple effects also ensure that families benefit from the improved standards and practices it promotes.

This report outlines how MAIDforME has progressed over seven years of operation. It highlights critical challenges we’ve chosen to address, the successes we’ve achieved so far, and how our resources and practices are protecting families and advancing the domestic staffing industry on the continent.

# 1. Interview Questionnaire: Raising the barriers to entry and providing a fair, transparent, and bias-free hiring process.

Historically, the practice of hiring domestic staff among African families has been marred by informality and a lack of structure. This informal approach has often led to poor hiring decisions.

Families have over the years relied on word-of-mouth recommendations or made hasty decisions based on superficial assessments and therefore have found it challenging to objectively evaluate the skills, experience, and suitability of potential domestic staff. The result of this is the hiring of individuals who are never fully equipped to meet the specific demands of the household, leading to dissatisfaction and potential issues.

Domestic staff have become victims of discrimination based on ethnicity, physical looks, or other personal characteristics. Without a structured process, families have unconsciously favoured candidates who fit certain stereotypes or who come from similar backgrounds, further perpetuating unethical hiring practices.

In response to this, MAIDforME's interview questionnaires acts as an essential screening tool to help families raise the barriers to entry by implementing a structured hiring process. It comes with clear job descriptions, and bias-free line of questioning that ensure all candidates are evaluated based on their merits and qualifications.

By providing a structured framework, our interview questionnaire helps families assess candidates' compatibility with their families, set clear expectations, and ensure that the wrong people do not gain access to their homes. They also create fairer opportunities for domestic workers by allowing them to showcase their skills and qualifications in a transparent and equitable way, promoting professional standards in the industry.

# PROGRESS

Since 2018, MAIDforME has made significant progress in improving the recruitment process for thousands of families and domestic workers across Africa. Our role-specific interview questionnaires have been successfully integrated into the recruitment practices of multiple families and agencies across many countries, helping to establish best practices in the domestic work industry. They ensure that families are finding the best hands and hiring who they need, and domestic worker candidates are assessed based on their skills, qualifications, and fit for the role, rather than being subjected to discriminatory assessments such as looks, intonation or places of origin. They also provide a structured, bias-free way to evaluate candidates, promoting fairness in the hiring process and ensuring that domestic workers are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Key milestones include:

- Widespread adoption of our interview questionnaires by domestic worker recruitment agencies and independent employers. So far, we have served families in 17 African countries and translated these resources into French to reach even more families.
- Increased awareness among employers about the ethical responsibilities involved in hiring domestic workers, leading to improved respect for workers' rights and dignity.
- Empowerment of domestic workers, as our questionnaires have helped them secure jobs based on their qualifications, rather than facing bias or exploitation.



MAIDforME is professionalizing domestic worker hiring processes for all

## 2. Agency Questionnaire: Personal Regulation and Ethical Recruitment in the face of Limited Government Oversight

### CONTEXT

The informal recruitment of domestic workers, often facilitated by unregulated agencies, remains a widespread issue. The lack of oversight, due to the very visible absence of active government involvement has led to the financial and time exploitation of families and domestic staff alike. In 2022, MAIDforME developed an Agency Questionnaire to mitigate this by empowering families to identify reputable, registered agencies that follow ethical standards in sourcing and recruitment. When this is done in growing numbers, unethically run agencies can be run out of business and domestic workers in their care saved from exploitation.

### PROGRESS

Through this resource, MAIDforME has created an infrastructure to help families personally screen agencies, ensuring that they only hire from those that meet certain standards. The questionnaire includes 22 critical questions to assess an agency's legitimacy, covering different important aspects such as business registration, training and assessment plans, staff assessment and welfare etc.

We have reduced the risks of families being unwilful participants in illegal recruitment practices, while also ensuring that domestic workers are treated fairly according to the law and not taken advantage of by these agencies.

By training families on signs to look out for and guiding families to only choose agencies that comply with the right standards, the agency questionnaire plays a crucial role in safeguarding domestic workers' rights and well-being.

# PROGRESS OVERVIEW

## 2018 Registration

After one year of operating unofficially as a home management blog, MAIDforME was formally registered as an entity to conduct business in domestic staffing. Created the first resource - Chore Schedule.

## 2019 First training

Launched our first-of-its-kind training “LifeMaidEasy” - designed for employers and staff to participate simultaneously, each with tailored learning slides on the same topic.

## 2020 Ready-made Templates/ Global Training

Launched our editable ready-made templates that employers could purchase, edit and integrate into their homes immediately. Our Re-orientation course for domestic staff during COVID -19 lockdown, was a success as over 100 families from 5 countries registered their staff.

## 2021 More Training

Launched our 4-tier domestic staff training course. From Preparatory to Professional levels



### 3. Training Programs and Onboarding: Upskilling Workers and Employers alike for the Realities of Family life.

#### CONTEXT

Over the years, the training provided to domestic staff have predominantly focused on labour. This is largely due to the long-standing perception of domestic work as a common labour rather than recognizing it as legitimate employment. These trainings have proven to be inadequate in preparing domestic staff for the multifaceted demands of family life.

Since 2019 till present, MAIDforME has taken the initiative to develop over 70 training lessons and a 4-week onboarding program designed to equip domestic workers with not only professional skills but also the social and personal tools necessary to integrate effectively into family life. With much of the hiring population being young, upwardly mobile families, there is a rise in demand for workers who fully understand the dynamics of family life and are adequately prepared to work within the family unit.

We have also developed training programs for hiring employers that prepare them for their domestic worker management; equipping them with skills needed to make themselves and their homes ready for staffing, like setting realistic expectations, creating systems and structure and providing a supportive and respectful work environment for their domestic staff.

***“By preparing workers for their role in family life, we promote smoother relationships between both workers and the families that employ them.”***

### 3. Training Programs and Onboarding: Upskilling Workers and Employers alike for the Realities of Family life.

## PROGRESS

MAIDforME's training courses and onboarding program have impacted hundreds of domestic workers, equipping them with critical skills in areas ranging from physical tasks like housekeeping to other soft skills like effective communication, emotional intelligence and a healthy sense of self.

These programs are designed to ensure that domestic workers are not only competent professionals but also well-rounded individuals who can thrive in their work and personal lives.

During the COVID 19 lockdown in 2020, we successfully organized a virtual reorientation program and trained domestic workers for over 100 families from five African countries virtually.

Our customised 4 -week onboarding program helps domestic workers integrate into family life quickly. By preparing the worker for their role in family life, it promotes smoother relationships between both workers and the families that employ them, resulting in a more positive and enjoyable working environment. It also emphasizes the meaning of their work and connects it to the family's well-being, which is often overlooked.

In 2024, we successfully onboarded 20 domestic staff in it's first launch.

## 4. Standard Operating Manuals (SOM): Setting Defined Work Standards for Domestic Tasks.

### CONTEXT

An informal domestic work sector has over the years meant unclear terms of employment, exploitation of employers and employees alike, and the absence of formalized work contracts and defined job descriptions. This leaves workers vulnerable to unfair treatment and families susceptible to unplanned disruptions in their day to day lives.

In 2018, MAIDforME responded by creating a comprehensive General Household Standard Operating Manual document outlining clear guidelines for domestic work, to help families formalise employment within the four walls of their homes.

### PROGRESS

Since its first creation in 2018, MAIDforME's SO Manual has evolved into an exhaustive document that covers important aspects of domestic work, including hygiene standards, work hours, salary structure, job expectations, security protocols, and disengagement procedures. This document serves as both a guideline and a legally binding contract that ensures both the employer and employee are on the same page regarding the terms of their employment. It outlines the consequences for misconduct and provides guidelines on the use of law enforcement when necessary. This is essential in preventing exploitation or abuse and ensuring that both parties understand the consequences of violating the terms of the agreement. Most importantly, it ensures both parties are aware of the proper procedures for ending the employment relationship.

## 4. Standard Operating Manuals (SOM): Setting Defined Work Standards for Domestic Tasks.

### PROGRESS

It is an excellent tool that significantly improves the working conditions of domestic workers, setting clear expectations and responsibilities from inception for both the employer and the domestic worker. It formalizes the employment relationship, provides clarity, and encourages fairness and mutual respect. All of these align with ILO Convention No. 189 on several fronts.

Making our Standard Operating Manual mainstream has meant normalizing the following in households:

- **Clear Employment Conditions:** Our SO Manual clearly defines aspects such as hygiene, conduct, working hours, salary structure, security, and emergency planning. It ensures that both parties understand the terms of employment and are aware of the specific expectations and responsibilities, creating a transparent work environment.
- **Written Agreement and Signature:** The inclusion of a contract that both the employer and the domestic worker read, understand, and sign is a critical step toward ensuring that employment terms are clear and enforceable. The contract formalizes the expectations outlined in the manual and provides a legal basis for enforcing the terms of the agreement.

# PROGRESS OVERVIEW

## 2022 Employer Training

Developed our training courses on family-life management to educate young families on the realities of family-life and efficient ways to manage household operations.

## 2023 More Resources

Addition of six new resources, further strengthening processes within homes.

## 2024 Onboarding

Launched our 4-week onboarding live virtual class, integrating domestic staff into family life. Onboarded 20 new staff on first launch.

## 2025 New Reach

A goal to serve 20,000 new families across the continent and increase our reach into 10 new African countries. Support domestic staff agencies with resources and models to meet the desired standards.

## 5. Chore Schedules: Structuring Work Hours and Preventing Overwork

### CONTEXT

Without structured and formalised work timings, domestic workers have been doomed to long, unregulated hours with little to no time for rest, leading to exhaustion and burnout. Families have also had to also put in twice as much effort in order to get simple tasks done, often settling for micromanagement, which is a recipe for stress, and which strains the employer-employee relationship.

MAIDforME developed the Chore Schedule to address this critical issue by clearly defining work hours, break times, and sleep periods. And, to free employers to grant their domestic workers some form of autonomy, thereby breaking free from the micromanagement that overarches the servant-master relationship.



***“ Our chore schedule provides a formalized framework for employer and employee to assess performance daily. It’s clarity makes it less likely that domestic staff is asked to do something outside their scope of work. ”***

## 5. Chore Schedules: Structuring Work Hours and Preventing Overwork

### PROGRESS

The first MAIDforME Chore Schedule was introduced in 2018 to ensure that domestic workers have a balanced work-life schedule, with adequate time for rest, meals, and personal activities. The schedule allows families to allocate household tasks fairly across the week and monitor and assess execution easily.

By this, domestic workers can avoid overtime and are not overburdened with tasks beyond what was agreed upon. It also helps set clear boundaries on working hours, provides adequate rest and break times, and ensures that the workers' time is structured and predictable. Being our most purchased tool, the chore schedule has allowed families to operate fairly and implement a more structured approach in their day to day routines at home.

The Chore Schedule divides the tasks agreed upon between the employer and worker over the course of the week, ensuring that the workload is manageable. Because it provides clear documentation of what is expected of the worker in terms of tasks, working hours, breaks, and rest, we have seen this enhance transparency and trust between families and their workers, preventing misunderstandings about the scope of work.

The Chore Schedule supports the fundamental principles of ILO 189, particularly the focus on ensuring that domestic workers are not exploited or overworked, that they have reasonable work hours, adequate rest, and clear expectations about their roles. It helps prevent abuse, enhances work-life balance, and ensures that both the employer and the domestic worker have a shared understanding of the terms of employment.

## 6. Performance Management Template: Normalizing Fair Evaluation on Defined Job Roles

### CONTEXT

The cultural belief of the average African prioritizes relationships over accountability. Families are more inclined to overlook inefficiency and cover up bad behaviour to protect their own, sweeping things under the rug in the name of forgiveness. Over the years, we have seen how these practices have contributed to decadence in the sector, with employers unwilling to assess domestic staff fairly because of the fear of being labelled as “wicked.” While our culture serves us well in certain areas, they can hinder growth in other areas that require fairness, and establishment of standards.

With culture having an enormous influence, domestic workers have also become victims of erratic and biased assessments, leaving them vulnerable to abuse. Many families instinctively do not recognise domestic work as work and therefore assume superiority and ownership over their workers.

MAIDforME’s Performance Management Template was introduced to bridge this gap. We have provided a fair and transparent system for assessing domestic workers based on their defined roles and responsibilities.



*The absence of structured evaluation systems in the ecosystem makes it easy for incompetent domestic staff to be recycled back into unsuspecting families.*



## 6. Performance Management Template: Normalizing Fair Evaluation on Defined Job Roles

### PROGRESS

Since 2022, MAIDforME has developed a tool that enables families to evaluate their domestic workers in a structured and impartial manner. This tool not only facilitates constructive feedback but also ensures that employers can rightfully and transparently state their concerns, and workers are given a fair chance to address concerns raised by employers. It empowers domestic workers by creating a system in which their performance is evaluated based on agreed-upon expectations and standards rather than personal biases.

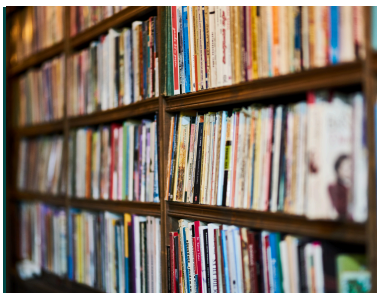
Our tool helps set boundaries around discussions during performance reviews, helping prevent situations where domestic workers might face verbal or emotional abuse under the guise of work-related feedback. Ensuring that these meetings stay focused on job performance, rather than personal issues or unfair treatment, supports a work environment free from abuse and harassment.

We have seen families demand reports from previous employers of domestic staff candidates, thereby enabling them make well-informed hiring decisions. This also points them to areas where a staff will need training and learning support if eventually employed.

A fair evaluation system helps the domestic worker self-reflect and improve on work without constant reminders from employer and opens them up to development opportunities presented to them.

# HIGHLIGHTS

We are leading the transformation of Africa's domestic staffing ecosystem into a professional, well-structured, and impactful industry.



## Resource Library

100 resources available in our home management library spread across different media formats; downloadable docs and audio and video trainings.

## Servicing the Ecosystem

Over 6000 families served in 17 African countries and 4 continents. Reaching domestic staff in Africa, Asia, America and Europe. Trained Agencies in Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt and India.



## Raising the Standard

We have awakened the consciousness of African families to the importance of a professional and structured domestic work industry. Families have raised their standards, prompting other parts of the ecosystem to do same.

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We will educate and empower Africa's domestic staffing ecosystem with trusted, research-backed training and resources that are practical, easy to use, and accessible to all.

## CONCLUSION: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Over the last seven years, MAIDforME has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the standards of domestic work in Africa, despite the visible absence of robust governmental policies and oversight.

We will continue to innovate and drive change within the industry, empowering both families and workers alike with information and tools necessary for engaging with the industry at every level.

We remain dedicated to advocating for domestic work on the continent to be recognized as work and that workers receive the respect and protection they deserve.

We will engage all stakeholders and push for action, so that policies can move from being just a set of guidelines to becoming an implemented standard that is upheld throughout the industry and across all African countries.

We will empower existing domestic work entrepreneurs on the continent by providing them with resources to enhance their systems and achieve the desired standards. Additionally, we will inspire aspiring entrepreneurs who are passionate about this field by offering training and models that ensure their work is ethical, meeting required standards and equally financially rewarding.

In 2025, we have a goal to directly serve 20,000 new families across the continent and increase our reach into 10 new African countries.

We look forward to what the future holds.

Thank you for being a part of this success story.