

On a recent weekend, Janet took two children she was taking care of home after watching a movie at the cinema. She then cooked lunch, fed them and tucked them in for a nap before cleaning the house.□



Domestic helpers from the Philippines were mostly trained and they worked professionally, unlike most domestic helpers in Việ t Nam. — Photo tienphong.vn

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Janet, 35, is a Filipina who has been working in HCM City as a domestic helper for a Vietnamese family for three years.

She earns US\$600 a month, way more than any Vietnamese domestic helpers. Normally, a Vietnamese could earn \$150-\$200 a month for the same position.

But the difference in the income is because of the differences in skills that employers are asking and paying for.

Lan, Janet's employer, said Janet could also teach her kids basic skills about taking care of themselves, and sometimes even help them with their studying.

"She knows too well what my kids like, what food is good for them. And I have nothing to complain about her housework," Lan said.

H ng, who lives in District 11, HCM City, is also happy with her domestic helper who comes also from the Philippines.

"She's meticulous and careful. She washes clothes of light colour separately. She knows which clothes can be machine-washed or need dry cleaning. And she's professional - never talks about our family with other people," H ng said.

A director of a domestic workers service company in HCM City said domestic helpers from the Philippines were mostly trained and they worked professionally, unlike most domestic helpers in Vi t Nam.

"Of course, not all families can afford the payment for Filipina domestic helpers, which ranges from \$600 to \$850 a month. While Filipina domestics are more professional, the advantage of Vietnamese domestic helpers is that they charge less," he said.

V  Quang Th , director of the Institute of Workers and Trade Unions under the Vi t Nam Labour General Conferderation, said according to the commitment Vi t Nam made under the ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN member countries must open their doors for labourers

in eight occupations.

Domestic workers are not included in these eight occupations, he said.

“Of course, workers who come to Việ t Nam to work are not under international or regional agreements,” Thệ said.

Nguyệ n Thệ Lan Hậ ng, former director of the Institute for Social and Labour Science under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, said while Vietnamese laws said that Việ t Nam only welcomed labourers with high technical skills or artisans to work in the country.

“However, it’s very difficult to identify those with high technical skills or can be defined as artisans,” Hậ ng said.

Thệ said the reality that many families in Việ t Nam preferred domestic workers from other countries could not be ignored.

“Once there is a demand that domestic workers in Việ t Nam can’t satisfy, families will find ways to hire the people they want,” Thệ said.

However, he urged Vietnamese domestic workers to raise their skills level to be competitive.

Thệ suggested opening training class for domestic workers so that they would not only be able to work in Việ t Nam, but could also go and work abroad.

Nguyệ n Đệ c Vệ, vice head of the Employment and Safety Unit of the Hà Nộ i’s Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, said currently foreign domestic workers were not permitted to work in Việ t Nam.

“Of course we can’t conclude that Filipina domestic workers in Việ t Nam are working illegally or not, because they might have many legal papers to support them,” Vñ said, adding that the department might carry out investigations into the matter.

Source: VNS