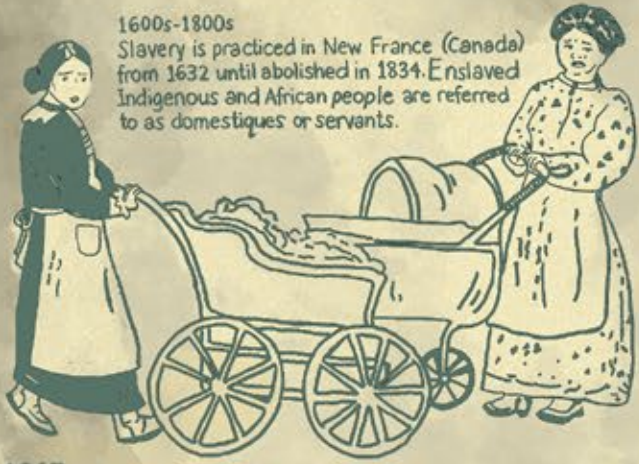


1600s-1800s  
Slavery is practiced in New France (Canada) from 1632 until abolished in 1834. Enslaved Indigenous and African people are referred to as domestiques or servants.



# A VISUAL TIMELINE OF CAREGIVING WORK IN CANADA

by KWENTONG BAYAN COLLECTIVE

1867  
Canada is established on Native land. Some celebrate the birth of a nation, others recognize it as broken treaties, theft of land and resources, and the genocide of Indigenous Peoples.

1900  
Canadian government recruits women from England, Ireland and Finland as nannies and governesses. They are automatically granted permanent residence status.

1910-1911  
First Caribbean Domestic Scheme: 100 women from Guadelupe are recruited to work temporarily in Canada as caregivers. When no longer needed, most are deported.

1945  
After WWII, Canada recruits domestic workers from the British colonies, mainly Jamaica and Barbados. These women receive low pay and no permanent residency.

1955-1966  
Second Caribbean Domestic Scheme: some caregivers allowed to apply for permanent residency after one year of working in Canada.

1973  
Temporary Employment Authorization Scheme: considers caregiving 'low skilled' work and issues domestic workers conditional temporary work permits.

1967  
The Points System: prospective immigrants must pass a points test that privileges skilled and educated workers over others.

“GOOD ENOUGH TO WORK  
GOOD ENOUGH TO STAY”

1979  
In order to meet the high demand for caregivers in Canada, some immigration officials advise women not to declare their children. Seven Jamaican mothers are deported for following this advice. A national protest campaign is launched and the women present their case to the Supreme Court. They win the right to stay in Canada.

1981  
Foreign Domestic Movement: domestic workers with temporary work permits can apply for permanent residency once they complete two years of live-in work.

1992  
Live-in Caregiver Program: domestic workers can apply for permanent residence after two years working in Canada. They must live with their employers. This makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

2001  
Ontario's new Employment Standard Act comes into effect. Domestic workers are granted the same rights as other employees.

2010  
Juana Tejada Law: Eliminates the requirement for live-in caregivers to undergo a second medical examination when applying to become permanent residents. Inspired by the late Juana Tejada, a live-in caregiver who developed cancer and was deemed medically inadmissible as a result.

2014  
Caregiver Program: The live-in requirement is eliminated. Two new pathways are introduced - childcare providers and caregivers of people with high medical needs. Only 2,750 caregivers from each pathway will receive permanent residency each year.

2016  
The Federal government repeals the 4-and-4 rule. Migrant workers from across Canada celebrate the win and continue to demand permanent status on landing for all migrant workers

The struggle continues...



# Caregiving Work in Canada

Poster by Kwentong Bayan Collective  
Introduction by Ethel Tungohan

Canadian families have always relied on domestic workers. This was true before Confederation, when Canadian families used Indigenous and Black women as slaves. This was also true afterwards, when the Canadian government recruited women from overseas to work as domestic workers. Due to its “white settler” policy, the Canadian government recruited British and Western European women to come as domestic workers because they were “mothers of the nation” and gave these women Canadian citizenship. In contrast, in the early and mid-1900s, women from the Caribbean came to Canada and were either individually sponsored by Canadian families or came under the Caribbean Domestic Scheme (CDS). Under the first and second CDS, which respectively took place between 1910 and 1911 and between 1955 and 1966, the Canadian government saw Caribbean “servants” as the beneficiaries of Canadian “generosity.” Most women under the first CDS were deported after their contracts whereas women under the second CDS could only apply for permanent residency (PR) after working for their employers for one year.

While the points-system eradicated racial preferences in immigrant selection, the establishment of the Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP) in 1973 created a hierarchy among migrants. Those who qualified for entry under the points-system were “high-skilled” and were eligible for Canadian citizenship whereas those in “low-skilled” professions such as domestic work could only live and work in Canada on a temporary basis. In response, in 1979 “seven Jamaican mothers” who came to Canada as domestic workers launched a campaign proclaiming that if domestic workers were “good enough to work,” they were “good enough to stay.” As a result, the seven mothers were given the right to stay in Canada. More importantly, their activism garnered the support of other domestic workers and galvanized the Canadian public, leading to the establishment of the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) in 1981, which gave domestic workers the right to apply for PR upon completing a two-year live-in work requirement.

In the ensuing years, domestic workers continued their campaigns for better policies. After the founding of the Live-in Caregiver Program in 1992, domestic workers lobbied for improvements. In 2001, their efforts led the Ontario government to include domestic work in the Employment Standards Act. In 2010, the Juana Tejada law was passed. Inspired by Juana Tejada, a caregiver who was denied PR because she had cancer and was deemed “medically inadmissible,” the law eliminated the required medical test for caregivers who want to apply for PR.

In 2015, because of domestic workers’ lobbying, the live-in requirement was eliminated. Nevertheless, the new Caregiver Program (CP) severely constrained the ability of domestic workers to get PR. Under the CP, caregivers are either “babysitters” or “high-medical needs” workers, and they have to complete language and licensing requirements before being eligible for PR. In addition, a quota of 2,750 applicants in each stream was established, which means that caregivers who fall outside this quota cannot apply for PR. As always, domestic workers are active in contesting these policies.

## Biographies

**Kwentong Bayan** is a collective with a critical and intersectional approach to community-based art, labour, and education. They are developing the comic book, *Kwentong Bayan: Labour of Love*, in close collaboration with caregivers, advocates, and community allies about the real life stories of Filipina/o and Filipinx\* migrant caregivers working in Canada under the Live-in/Caregiver Program. In the Filipino language, “kwentong bayan” is the literal translation of “community stories.” And “Labour of Love” reflects our understanding that both community-based artwork and caregiving work is rooted in love, is valuable, and deserves respect. Website: [lcpcomicbook.com](http://lcpcomicbook.com).

\* We use the terms *Filipino/a*, *Filipin@*, and *Filipinx* to acknowledge fluidity of gender identity in our communities.

**Jo SiMalaya Alcampo** (Writer) is an interdisciplinary artist whose art practice includes community storytelling, interactive installations, and electroacoustic soundscapes. Jo works with Caregiver Connections, Education and Support Organization (CCESO)—an organization that supports migrant caregivers—and is a member of the Kapwa Collective—a mutual support group of Filipinx Canadian artists, critical thinkers, and healers bridging narratives between the Indigenous and the Diasporic, and the Filipino and the Canadian.

**Althea Balmes** (Illustrator) is a multidisciplinary visual storyteller interested in collaborative creative expressions to tell stories and make art. She uses her strong connection to her culture and her place as a diasporic Canadian woman of colour to inspire her work and as a way to connect to others. She teaches visual storytelling workshops throughout Toronto.

**Ethel Tungohan** is an Assistant Professor in Political & Social Science at York University. She is also a community activist and has participated in campaigns seeking justice for temporary foreign workers and caregivers. To read more of her work, [www.tungohan.com](http://www.tungohan.com).

## Further Reading

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## Acknowledgements

The original artwork for this poster was produced by Kwentong Bayan Collective for the *BAYAN Exhibition* at the A Space Gallery with the generous support of our community. See our full acknowledgements on the GHC website.

