

FOA and au pair

Why FOA?





FOA and au pair

We wish you welcome to Denmark and to a new and exciting job as an au pair in a Danish family.

This pamphlet tells in short the story of FOA – and what FOA can do for you working as an au pair. We hope that having read the pamphlet you will understand and appreciate why Danish unions can help you to a successful stay in Denmark.

What does FOA offers au pairs?

FOA can assist in providing a network with other au pairs. We support arrangements for au pairs and we would like to assist in securing a successful stay for you. FOA considers the au-pair-scheme a good way of cultural interaction and we want to secure this focus continuously. However it is our experience that some families consider their au pair more as cheap way of having some work done and sometimes forget that their au pairs are not allowed to work more than 30 hours a week without being paid the normal wage for the same work in Denmark. FOA will make sure that you are paid for all extra work.



Jade Carreon

Unions in Denmark have participated in securing good working conditions for Danish employees compared with conditions in other countries. In Denmark the majority of the employees are covered by a collective agreement. An agreement in Denmark is signed by a union – as for instance FOA – and an employer, and in the agreement working hours, time off and holidays are defined. Au pairs are covered by a government agreement regulating working conditions. FOA seeks political influence on this agreement to improve conditions. As an au pair you can draw on FOA's experience with securing the rights of the employees and help FOA working politically for better agreements for you and other au pairs. In Denmark the unions ensure that the employers respect working hours and pay the correct wages. Therefore it is important to us that you have good conditions in FOA as au pair. In Denmark it is FOA who watches the employers and secures payment by current rules in the au pair job.

Jade Carreon: "FOA assisted me when my family asked me to work 15 hours a day. FOA helped me to obtain a compensation to the amount of 22.884,75 Danish kroner in lost wages and holiday payment."

History of FOA

The union FOA – Fag og Arbejde has always worked for the rights of housemaids, young girls working in private homes and baby-sitters. It lies in our nature to help you as an au pair, as it is the same functions you will have to fulfill in your new family.

Originally FOA was founded in 1899 by a woman called Marie Christensen. She went to visit all housemaids in Copenhagen and invited them to participate in a founding meeting and she founded Københavns Tjenestepige Forening – Society of Housemaids in Copenhagen. This society eventually became the Society of Housemaids in Denmark – the later Husligt Arbejder Forbund (Society of House Workers). The society worked for:

- Elimination of working at night
- Working hours from 7 am to 7 pm
- Healthy and sufficient food for each housemaid
- A proper room for each housemaid
- All housemaids should have time off every second Sunday from 3 pm at the latest
- All housemaids should have time off each day for 1-1 ½ hour before 7 pm.

These conditions are very similar to the conditions of au pairs today – only their working hours were much longer back in 1899 than they need to be nowadays. Be aware that as an au pair you only have to work 30 hours a

week and you have the right to one weekly day off.

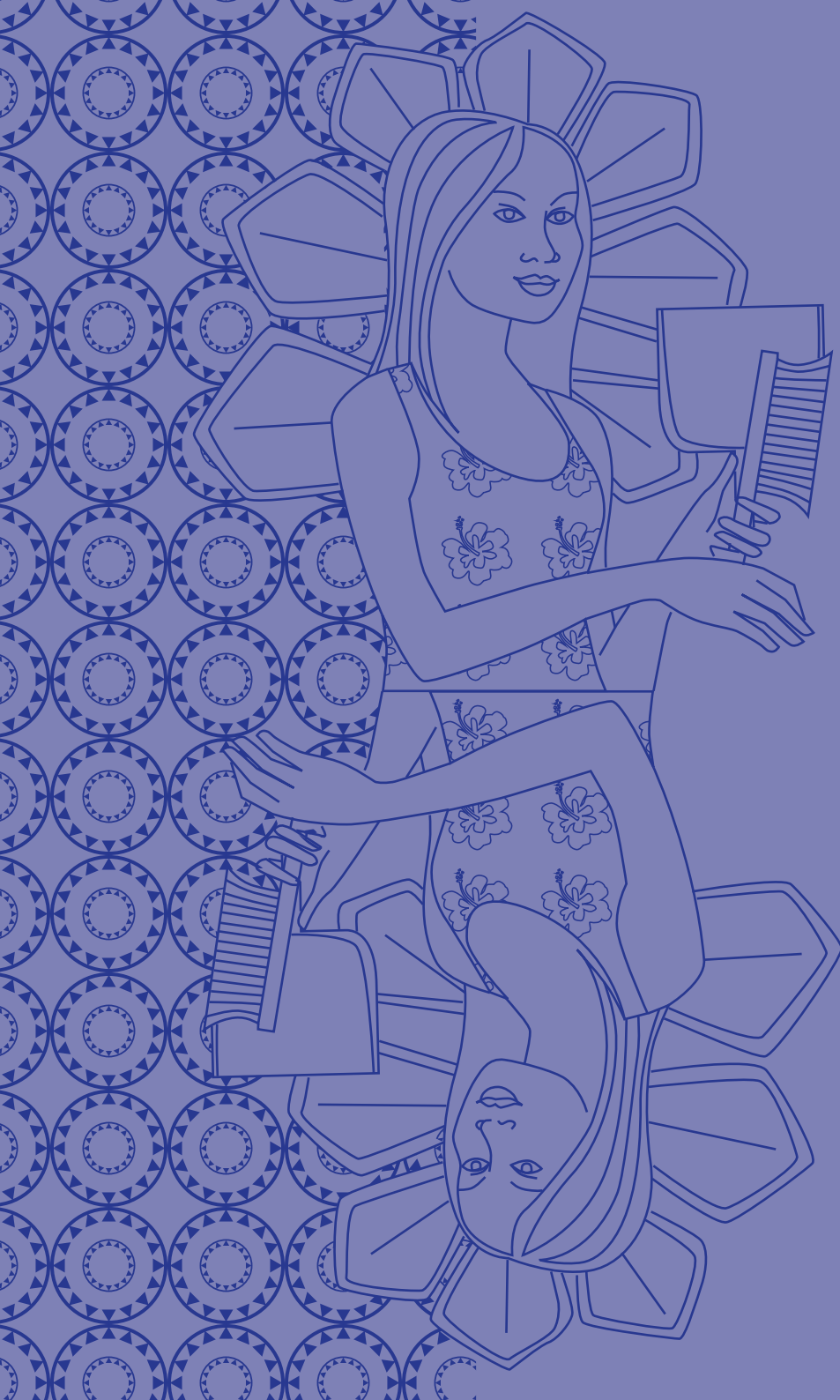
In 1974 a new professional group – teaching assistants – was founded. Their aim was to secure uneducated people working in child care good working conditions when taking care of children. Besides continuously taking care of housemaids and child care FOA has many other occupational fields and today FOA has approximately 200.000 members.

Since its foundation FOA has always worked together with other parts of the Danish unions for the rights of employees. During the last century we have achieved a reduction of the working week from no upper limit to 37 hours. Thanks to the unions in Denmark employees are paid decent wages for their work and all employees have a right to at least 5 weeks of holiday. If a Danish employee does not receive the proper wage or works more hours than he or she is paid for the union may bring a case against the employer in order to make the employer pay the proper wage. In your case the union is FOA.

A membership of FOA costs 25 Danish kroner a month. For this amount you also receive a magazine and free counseling and help in your local FOA branch.

You can join as a member by calling **8020 2030**. Calling is free of charge.





Join FOA

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