



How Do Non-Governmental Organizations Influence Socio-Economic Well-Being of Domestic Workers? Empirical Evidence from Community of Volunteers for the World Organization in Tanzania

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Abstract: Domestic work remains one of the most informal, precarious, and underregulated sectors globally, disproportionately employing women and girls from low-income households who face limited social protection, low wages, and systemic barriers to exercising their labor rights. In response, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have increasingly intervened to fill institutional gaps, yet empirical evidence on their measurable influence on workers' socio-economic outcomes remains scarce. This study addresses that gap by investigating how NGO-led interventions shape the working conditions and economic well-being of domestic workers, using the Community of Volunteers for the World Organization (CVM) in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania, as a case study. A cross-sectional research design was employed, collecting data from 134 domestic workers (97 CVM members and 37 non-members) through structured surveys and interviews. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used to compare group characteristics, while a multiple linear regression model assessed the causal effect of specific CVM training programs on monthly wages. The results reveal stark disparities between members and non-members: 44.3% of CVM members held written employment contracts compared to none among non-members; 21.6% of members earned above TZS 50,000 monthly versus only 2.7% of non-members; and 81.4% of members demonstrated awareness of their rights, compared to just 8.1% of non-members. Critically, regression analysis showed that training in childcare ($\beta = 3,839.690$, $p < 0.01$) and house management ($\beta = 5,819.638$, $p < 0.05$) were significant positive predictors of monthly wages, translating into tangible economic gains for trained workers. These findings provide robust empirical evidence that NGO-led training programs and organizational membership significantly enhance formalization, rights awareness, and wage outcomes. The study contributes to labor and development literature by empirically isolating the causal mechanisms through which civil society organizations improve informal sector livelihoods. It concludes that NGOs like CVM play a transformative role in empowering domestic workers through skills development and advocacy. It is recommended that the government and development partners institutionalize support for such NGO-led training initiatives and promote written employment contracts to formalize and protect the domestic work sector.

Keywords: Non-governmental organizations, Domestic workers, Socio-economic well-being, Skills training, Tanzania

1. Background Information

Globally, domestic work occupies a unique and precarious position within the labour market, frequently characterized as informal, low-status, and systematically excluded from the protective frameworks afforded to formal employment (Vadageri & Soundari, 2016; Pereira-Kotze *et al.*, 2022). This sector is predominantly composed of women and girls from low-income households, who, driven by economic necessity, often accept employment under conditions that violate fundamental labour standards (Slupska *et al.*, 2022;

Rajanna, 2020). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that domestic workers enter the workforce at a young age, possess limited formal education, and consequently lack the structural power to bargain for their rights or negotiate safe working environments (Spitzer *et al.*, 2023; Adom-Asamoah *et al.*, 2016). This vulnerability is further compounded by the nature of domestic work itself, which is frequently characterized by excessive working hours; often exceeding 15 hours per day; physical and psychological violence, and wages that fall below



government-mandated minimums (Olsson, 2016; Matheka *et al.*, 2020; Musizvingoza *et al.*, 2022). Scholars have drawn critical parallels between domestic work and modern slavery, underscoring the extreme exploitation embedded within the sector (Blagbrough, 2008; Makalabundi *et al.*, 2021a).

The structural informality of domestic work poses a significant barrier to collective representation. In developing nations, trade unions and formal worker organizations have historically struggled to organize domestic workers, leaving them with minimal institutional support to challenge exploitative conditions (Kele & Nyanga, 2023; Steiler, 2023). This institutional void has, however, created space for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to emerge as key actors in the struggle for domestic workers' rights. Over the past two decades, NGOs have increasingly assumed roles traditionally held by unions, advocating for policy reform, delivering rights-based education, and providing direct services such as skills training and legal aid (Cherubini *et al.*, 2018; Cirillo, 2023). In Tanzania, these organizations have become critical intermediaries, working to bridge the gap between informal workers and formal systems of protection (Kerega, 2019; Klocker, 2011).

One such organization is the Community of Volunteers for the World Organization (CVM), which has been active in Morogoro Municipal since 2019. CVM focuses on empowering domestic workers through training programs aimed at enhancing skills in childcare, house management, and health safety, while simultaneously promoting awareness of legal rights and facilitating linkages with trade unions and government institutions. Despite the proliferation of such interventions, there remains a notable gap in empirical research that quantitatively assesses their influence on the socio-economic well-being of domestic workers. Existing studies have documented the challenges and vulnerabilities of domestic workers (Shagembe *et al.*, 2023; Matheka *et al.*, 2020), yet few have systematically evaluated how NGO-led initiatives translate into measurable improvements in working conditions, wages, and empowerment outcomes.

The present study addresses this gap by investigating the influence of CVM's interventions on the socio-economic well-being of domestic workers in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania. Drawing on empowerment theory, which suggests that increasing individuals' skills, knowledge, and access to resources enhances their capacity for self-determination and negotiation (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000; Miedema *et al.*, 2018), this study hypothesizes that CVM's training and advocacy activities contribute to improved working conditions and wage outcomes for its members. Henceforth, by comparing members and non-members of CVM, this research provides empirical evidence on the role of NGOs in promoting formalization, rights

awareness, and economic advancement within the informal domestic work sector.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in empowerment theory, which provides a robust lens for understanding how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) influence the socio-economic well-being of domestic workers. Empowerment theory, as articulated by Perkins and Zimmerman (1995), conceptualizes empowerment as a process through which individuals, organizations, and communities gain control over their lives, access resources, and develop the capacity to participate in decisions that affect them. Unlike traditional deficit-based models that focus on vulnerability, empowerment theory emphasizes strengths, competencies, and the potential for transformation when individuals are provided with appropriate opportunities, skills, and support systems (Zimmerman, 2000).

Empowerment operates at multiple interconnected levels: individual, organizational, and community (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). At the *individual level*, empowerment involves the development of self-efficacy, critical consciousness, and practical skills that enable individuals to act autonomously and advocate for their interests. For domestic workers, this translates into acquiring knowledge about their legal rights, developing competencies in childcare and house management, and gaining the confidence to negotiate better working conditions and wages (Miedema *et al.*, 2018). At the *organizational level*, empowerment refers to the structures and processes within institutions like the Community of Volunteers for the World Organization (CVM) that facilitate collective action, resource mobilization, and advocacy. At the *community level*, empowerment encompasses broader social and policy changes that create enabling environments for marginalized groups.

Zimmerman (2000) further elaborates that empowerment is not merely an outcome but a dynamic process involving access to resources, opportunities for skill development, and the exercise of agency. The theory posits that individuals who are marginalized due to structural factors; such as low education, poverty, or informal employment; can achieve improved well-being when provided with targeted interventions that enhance their capabilities and expand their access to social, economic, and political resources (Miedema *et al.*, 2018). This perspective aligns with the capabilities approach, which emphasizes that development should be measured by the expansion of people's freedoms and abilities to live lives they have reason to value.

Applying empowerment theory to the context of domestic workers in Tanzania, this study posits that CVM serves as a critical empowerment agent. The organization delivers

training programs designed to enhance domestic workers' practical skills in childcare, house management, health safety, and legal rights awareness. These interventions are hypothesized to increase workers' bargaining power, leading to improved employment conditions, including written contracts, higher wages, and greater job security. Furthermore, by facilitating linkages with trade unions and government institutions, CVM contributes to organizational empowerment, creating pathways for collective advocacy and institutional recognition of domestic workers' rights (Steiler, 2023; Cirillo, 2023).

The theoretical framework guiding this study (Figure 1) illustrates the hypothesized relationships between CVM's interventions and the socio-economic well-being of domestic workers. The model posits that CVM's training and advocacy activities serve as empowerment inputs that enhance domestic workers' skills, knowledge, and rights awareness. These intermediate empowerment outcomes are expected to translate into improved working conditions, including formalized employment contracts and increased bargaining power, ultimately leading to enhanced socio-economic well-being as measured by higher monthly wages and improved quality of life. The framework acknowledges that demographic characteristics; such as age, education, and work experience; may influence the extent to which domestic workers benefit from empowerment interventions.

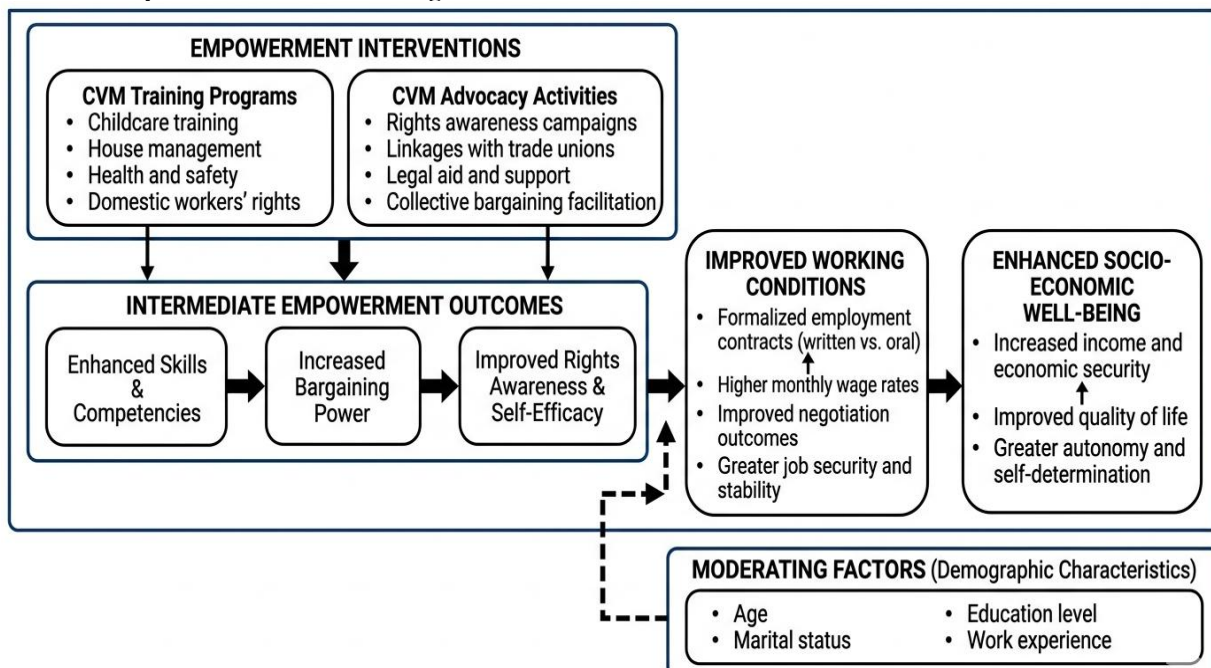
levels, and rights awareness; that serve as indicators of empowerment processes and outcomes. Consistent with empowerment theory, the study hypothesizes that domestic workers who participate in CVM's training programs will demonstrate improved working conditions and higher wages compared to non-members, reflecting the transformative potential of NGO-led empowerment interventions.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Morogoro Municipal, one of the six districts of Morogoro Region in eastern Tanzania. Morogoro Municipal serves as the administrative and commercial hub of the region, located approximately 200 kilometers west of Dar es Salaam along the central transport corridor. The municipality is characterized by a mix of urban and peri-urban settlements, with a rapidly growing population driven by rural-urban migration. According to the 2022 National Population and Housing Census, Morogoro Municipal has a population of approximately 471,409 residents, with a significant proportion engaged in informal sector activities, including domestic work (United Republic of Tanzania, 2022). The municipality was purposively selected for this study due to the presence of the Community of Volunteers for the World Organization (CVM), which has been actively implementing interventions targeting domestic workers in the area since 2019.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Linking CVM Interventions to Domestic Workers' Socio-Economic Well-Being

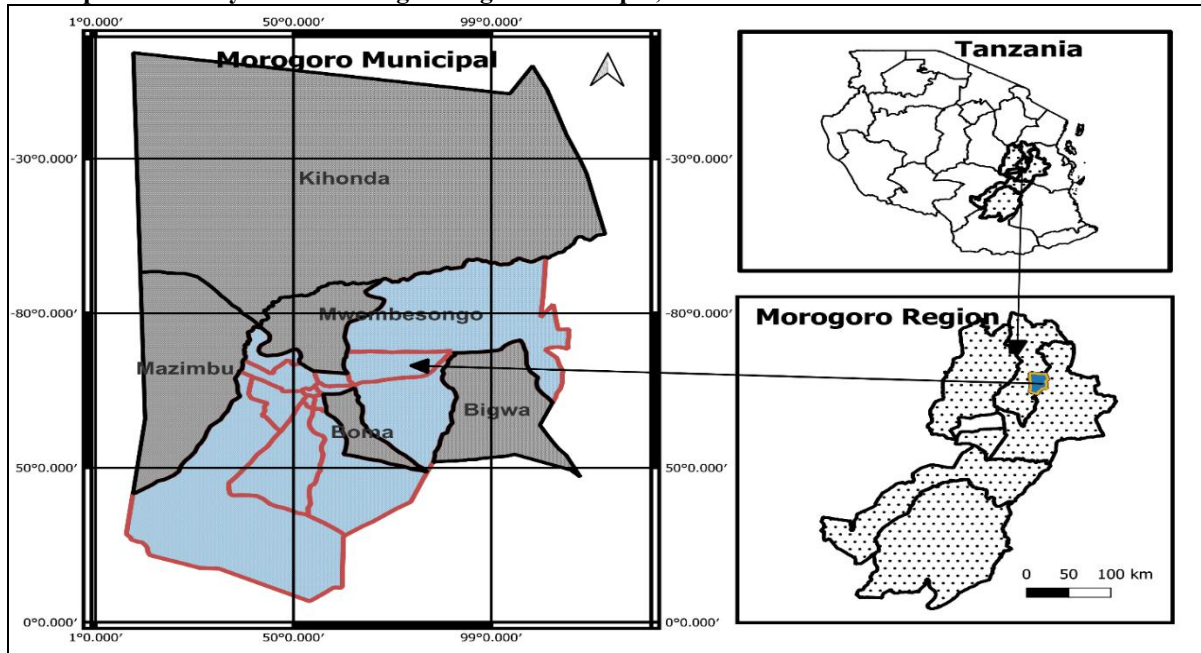


Source: Adapted from Perkins and Zimmerman (1995); Zimmerman (2000)

The conceptual model depicted in Figure 1 operationalizes empowerment theory by specifying the causal pathways through which CVM's interventions are expected to influence domestic workers' outcomes. The framework guides the empirical analysis by identifying key variables; including training participation, contract formalization, wage

Figure 2 presents the geographical location of the study area, illustrating Morogoro Municipal's strategic position within Tanzania and its accessibility from Dar es Salaam, the country's largest city and a major source of labor migration for domestic work.

Figure 2: Map of the Study Area Showing Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania



Source: Authors' construction (2026) based on Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics spatial data

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional research design, which is appropriate for examining the characteristics, behaviors, and outcomes of a specific population at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design enabled the comparison of domestic workers who were members of CVM with those who were non-members, allowing for the assessment of differences in working conditions, training participation, and socio-economic outcomes. The cross-sectional approach is particularly suited for studies seeking to establish associations between organizational membership and well-being indicators, as it facilitates the simultaneous collection of data on multiple variables across a representative sample (Kothari, 2004).

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

The target population comprised domestic workers operating within Morogoro Municipal. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques was employed to select study participants. Purposive sampling was used to identify domestic workers who were registered members of CVM, leveraging the organization's membership records and outreach programs. Convenience sampling was subsequently applied to recruit non-member domestic workers from comparable neighborhoods to ensure comparability across the two groups.

The sample size was determined based on the total number of domestic workers registered with CVM in Morogoro Municipal at the time of data collection, which was approximately 120 members. Using a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, a minimum sample of 92 members was recommended (Yamane, 1967). However, to account for potential non-response and incomplete data, the study targeted 100 CVM members. For non-members, a

proportional sample of 40 domestic workers was targeted to facilitate comparative analysis. Ultimately, complete data were collected from 134 domestic workers, comprising 97 CVM members (81.7% response rate) and 37 non-members (92.5% response rate). The final sample sizes were deemed sufficient for descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including multiple linear regression, which typically requires a minimum of 10 cases per independent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

3.4 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Primary data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview guides. The survey questionnaire was designed to capture information on respondents' demographic characteristics (age, education level, marital status, household size, and work experience), employment conditions (contract type, working hours, wage levels), training participation (type and frequency of training received from CVM), rights awareness, and bargaining behavior. The questionnaire was initially developed in English, translated into Swahili for ease of administration, and back-translated to ensure linguistic accuracy and conceptual equivalence (Brislin, 1986).

Data collection was conducted over a period of three months, from June to August 2025. Trained research assistants administered the survey through face-to-face interviews at locations convenient to respondents, including CVM meeting venues and domestic workers' places of employment. Each interview session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. In addition to the quantitative survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 purposively selected domestic workers (5 members and 5 non-members) to gather qualitative insights into their lived experiences, challenges,



and perceptions of CVM’s interventions. These qualitative data were used to triangulate and enrich the quantitative findings.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Analytical Framework

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 (IBM Corp., 2017). The analytical framework employed both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and employment-related variables. The findings were presented in tabular and graphical formats to facilitate interpretation.

Inferential statistical analysis involved two main approaches. First, chi-square (χ^2) tests were employed to examine associations between categorical variables, specifically comparing CVM members and non-members across demographic characteristics and working conditions. The chi-square test is appropriate for determining whether observed differences between groups are statistically significant (Field, 2018). Second, a multiple linear regression model was used to examine the relationship between CVM's training interventions and domestic workers' monthly wages, controlling for other potential confounding factors.

- x_2 = Training in childcare (binary)
- x_3 = Training on health and safety (binary)
- x_4 = Training on domestic workers' rights (binary)
- z_1 = Age category (binary)
- z_2 = Education level (categorical)
- z_3 = Work experience (categorical)
- z_4 = CVM membership (binary)
- β_0 = Constant term
- β_1 to β_8 = Regression coefficients
- ε = Error term

The regression model was estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS) with robust standard errors to address potential heteroscedasticity. Model diagnostics, including tests for multicollinearity (variance inflation factor) and normality of residuals, were conducted to ensure the validity of the regression estimates (Gujarati & Porter, 2009). Statistical significance was assessed at the 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10 levels.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the Sokoine University of Agriculture Research Ethics Committee (Reference No. SUA/DPPM/REC/2025/042). Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with detailed information about

Table 1: Analytical Framework: Variables, Measurement, and Expected Signs

Variable	Measurement	Expected Sign
Dependent Variable		
Monthly wage (Y)	Continuous: Monthly wage in Tanzanian Shillings (TZS)	
Independent Variables		
Training in house management (x_1)	Categorical: 1 = Yes, 0 = No	+
Training in childcare (x_2)	Categorical: 1 = Yes, 0 = No	+
Training on health and safety (x_3)	Categorical: 1 = Yes, 0 = No	+
Training on domestic workers' rights (x_4)	Categorical: 1 = Yes, 0 = No	+
Control Variables		
Age	Categorical: Below 18 years, 18 years and above	+
Education level	Categorical: No formal, Primary, Secondary, Post-secondary	+
Work experience	Categorical: Less than 1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, Above 10 years	+
Membership to CVM	Categorical: 1 = Member, 0 = Non-member	+

Source: Authors' construction (2026)

Table 1 presents the analytical framework guiding the empirical analysis, specifying the variables included in the multiple linear regression model, their measurement scales, and the expected direction of their influence on monthly wages. The multiple linear regression model was specified as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_5 z_1 + \beta_6 z_2 + \beta_7 z_3 + \beta_8 z_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Monthly wage (TZS)
- x_1 = Training in house management (binary)

the study’s purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants aged 18 years and above. For participants under 18 years (n=36), parental or guardian consent was obtained in addition to the minor's assent. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence, and all data were anonymized to protect confidentiality.



4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, organized thematically to address the research objectives. The results are integrated with discussion to provide contextual interpretation and scholarly engagement with existing literature. The analysis compares domestic workers who are members of the Community of Volunteers for the World Organization (CVM) with non-members across demographic characteristics, working conditions, and wage determinants. Table numbering begins from Table 2, consistent with the preceding methodology section where Table 1 was presented.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Domestic Workers

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the 134 domestic workers surveyed, disaggregated by CVM membership status. The findings reveal notable differences between members and non-members across key demographic variables, suggesting that organizational membership may be associated with distinct population characteristics.

of slavery (Blagbrough, 2008; Makalabundi *et al.*, 2021a). Thi *et al.* (2022) similarly found that young domestic workers face heightened risks of violence and exploitation, reinforcing the importance of age-focused interventions.

Regarding educational attainment, the majority of respondents across both groups had completed primary education (67.6% of non-members, 60.8% of members), with secondary education more prevalent among members (32.0%) than non-members (21.6%). However, these differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.92$, $p = 0.178$). The predominance of primary education as the highest level of attainment reflects the broader pattern of limited educational access among informal sector workers in Tanzania (Kerega, 2019). Kamalulil and Panatik (2022) noted that primary education, while limited, provides foundational literacy and numeracy skills that can support self-determination and basic rights awareness among domestic workers.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Domestic Workers by CVM Membership Status (n=134)

Variable	Description	Membership to CVM		Chi-square (p-value)
		No (n=37)	Yes (n=97)	
		n (%)	n (%)	
Age category	Above 18 years	16 (43.2)	82 (84.5)	$\chi^2 = 18.47$, $p < 0.001$
	Below 18 years	21 (56.8)	15 (15.5)	
Education level	No formal education	4 (10.8)	6 (6.2)	$\chi^2 = 4.92$, $p = 0.178$
	Primary education	25 (67.6)	59 (60.8)	
	Secondary education	8 (21.6)	31 (32.0)	
	Post-secondary	0 (0.0)	1 (1.0)	
Marital status	Single	37 (100.0)	94 (96.9)	$\chi^2 = 2.31$, $p = 0.315$
	Married	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	
	Separated	0 (0.0)	1 (1.0)	
Work experience	Less than a year	6 (16.2)	7 (7.2)	$\chi^2 = 3.26$, $p = 0.353$
	1–5 years	25 (67.6)	71 (73.2)	
	6–10 years	5 (13.5)	17 (17.5)	
	Above 10 years	1 (2.7)	2 (2.1)	

Source: Field survey data (2025)

As shown in Table 2, a significantly higher proportion of CVM members (84.5%) were aged 18 years and above, compared to non-members (43.2%). This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 18.47$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that CVM's interventions may be targeted toward or more effectively reach adult domestic workers of legal working age. This finding aligns with the organization's mandate to promote ethical employment practices and combat child labor, as documented in the literature on child domestic work (Blagbrough, 2008; Gamlin *et al.*, 2015). The presence of underage workers (56.8% among non-members) underscores the persistent challenge of child domestic labor in Tanzania, a phenomenon that has been characterized as a modern form

Marital status showed little variation, with the overwhelming majority of respondents being single (100% of non-members, 96.9% of members). This finding diverges from studies in other contexts, such as Pokale *et al.* (2021) and Thiruvassagam *et al.* (2019), who reported higher proportions of married domestic workers in India and Malawi, respectively, often due to the dual responsibilities of family care and income generation. The predominance of single status in this study may reflect the demographic profile of domestic workers in Morogoro, who are typically young, unmarried women seeking economic independence before marriage (Klocker, 2011).



Work experience was concentrated in the 1–5 years category for both groups (67.6% of non-members, 73.2% of members), with no statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 3.26, p = 0.353$). The relatively short work experience among most domestic workers suggests high turnover, which may be attributable to the precarious nature of domestic work, including low wages, long working hours, and limited job security (Kele & Nyanga, 2023). Guantai (2020) found that work experience is significantly correlated with wage earnings among domestic workers in Nairobi, suggesting that tenure in the sector may contribute to productivity and bargaining power over time.

4.2 Working Conditions and Empowerment Outcomes

Table 3 presents a comparative analysis of working conditions and empowerment indicators between CVM members and non-members. The findings reveal stark disparities across multiple dimensions, suggesting that organizational membership is associated with more formalized employment arrangements, greater access to training, enhanced rights awareness, and improved bargaining capacity.

agreements predominate and workers remain vulnerable to arbitrary changes in employment terms, wage theft, and dismissal without cause (Steiler, 2023).

Wage disparities between the two groups were also statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 12.03, p = 0.002$). Although the majority of both groups earned between TZS 30,000 and 50,000 monthly; substantially below the government-stipulated minimum wage for domestic services; a higher proportion of CVM members (21.6%) earned above TZS 50,000 compared to non-members (2.7%). Moreover, no CVM member earned below TZS 30,000, whereas 10.8% of non-members fell into this lowest wage category. These findings suggest that CVM membership may confer wage advantages, potentially through enhanced bargaining capacity and skills development (Adom-Asamoah *et al.*, 2016; Makalabundi *et al.*, 2021b).

Training participation demonstrated the most pronounced disparities between groups. Among CVM members, 80.4% had received house management training, 62.9% childcare training, and 82.5% domestic workers' rights training. In contrast, no non-member reported having received any of

Table 3: Working Conditions and Empowerment Indicators by CVM Membership Status (n=134)

Variable	Category	Membership to CVM		Chi-square (p-value)
		No (n=37)	Yes (n=97)	
		n (%)	n (%)	
Contract format	Oral	37 (100.0)	54 (55.7)	$\chi^2 = 29.34, p < 0.001$
	Written	0 (0.0)	43 (44.3)	
Monthly wage	Below TZS 30,000	4 (10.8)	0 (0.0)	$\chi^2 = 12.03, p = 0.002$
	TZS 30,000–50,000	32 (86.5)	76 (78.4)	
	Above TZS 50,000	1 (2.7)	21 (21.6)	
House management training	No	37 (100.0)	19 (19.6)	$\chi^2 = 99.12, p < 0.001$
	Yes	0 (0.0)	78 (80.4)	
Childcare training	No	37 (100.0)	36 (37.1)	$\chi^2 = 78.45, p < 0.001$
	Yes	0 (0.0)	61 (62.9)	
Domestic workers' rights training	No	37 (100.0)	17 (17.5)	$\chi^2 = 105.86, p < 0.001$
	Yes	0 (0.0)	80 (82.5)	
Awareness of domestic rights	No	34 (91.9)	18 (18.6)	$\chi^2 = 57.24, p < 0.001$
	Yes	3 (8.1)	79 (81.4)	
Wage bargaining behavior	No	22 (59.5)	44 (45.4)	$\chi^2 = 2.18, p = 0.140$
	Yes	15 (40.5)	53 (54.6)	

Source: Field survey data (2025)

Table 3 reveals that contract formalization is significantly associated with CVM membership. While all non-members (100%) relied on oral employment contracts, 44.3% of CVM members held written contracts ($\chi^2 = 29.34, p < 0.001$). Written contracts provide clearer terms of employment, including job descriptions, working hours, and wage agreements, and serve as a critical mechanism for protecting workers' rights (Demarso & Abba, 2020). The absence of written contracts among non-members reflects the deeply informal nature of domestic work in Tanzania, where verbal

these trainings. These differences were all statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. The training programs delivered by CVM represent a critical empowerment mechanism, equipping domestic workers with practical skills that enhance their employability and job performance, as well as knowledge of their legal rights (Anusuya *et al.*, 2022). The absence of such training among non-members underscores the limited access to skills development opportunities for informal workers who are not affiliated with advocacy organizations.



Rights awareness was dramatically higher among CVM members, with 81.4% reporting awareness of domestic workers' rights compared to only 8.1% of non-members ($\chi^2 = 57.24, p < 0.001$). This finding highlights the critical role of organizations like CVM in educating domestic workers about their legal entitlements, including minimum wage provisions, working hour limits, and protections against violence and exploitation (Cirillo, 2023). The low awareness among non-members reflects the limited reach of rights education initiatives and the persistent information asymmetries that perpetuate exploitation in the informal sector (Spitzer et al., 2023).

While wage bargaining behavior did not differ significantly between groups ($\chi^2 = 2.18, p = 0.140$), a higher proportion of CVM members (54.6%) reported bargaining for their wages compared to non-members (40.5%). The lack of statistical significance may be attributable to the small sample size of non-members or the influence of unobserved factors such as personality traits or employer characteristics (Shroff, 2019). Nonetheless, the observed pattern aligns with the theoretical expectation that empowerment interventions enhance workers' self-efficacy and negotiation capacity (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

4.3 Determinants of Domestic Workers' Monthly Wages

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis examining the determinants of monthly wages among domestic workers. The model includes four training variables, CVM membership, and demographic controls, with robust standard errors to address heteroscedasticity. The model was statistically significant ($F = 2.523, p = 0.044$), though the R-squared value of 0.073 indicates that the included variables explain approximately 7.3% of the variance in monthly wages, suggesting that other unobserved factors, such as employer characteristics, geographic location, or individual bargaining ability, also influence wage outcomes.

As shown in Table 4, training in childcare emerged as a statistically significant positive predictor of monthly wages ($\beta = 3,839.690, p < 0.05$). This finding indicates that domestic workers who received childcare training through CVM earned, on average, TZS 3,840 more per month than those without such training, holding other factors constant. Similarly, training in house management was a statistically significant positive predictor ($\beta = 5,819.638, p < 0.10$).

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression Results: Determinants of Monthly Wages (n=134)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig. 95% Confidence Interval		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
	B	Std. Error					
(Constant)	33641.561	5413.339	6.215	0.000	22880.143	44402.979	
Training on health and safety	330.134	2933.740	0.113	0.911	-5478.043	6138.311	
Training on childcare	3839.690	2616.513	1.674	0.014*	-1345.578	9024.958	
Training in house management	5819.638	2946.795	1.975	0.050*	-15.536	11654.812	
Training on domestic workers' rights	3105.729	2909.868	1.067	0.288	-2655.420	8866.878	
CVM membership	1843.762	3568.293	0.517	0.606	-5225.682	8913.206	
Age (reference: Below 18 years)							
Above 18 years	-2292.377	3661.247	-0.626	0.532	-9545.906	4961.152	
Education (reference: No formal)							
Primary education	1912.308	3441.300	0.556	0.579	-4905.804	8730.420	
Secondary education	-3192.829	4102.700	-0.778	0.438	-11307.567	4921.909	
Post-secondary education	-10419.761	14577.082	-0.715	0.476	-39296.251	18456.729	
Work experience (reference: Less than a year)							
1-5 years	-1092.236	3389.236	-0.322	0.748	-7807.422	5622.950	
6-10 years	1949.438	4148.406	0.470	0.639	-6269.685	10168.561	
Above 10 years	-3622.497	9149.240	-0.396	0.693	-21753.440	14508.446	
Model Summary							
F-value						2.523	
Model significance						0.044	
R-squared						0.073	
Adjusted R-squared						0.013	

Source: Field survey data (2025)

*Note: * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05, p < 0.10$



suggesting that domestic workers who completed house management training earned approximately TZS 5,820 more monthly than their untrained counterparts.

These results underscore the tangible economic benefits of skills development interventions for domestic workers. Childcare and house management represent core competencies in domestic work, and enhanced proficiency in these areas likely increases workers' perceived value to employers, enabling them to command higher wages (Achyut et al., 2023). The findings align with human capital theory, which posits that investments in skills development yield returns in the form of increased productivity and earnings (Becker, 1964). In the context of informal labor markets where formal credentials are often absent, practical skills serve as critical signals of competence and reliability (Guantai, 2020).

Conversely, training on health and safety ($\beta = 330.134$, $p = 0.911$) and training on domestic workers' rights ($\beta = 3,105.729$, $p = 0.288$) were not statistically significant predictors of wages. The non-significance of rights training may reflect the fact that awareness of legal entitlements does not automatically translate into wage improvements, particularly in contexts where enforcement mechanisms are weak and employers wield disproportionate power (Spitzer et al., 2023). Similarly, health and safety training, while valuable for preventing workplace injuries and illnesses, may not be directly compensated through wage premiums in informal employment arrangements (Pereira-Kotze et al., 2022).

CVM membership itself was not a statistically significant predictor of wages when controlling for training variables ($\beta = 1,843.762$, $p = 0.606$). This suggests that the wage advantages associated with CVM membership are mediated primarily through participation in specific training programs, particularly childcare and house management. This finding reinforces the theoretical framework posited earlier, which conceptualized training as the primary mechanism through which organizational membership translates into improved socio-economic outcomes (Zimmerman, 2000).

None of the demographic control variables; age, education level, or work experience; emerged as statistically significant predictors of wages. The lack of significance for education may be attributable to the limited variability in educational attainment among the sample, with the majority having completed only primary education. Similarly, the non-significance of work experience may reflect the relatively short tenure of most domestic workers or the limited returns to experience in a sector characterized by flat wage structures and limited opportunities for advancement (Guantai, 2020; Kele & Nyanga, 2023).

4.4 Theoretical Implications

The findings collectively support the study's theoretical framework, grounded in empowerment theory (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). CVM's interventions; particularly skills training in childcare and house management; function as empowerment inputs that enhance domestic workers' human capital and bargaining capacity. These intermediate empowerment outcomes translate into improved working conditions, including higher wages and more formalized employment arrangements. The stark disparities between members and non-members across multiple indicators; contract formalization, wage levels, training participation, and rights awareness; provide compelling evidence of the transformative potential of NGO-led empowerment interventions in the informal sector.

The findings also align with broader scholarship on the role of civil society organizations in advancing labor rights among marginalized workers. In contexts where state enforcement of labor standards is weak and trade union representation is limited, NGOs serve as critical intermediaries, providing education, advocacy, and direct services that fill institutional gaps (Cherubini et al., 2018; Cirillo, 2023; Steiler, 2023). The case of CVM in Morogoro demonstrates that targeted, skills-based interventions can yield measurable improvements in the socio-economic well-being of domestic workers, contributing to the formalization and professionalization of a historically undervalued and exploited sector.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This study set out to empirically investigate the influence of non-governmental organizations on the socio-economic well-being of domestic workers in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania, using the Community of Volunteers for the World Organization (CVM) as a case study. Drawing on empowerment theory as the guiding analytical framework, the research compared domestic workers who were members of CVM with non-members across demographic characteristics, working conditions, and wage outcomes, while employing multiple linear regression to isolate the causal effects of specific training interventions on monthly earnings. The findings provide compelling empirical evidence that NGO-led interventions; particularly skills-based training in childcare and house management; significantly enhance domestic workers' economic outcomes, with trained workers earning, on average, TZS 3,840 and TZS 5,820 more per month, respectively, than their untrained counterparts. Moreover, membership in CVM was associated with substantially improved working conditions, including a 44.3% rate of written employment contracts compared to none among non-members, a 21.6% rate of wages above TZS 50,000 compared to only 2.7% among non-members, and an 81.4% level of rights awareness compared to a mere 8.1% among non-members. These disparities underscore the



transformative potential of organized civil society interventions in addressing the structural vulnerabilities that characterize informal domestic work.

From an empirical perspective, this study makes several important contributions to the literature on informal labor, empowerment, and NGO effectiveness. First, it provides quantitative evidence that specific training components; childcare and house management; yield measurable wage premiums, thereby validating human capital theory in the context of informal sector employment. The non-significance of rights training on wages, despite its strong association with awareness, suggests a critical distinction between knowledge acquisition and economic empowerment, highlighting the need for interventions that not only inform workers of their rights but also equip them with the practical skills and bargaining power necessary to claim those rights in contexts of unequal employer-worker power dynamics. Second, the finding that CVM membership alone was not a significant predictor of wages when controlling for training variables indicates that the economic benefits of organizational affiliation are mediated through tangible skills development rather than mere associational membership, a nuanced insight that carries important implications for the design and evaluation of NGO programs targeting marginalized workers. Third, the stark demographic differences between members and non-members; particularly the concentration of underage workers among non-members; suggests that NGOs may inadvertently serve populations that are already relatively advantaged, raising important questions about reach, equity, and the need for targeted outreach to the most vulnerable segments of the domestic worker population, including children, those with no formal education, and those with limited social networks.

The policy implications of these findings are equally significant. At the national level, the government of Tanzania, through the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Community Development, should recognize and institutionalize support for NGO-led training programs as a cost-effective strategy for formalizing the domestic work sector and improving labor outcomes. Rather than viewing NGOs as peripheral actors, policymakers should integrate successful interventions, such as CVM's training modules on childcare and house management; into broader national employment strategies, potentially through public-private partnerships, subsidized training vouchers, or recognition of NGO certifications within the national qualifications framework. The adoption of written employment contracts, which were virtually absent among non-members but present among nearly half of CVM members, should be actively promoted through employer education campaigns, simplified contract templates, and, where feasible, regulatory incentives such as tax benefits for employers who formalize domestic work arrangements. Such measures would align with the

principles of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), which Tanzania ratified in 2013, yet has struggled to implement effectively at the local level.

At the municipal level, local government authorities in Morogoro and other urban centers should collaborate with NGOs like CVM to expand the reach of training programs beyond existing organizational members to include non-member domestic workers, particularly those in the most precarious circumstances; underage workers, those with no formal education, and those earning below the minimum wage. The findings of this study suggest that non-members are disproportionately concentrated in these vulnerable categories, indicating both a gap in service delivery and an opportunity for targeted intervention. Municipal councils could allocate resources to support mobile training units, evening or weekend training sessions to accommodate workers' schedules, and outreach campaigns that leverage community networks to reach workers who are not affiliated with any organization. Furthermore, local governments should establish mechanisms for monitoring compliance with labor standards in domestic work, including wage floors, working hour limits, and contract requirements, with NGOs serving as critical partners in both enforcement and worker education.

For civil society organizations operating in the domestic work sector, the findings underscore the importance of prioritizing practical, skills-based training components that directly enhance workers' economic value and bargaining position. While rights awareness remains essential for fostering workers' critical consciousness and agency, the evidence suggests that rights training alone does not translate into wage gains; rather, it must be complemented by demonstrable skill development that workers can leverage in negotiations with employers. Organizations should also consider expanding their reach to include the most marginalized domestic workers, who are currently underrepresented in membership rolls, through targeted recruitment strategies, removal of barriers to participation such as membership fees or meeting times that conflict with work schedules, and partnerships with community-based organizations that have existing relationships with these populations. Additionally, NGOs should systematically collect and analyze disaggregated data on their members' characteristics to ensure that their interventions are reaching those most in need and to continuously refine their programming based on empirical evidence of what works.

Finally, this study recommends that future research extend the analytical framework employed here to other geographical contexts and to a broader range of NGO interventions, employing longitudinal designs that can establish causal relationships more definitively than the cross-sectional approach used in this study. Mixed-methods



research that combines quantitative wage analysis with qualitative exploration of employers' perspectives on training and formalization would provide valuable insights into the demand-side factors that shape wage determination in domestic work. Additionally, future studies should examine the sustainability of NGO-led empowerment interventions over time, including whether wage gains persist after training, whether trained workers experience improvements in other dimensions of well-being such as health, job satisfaction, and social status, and whether organizational membership fosters lasting collective action capabilities that extend beyond individual-level outcomes. The findings of such research would contribute to a growing evidence base on the role of civil society in advancing social justice and economic inclusion for the world's most marginalized workers, informing both policy and practice in the ongoing struggle to recognize domestic work as real work worthy of dignity, protection, and fair compensation.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

We are hereby declaring that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the research and findings presented in this paper.

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