

GATES

Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey

Lead Community & Academic Organizations



From 'Migrant' to 'Citizen':

Learning from the Experiences of Former Caregivers Transitioning
out of the Live-in Caregiver Program

GATES Preliminary Analysis
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Canada 

The Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey (GATES) is a community-led national survey of 631 current and former live-in caregivers in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa and Montreal, with financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. GATES was initiated in 2011 by former live-in caregivers in Gabriela Ontario to gather information about the experiences of the Filipina women who are transitioning to life as Canadians after completing their Live-In Caregiver Program requirements.

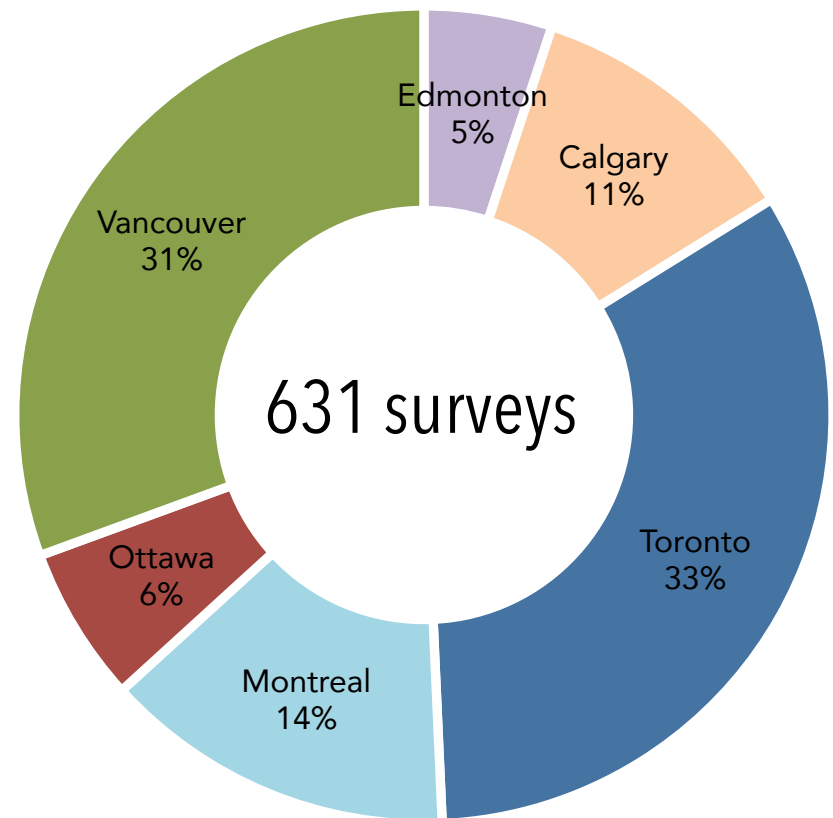
Lead Research Organizations

GABRIELA Ontario
Ryerson University
York University

Cities

Vancouver	Edmonton
Calgary	Ottawa
Toronto	Montreal

- In-person paper survey between December 2012 and December 2013 of 631 Filipina women who arrived through the LCP and have an open work permit, permanent residency, or Canadian citizenship.
- Topics include employment, recruitment, education, use of community supports and health.
- 55 in-depth focus groups discussing caregivers' personal transition experiences.



There is the expectation among policymakers and live-in caregivers that live-in caregivers' lives in Canada improve upon the acquisition of Canadian permanent residency and Canadian citizenship. However, we know from previous studies that newcomers to Canada face barriers to their integration, such as the devaluation of foreign education and work experience as well as issues of family separation. GATES is the first large-scale study in Canada to systematically investigate the barriers impeding live-in caregivers' settlement in Canada.

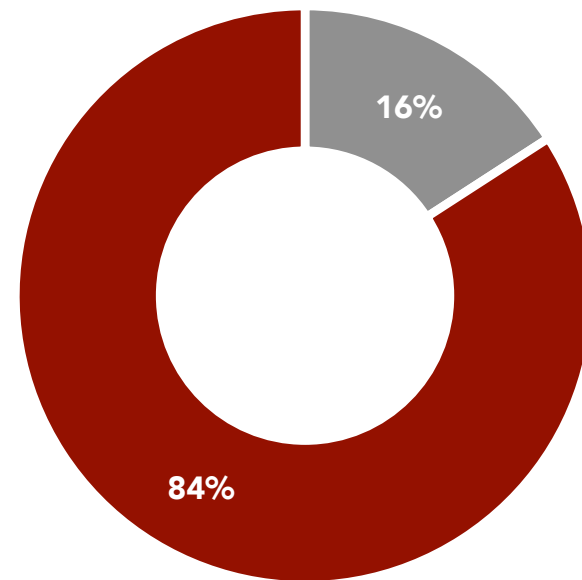
Key Research Questions

1. What is the demographic profile of former live-in caregivers?
2. How were they recruited to come into Canada?
3. How long did it take for their permanent residency applications to get processed?
4. What factors prevent former live-in caregivers from integrating fully into Canada?
5. What is the occupational profile of former live-in caregivers? What are their career goals?
6. How do live-in caregivers' family members fare in Canada?

Live-in caregivers enter Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), which was established in 1992. They are sponsored by Canadian families to provide care for children, the elderly and disabled individuals. Caregivers are required to live and work with their employers for a period of 24 months, after which they can apply for permanent residency for themselves and their families. While waiting for the results of their permanent residency applications, live-in caregivers receive an open work permit that allows them to find jobs outside of care work.

The average of age of caregivers when arriving in Canada is 34 years. Overwhelmingly, caregivers are highly educated. There are many reasons why live-in caregivers come to Canada. All of our participants said that the main reason they came to Canada was to avail of better economic opportunities and to get a better life for themselves and their children.

Highest Educational Attainment in Philippines

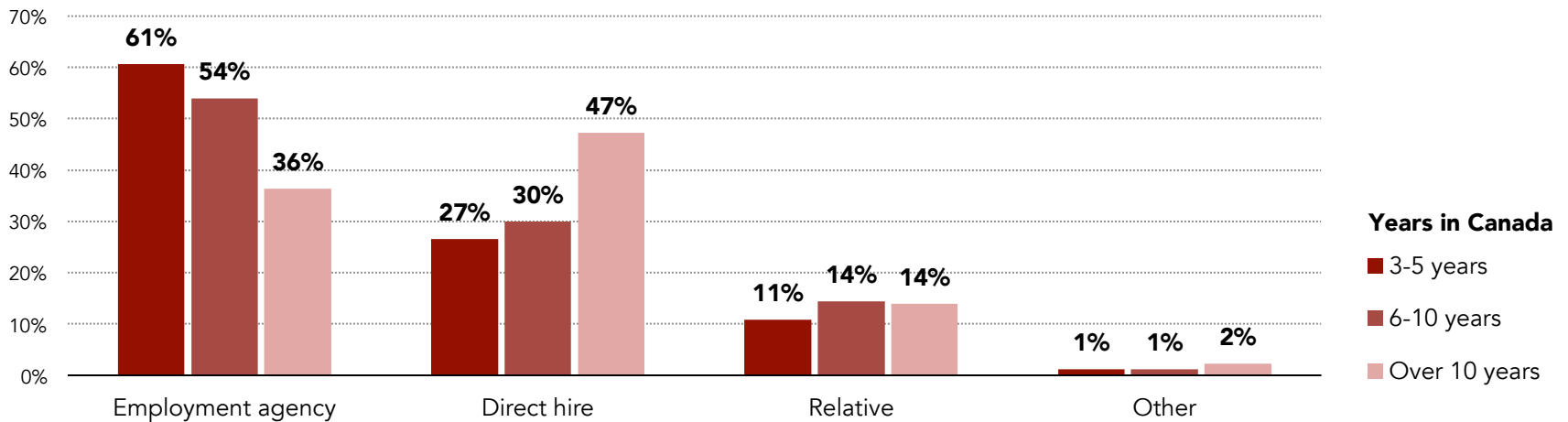


■ High School or Less ■ University or Higher

Source: Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey

The vast majority of recent caregivers arrive in Canada through employment agencies. The next largest recruitment category is through a direct hire by an employer, not including relatives. Only 1 in 10 caregivers in the last 5 years were recruited by family members.

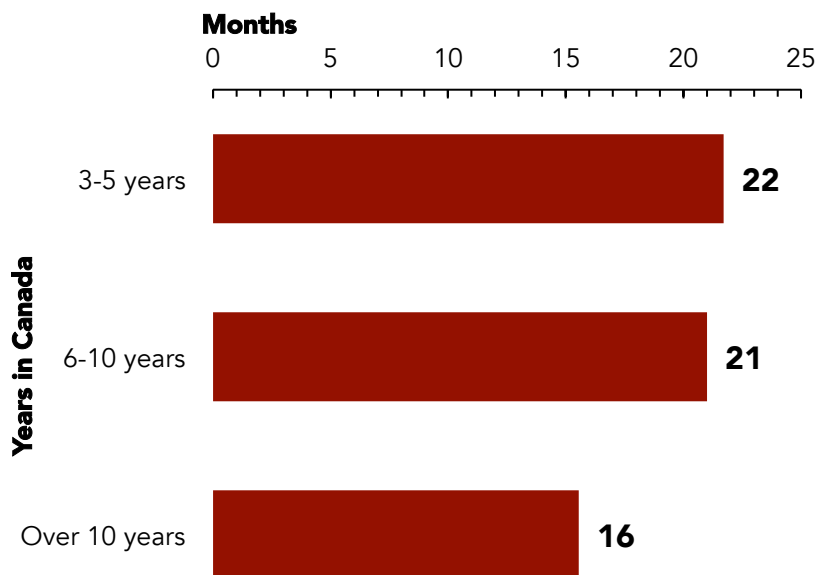
Method of Recruitment



Source: Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey

How long do caregivers have to wait to receive permanent residency?

Average Length of Time to Process Permanent Residency Application



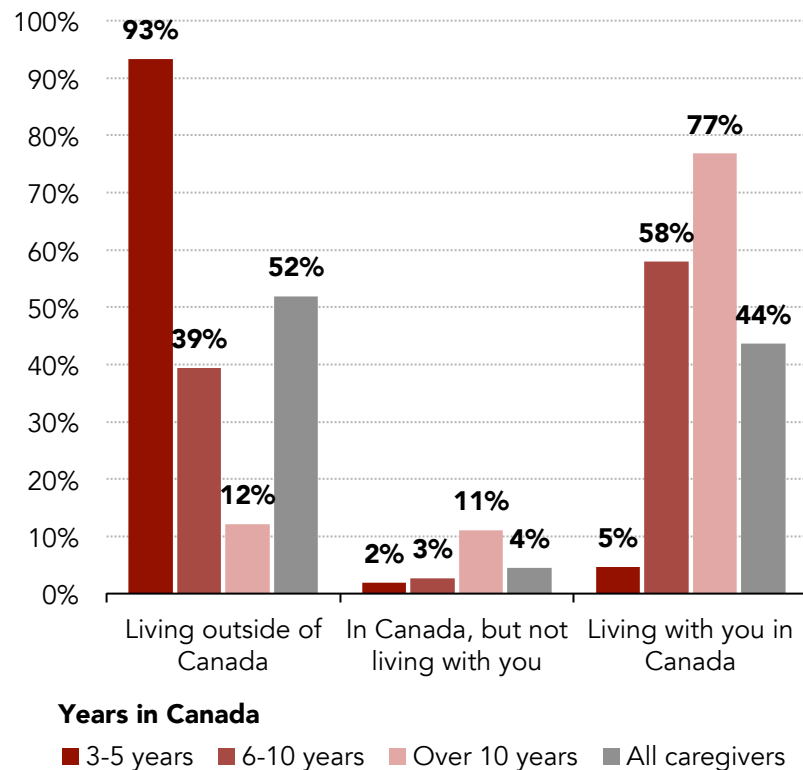
Source: Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey

After working as a live-in caregiver for 24 months, caregivers are eligible to apply for permanent residency. Survey respondents report waiting an average of 19 months before their permanent residency application was fully processed. For recent caregivers (3-5 years in Canada), the average waiting time was higher at 22 months.

Administrative data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada shows that processing times have continued to worsen over time. According to CIC open data files, the processing time for permanent residency applications for those in the LCP has increased 86% in the last 4 years, from a median wait time of 14 months in 2009 to 26 months in 2013.

Live-in caregivers spoke in great detail about the difficulties of family separation. Two-thirds (67%) of the caregivers surveyed have children. More concerning, just over half (52%) of these women said that they continue to be separated from their children.

Living Arrangements of Children



Source: Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey

Select feedback from focus groups:

“The thing is, for me, what I keep thinking about are my children. This is the main reason for why I do this. If it's just me and my husband, we can live a good life in the Philippines. But our children? You need to give them the best education, the best of everything...so I am ok with this. I never want my children to go through what I did. I am ok staying here even if it's hard.” (Toronto focus group participant, who has been apart from her family for six years).”

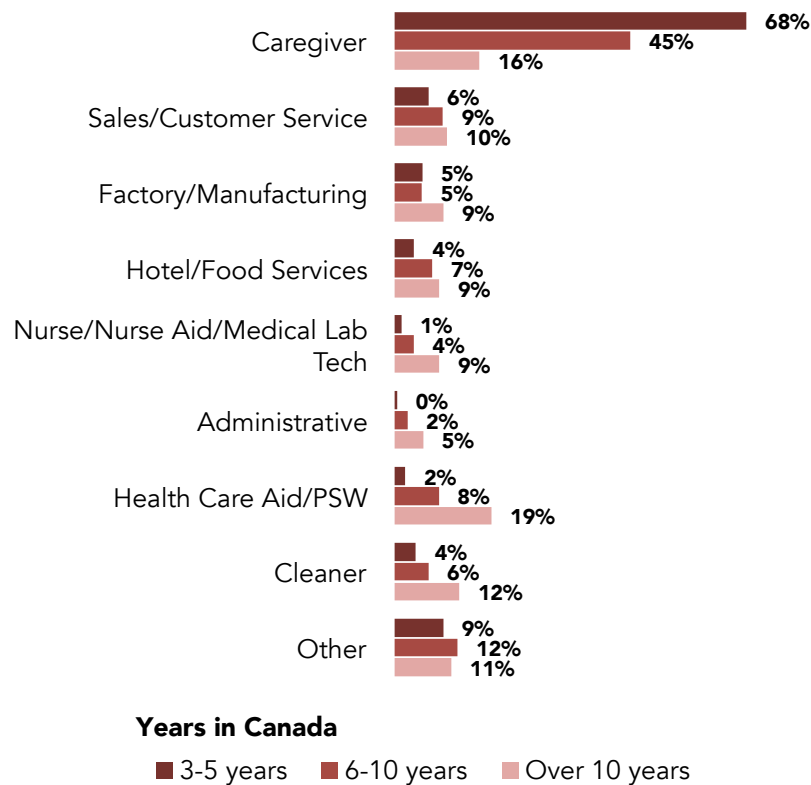
“But I am having a hard time anticipating what will happen when my family gets here. Of course, I am sure that the kids will go through culture shock and I do not want to compare them with me. I am stronger than them, I am older. I am ok, but I am worried about my kids.” (Vancouver focus group participant, who has been apart from her family for ten years).”

Source: GATES Focus Group Respondents

Transition Experiences: Lack of Occupational Mobility

Another key issue raised in the study is former live-in caregivers' lack of occupational mobility despite their advanced educational credentials. 68% remain working as caregivers 3 to 5 years after leaving the program. Because most caregiving positions do not provide benefits and lack security, caregivers are placed in a precarious employment situation. A pathway to providing caregivers with occupational security is providing them with easier access to training and certification courses while still under the LCP. A number of caregivers indicated that jobs that give higher wages and provide greater security, such as being Health Aides or Personal Support Workers, increasingly require training and certification courses, which they are forbidden from taking while under the LCP.

Current Occupation in Canada



Source: Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey

1. The 24 month live-in work requirement that ties live-in caregivers to their employers exacerbates live-in caregivers' vulnerability.
2. Prohibitions against live-in caregivers' ability to take part-time courses while under the LCP increases deskilling.
3. There are higher barriers to entry for live-in caregivers entering the job market because of the stigma associated with live-in care work.
4. Extended periods of family separation and the difficulties of family reunification impede the integration of live-in caregivers and their families to Canada.
5.
 - a. There is a lack of settlement services geared for live-in caregivers.
 - b. Inconvenient locations and hours make it difficult for live-in caregivers to access these services.

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