



**when
rights
are
left**

e n g l i s h

key stage 3 classroom materials

Slavery in Today's World

Common characteristics distinguish slavery from other human rights violations.

Today a slave is:

Forced to work through mental or physical threat and/or abuse

Owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or threatened abuse

Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'

Physically constrained or has restrictions placed on their freedom of movement

The types of slavery that exist today include:

Bonded labour

A person becomes bonded when their labour is demanded as means of repayment of a loan, and they are then tricked into a cycle of debt and forced to continue working. Most bonded labourers live under the threat of violence.

Forced labour

Affects people who are illegally recruited by governments, political parties or private individuals, and involuntarily forced to work, usually under threat of violence or another penalty.

Worst forms of child labour

Refers to the most exploitative forms of child labour. These include jobs where children work in hazardous conditions, where they are given little or no payment, where they live in isolation from their family, where they are physically or mentally abused. This includes the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Trafficking

The transport and trade of humans, usually women or children, for economic gain. Traffickers usually lure their victims into slave labour through trickery and deception.

Traditional or 'chattel' slavery

In some countries people are still bought and sold as commodities. They are sometimes abducted from their homes, inherited, or given as gifts.

Human Rights Education in practice

Human rights education has been defined as the effort, through the combination of content and process, to develop in students of all ages an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, to sensitise them to the rights of others, and to encourage responsible action to safeguard the rights of all in school and in the wider world.

It is built on key values which underpin responsible action and are universally agreed through the Declarations and Conventions which make up human rights law. It also makes explicit those aspects of daily life where rights and responsibilities are secure and protected in addition to those that are infringed, in the UK and elsewhere.

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With thanks to funders: OXFAM, Europe Aid and Mercers' Company

With thanks to: Education in Human Rights Network, Trocaire, Amnesty International, Christian Aid, Martine Miel & Matt Gross

Also available in the When Rights are Left series: English, Geography & History



Background to Migrant Domestic Work

'When I arrived in London I was locked inside the house. I had no key of my own and I could not go out. They told me not to go out of the house and not to let anybody inside. I was afraid to do anything. I wanted to leave them but I was afraid of what the family could do to me. I was also afraid to run away because I did not know anybody here in London. I did not know of anybody who could help me.'

A former domestic worker

Domestic work in private households is an accepted part of life in countries across Europe. Most of the work is carried out by women and it can be demanding work, requiring a variety of skills. Many domestic workers have migrated to Europe from developing countries, leaving their homes in an attempt to escape a life of poverty. They dream of earning enough money to help support their families, often to pay for their children's education.

Once in Europe, these women are at the mercy of their employers. Kalayaan, an organisation set up to assist migrant domestic workers, reports that employers exploit workers in a variety of ways, including:

Restrictions on freedom of movement:

Confiscating a domestic worker's passport, making it impossible for her to leave.
A passport gives proof of a legal visa and work permit.

Forced isolation:

Refusing to let a domestic worker leave the house
Preventing domestic workers from contacting family and friends

Lack of remuneration:

Refusing to pay wages, or claiming to pay wages into a non-existent bank account

Dehumanising treatment:

Physical and mental abuse
Lack of food
Forcing domestic workers to live in poor conditions, such as sleeping on the kitchen floor

Kalayaan, meaning 'freedom', was established in 1987.

It campaigns for the rights of domestic workers, and also provides practical support to women who are facing abuse and exploitation.

The organisation currently has a membership of 4,000 workers from 30 different nationalities.

activity 1

“Sticks and stones may break my bones...”

Aim:

this activity examines how words can be used to undermine someone, and to make them feel inferior. In this instance it acts as an introduction to thinking about contemporary slavery.

You will need:

a copy of the UDHR for each member of the class

Method:

Start by talking to the class about whether they agree with the saying: 'sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me'

- ▶ How can words harm a person?
- ▶ When and why do people use nasty names or words?
- ▶ How does it feel when someone calls you nasty names?
- ▶ Is it the word that has the ability to hurt you, or is it the way a word is used?
- ▶ Discuss the idea that words take on meaning according to who uses them, and what relationship is between the two people

Read out, or give out the two quotes on page 3:

The quotes are from a woman and a girl who came to the UK to work as domestic workers.

They managed to escape from their employers and were lucky enough to be put in contact with 'Kalayaan', a charity that helps women working as migrant domestic workers.

Discussion points:

- ? Discuss the names that Jennifer and Alice were called. Are the words themselves abusive? What makes them abusive?
- ? Describe the relationship between the women and their employers.
- ? How do you think they felt when they were called these names?
- ? Do you think they told their employers how they felt? Why?
- ? What do you think would happen if the women called their employers these names?

"I was often so tired I fell asleep over my food. I was not allowed to eat until they had finished and then I was only allowed to eat what they left. If I did not work fast enough they shouted at me and called me slave and dog. Always they threatened to kill me if something went wrong."

Jennifer, aged 14, from Sierra Leone

"If they passed me I had to bow. I could never be seated in their presence. They did not use my name, only bad words like 'You, Dog', or 'Donkey', or, if I was close and they wanted something, they just tugged my hair and pointed."

Alice, aged 25, from the Philippines

Background:

Migrant domestic workers

These are real case studies. The women were migrant domestic workers, so they were brought from other countries to work for families in the UK. They were on call twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. They were not allowed out of the house, and were completely at the mercy of their employers. These two women were physically and mentally abused but were afraid to run away, because they had no money and didn't know who to turn to for help.

These women were treated as slaves. They had to work without pay or time off, suffering physical and mental abuse. They had no means of controlling their own lives, and no freedom of movement.

Follow-on work:

- ▶ Draw two columns, at the top of left hand column write 'domestic worker', at the top of the right hand column write 'employer'.
- ▶ In the first column write words that describe the feelings and thoughts that the Jennifer or Alice might have for their employers.
- ▶ In the second column write words explaining the thoughts and feelings of the employer towards the domestic worker.
- ▶ Discuss the words written. Draw out the idea that the employer does not see the domestic worker as an equal.

Summary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

E V E R Y

Articles

1. Is born free and should be treated in the same way
2. Is equal despite differences in language, sex, colour, belief, nationality
3. Has the right to life and to live in freedom and safety
4. Has the right not to be held in slavery
5. Has the right not to be hurt or tortured
6. Has the right to be recognised before the law
7. Has the right to be treated equally before the law
8. Has the right to ask for legal help when their rights are not respected
9. Has the right not to be arrested or imprisoned unjustly, or exiled
10. Has the right to a fair trial
11. Has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
12. Has the right to privacy
13. Has the right to travel within and to and from their own country
14. Has the right to asylum in another country to escape persecution
15. Has the right to a nationality

O N E

is...

16. Has the right to choose whom they marry and have a family life
17. Has the right to own property
18. Has the right to freedom of thought and belief
19. Has the right to freedom of opinion and expression
20. Has the right to meet with others
21. Has the right to take part in government and to vote
22. Has the right to social security
23. Has the right to work, equal pay, safe working conditions, and the right to join a trade union
24. Has the right to rest and leisure, including holidays
25. Has the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, shelter, clothing, and medical help
26. Has the right to education
27. Has the right to take part in their community's cultural life
28. Is entitled to a social and international order that is necessary for these rights to be realised
29. Has the right to take on the responsibilities necessary to respect the rights of others
30. No one has the right to perform an act aimed at the destruction of any of these rights

activity 2

Hidden Feelings

Aim:

to think about communication, and the difference between people's public and private thoughts and feelings.

This activity is to prepare students for Activity 3 when they will be exploring the role of journalists.

You will need:

a copy of the case study and the 'bubbles' sheet for each member of the class.

Method:

- ▶ Give out a copy of the case study and a copy of the 'bubbles' sheet
- ▶ Ask students to read the case study and then to fill in Mary's thoughts and speech bubbles on the work sheet.

Follow-on work

Write a diary entry for a day in the life of Mary. You could then write a diary entry for the employer, or the employer's daughter to show another perspective.



child domestic workers, Benin, West Africa. Credit: ESAM

Discussion points:

- ? How much does Mary say about her true feelings?
- ? Why might Mary hide what she is feeling?
- ? What reasons might the family give to justify their treatment of Mary?
- ? Do you think the family would treat Mary differently if they knew how she felt? Why?
- ? How would you feel if you were in Mary's position?

Mary was born in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Her father died when she was seven years old and her mother was left looking after six children. Although she worked very hard, growing and selling vegetables, Mary's mother could not afford to look after all her children.

A man at the market heard about her situation, and suggested that she send one of her children to work abroad. He said that the child would receive an education and earn enough money to help support the family. Mary's mother hated the idea of sending one of children away, but she knew that it was for the best. When Mary heard about the plan she was very nervous, but she was excited by the idea of seeing another country, and going to school.

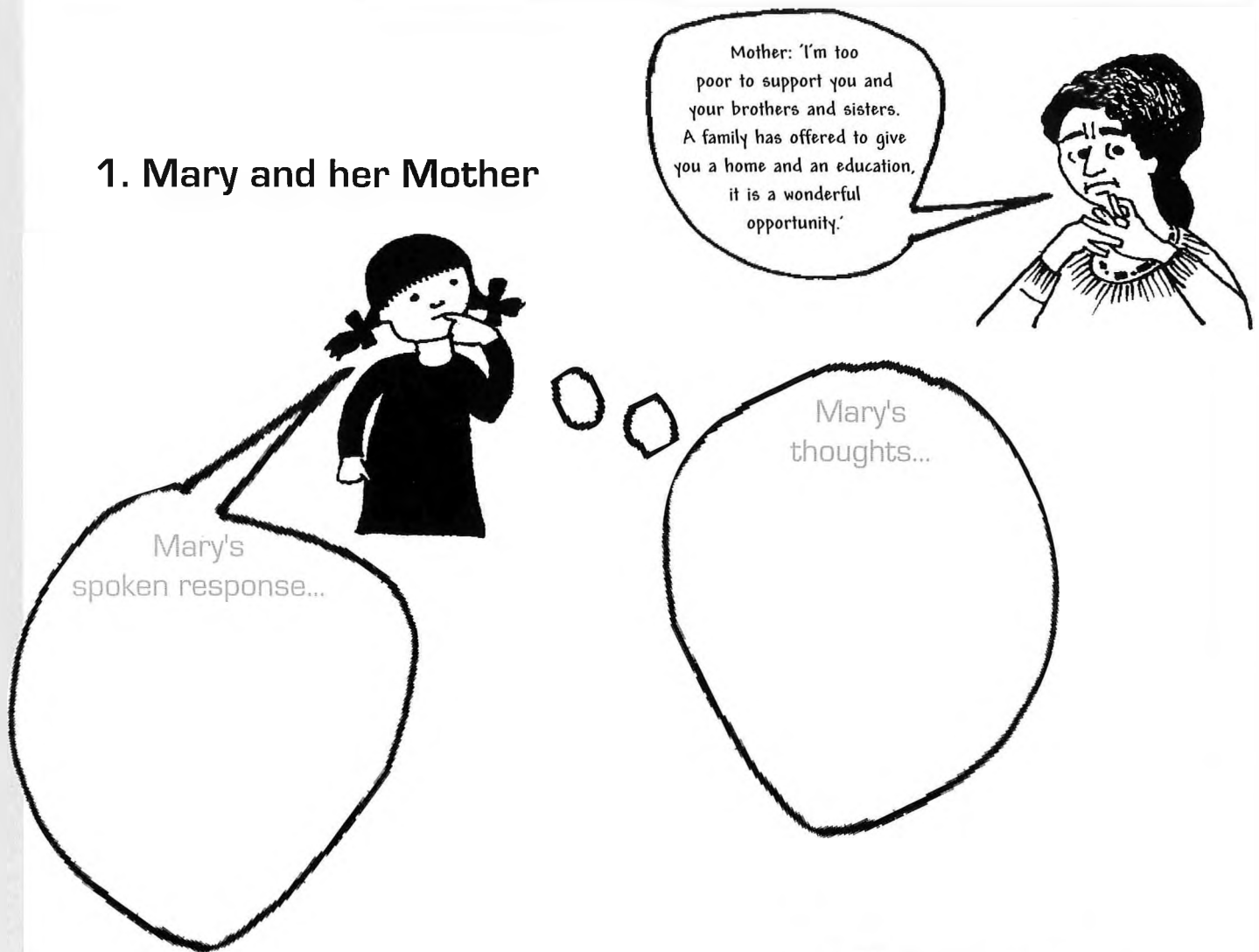
The man from the market took Mary to the airport and they flew to Beirut in the Lebanon. It was the first time Mary had left home, and the first time she had been on an aeroplane. She had not realised how far Beirut was from her home.

In Beirut people spoke a different language and wore different clothes, Mary felt very home sick. She was taken to a house and told it was her new home, but the family she lived with did not treat her like a daughter. Instead they made her work day and night, cleaning, washing, cooking and looking after the children.

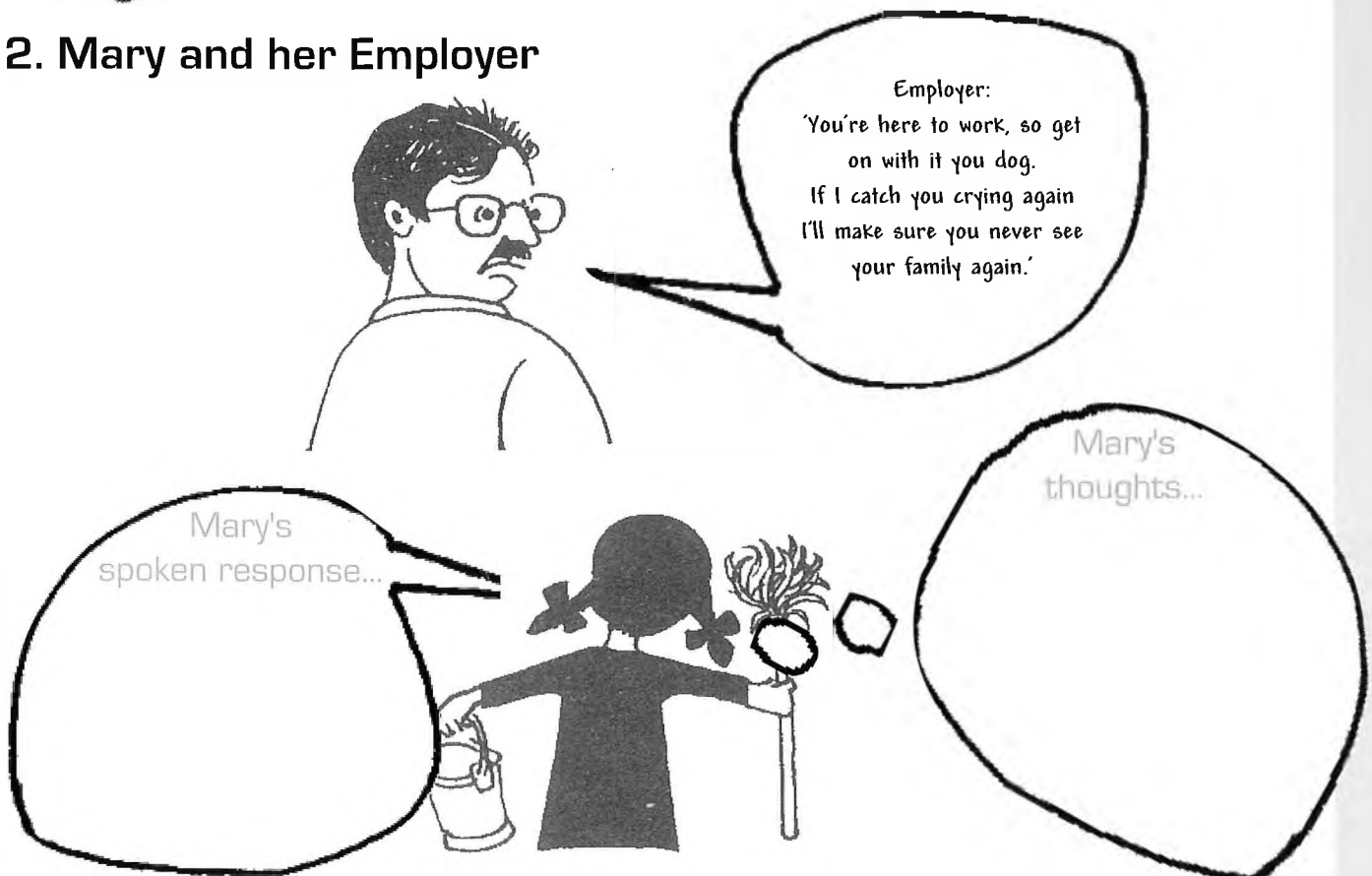
Every day began at 5.30am, and often she was still working at 1.30 in the morning. She was not allowed to eat until the family had finished their food, and was only allowed to eat their leftovers. If she did not work fast enough, or made a mistake, her mistress shouted at her. Sometimes the mistress beat Mary with a broom. She was not allowed out of the house, she had no friends and had no idea how to contact her family. She was never paid a penny, and when she asked about her education, the father laughed and hit her on the face for "being rude".

When she was fourteen, the family brought her to London, to work for them in their new house. She felt even more home sick than before, the people she watched out of the windows of the house looked so different from back home. She gave up all hope of ever seeing her family again.

1. Mary and her Mother

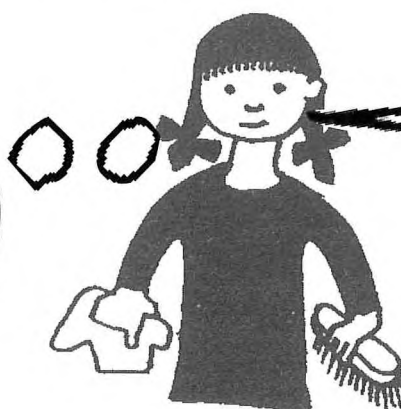
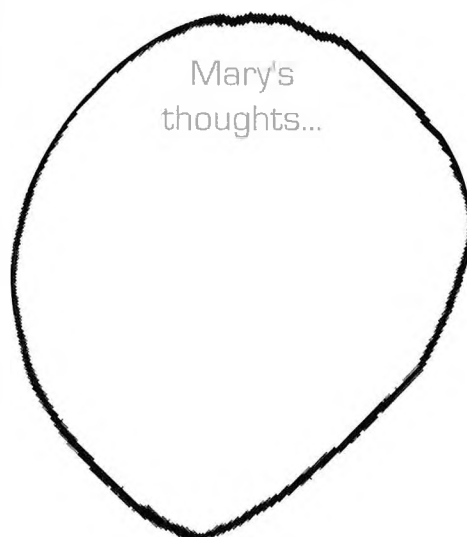
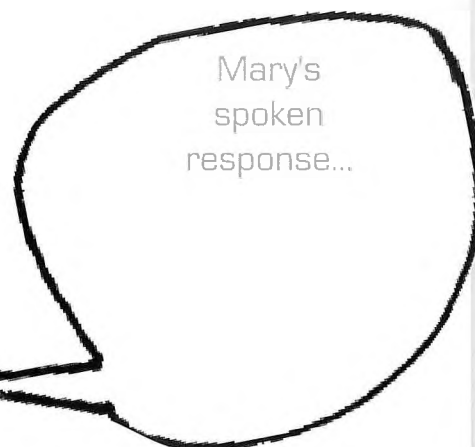
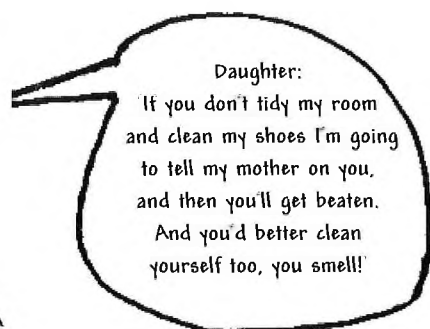


2. Mary and her Employer

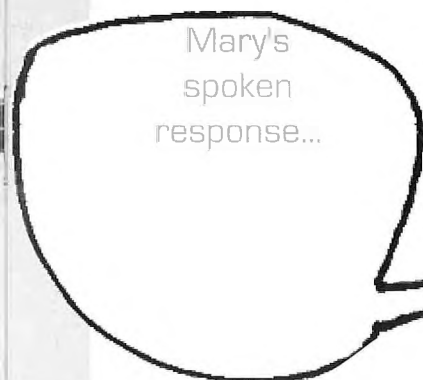
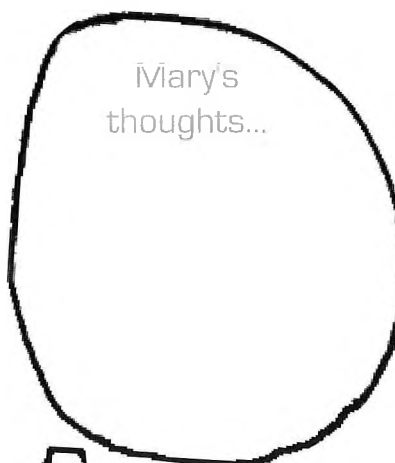


Illustrations by Clive Offley, taken from
Child Domestic Workers: A Handbook for
Research & Action, Anti-Slavery 1996

3. Mary and the daughter of the family



4. Mary and a friend of the employer



activity 3

What's the story?

Aim:

to think about the objective nature of journalism, and the difficulties journalists face when trying to uncover the truth about a situation.

Do journalists always get the real story?

When journalists interview someone how can they tell whether they're telling the truth?

Are people always honest about their thoughts and feelings? Sometimes people say what they think they should say, like in the previous activity, their true thoughts and feelings remain hidden.

You will need:

5 copies of Mary's case study

Method:

- ▶ They then decide which of the headlines they are going to use, and which characters from the case study they are going to interview. They may include their own ideas for characters whom they want to interview.
- ▶ They then decide on what questions to ask. There should be five questions, starting with each of the following:

what/when/how/where/who
- ▶ The journalists may interview characters individually or together.

Headlines:

1. **Domestic Work is Dangerous and can Result in Slavery**
2. **Rich Families Help Poor Children in Need of Work**
3. **Migrant Workers take Jobs from British People**
4. **Poverty Leads to the Break-up of Families**

Discussion points:

- ? Which headlines were chosen and why? Which of the headlines is most likely to appear in the news? Why?
- ? What were the differences in the interviews? Why did they come about?
- ? What are the differences between interviewing people individually or in a group, e.g. does Mary give different answers according to whether she is interviewed alone or with her employer?
- ? Do you think the answers reflect the true feelings of the characters?
- ? Do you think the journalist gained a realistic view of Mary's situation?
- ? Do you think professional journalists always gain a realistic view of a situation?



Word cycle

(worksheet overleaf)

Aim:

to practice word association and think of vocabulary that relates to slavery and freedom

You will need:

3 copies of the oval sheets for each member of the class

Method:

- ▶ Start by writing the word **'freedom'** in the oval at the top, then think of related words and write them in the following ovals.
- ▶ Next write the word **'slavery'** in the first oval and again, think of related words.
- ▶ Finally write **'slavery'** in the oval at the top, and think of words that will take you from **'slavery'** to **'freedom'**, so that the last word you write is **'freedom'**.
- ▶ Now write a poem about slavery and/or freedom, using the words you have written.

The worksheet features a series of eight horizontal ovals arranged vertically. The background of the page is divided into two vertical sections: a black section on the left and a gray section on the right. Each oval is split vertically, with its left half on the black background and its right half on the gray background. The ovals are empty, providing a space for writing.

Poem:

So many women have gone
abroad from the Philippines to
work as domestics that it has
become a recognised part of
the culture.

A Filipino pop group 'Smokey
Mountain', had a success with
a song called 'Mama', the
refrain of which is:

**Mama's a maid in London
I want to believe that she's fine
She could be lonely in London
I want to know why she had to
go
I need her
I want to be near her
And see to it
That we're together once more.**

English

Background Reading:

Anderson, Bridget. *Britain's Secret slaves -
An Investigation into the Plight of the
Overseas Domestic Workers*. London: Anti-
Slavery International and Kalayaan, 1993.
ISBN 0900918292

Black, Maggie. *Child Domestic Workers:
A Handbook for Research and Action*.
London: Anti-Slavery International, 1997.
ISBN 0900918411

Further Resources:

Anti-Slavery International. *Our News, Our
Views: Child Labour, Children's Rights and
the Media*. London: Anti-Slavery International,
1998.

ISBN 0 900918 47 0

Young reporters look at the lives of working
children around the world. With over 30
activities to use the video, young people will gain
an understanding of child labour and children's
rights, as well as developing a critical
awareness of the media. Includes activities
on child domestic workers.

Websites

www.antislavery.org
current information and news

www.ips-dc.org/campaign
campaign news, case studies and articles

www.hrschool.org
see link under migration/migration workers

www.philsol.nl
click on 'Overseas Filipinos'

www.northbysouth.org
A historical angle on domestic slavery. Click on 'Kenyon
North by South Web Pages, and then search for



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Community.
The views expressed herein are those of Anti-Slavery and
reflect the official opinion of the European Community.



Also available in the
When Rights are
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