

WHAT IS RE:CARE?

RE:CARE is a research project that highlights the **essential yet often overlooked role of care work** in Malaysia. The project centres on the lived experiences of essential care workers—from healthcare professionals and social care providers to migrant domestic workers—whose labour sustains our society. With the goal of **building a resilient care workforce**, RE: CARE calls for recognition of the critical role women play in the care ecosystem and advocates for an approach that values, supports, and invests in care workers.

WHAT ARE WE RESEARCHING?

This research delves into the care sector **vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic**, and its **ongoing, gendered impacts on the care workers managing their paid and unpaid care responsibilities**. While the pandemic serves as our starting point to understand the crucial support needed by the essential care workforce and infrastructure, our ultimate goal is clear: **To enhance the resilience of Malaysia's care ecosystem.**

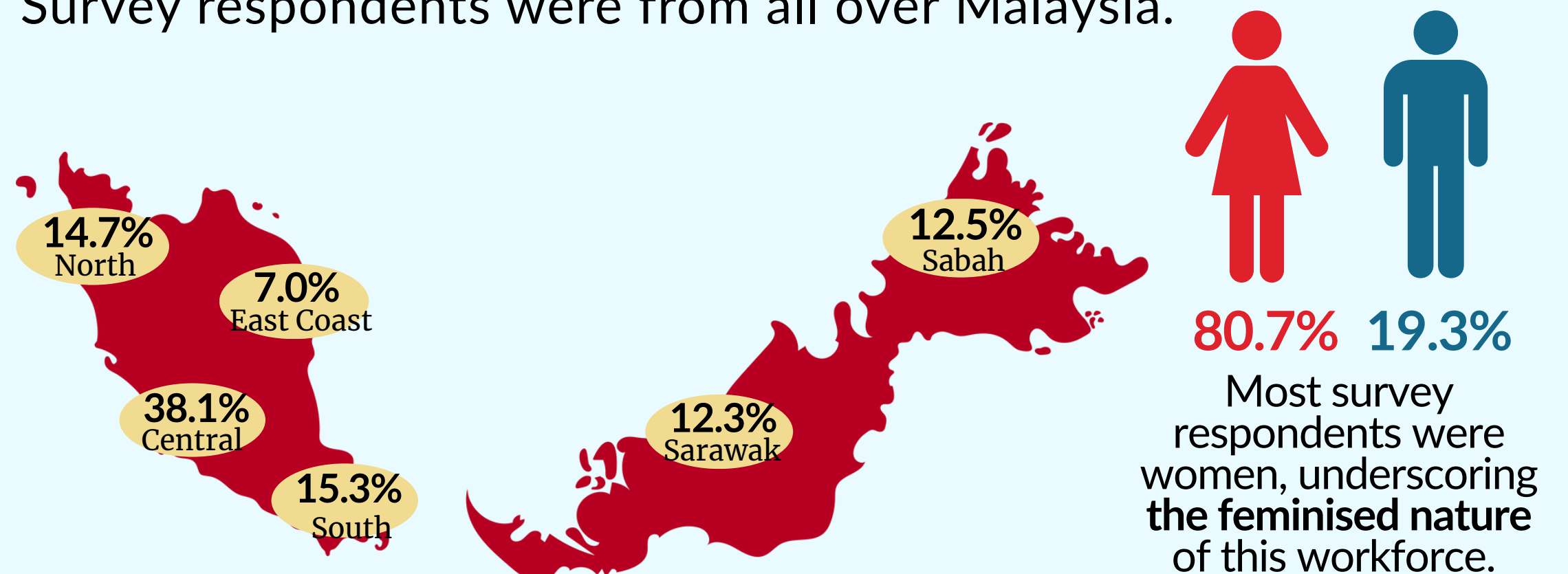
WHO WAS INCLUDED?

The large-scale, nationwide study undertook a mixed-methods approach, influenced by participatory principles. The research included 144 women care workers across 24 focus group discussions, complemented by a quantitative survey with 1,534 men and women care worker respondents, and 20 key informant interviews with policy-adjacent stakeholders across government and civil society.

RE:CARE worked with care workers across healthcare, social care, and domestic care, with a focus on the following occupations:



Survey respondents were from all over Malaysia.



SNAPSHOT ONE

Many care workers have already been working over the maximum 45 hours of full time work a week prescribed in the Employment Act even before the pandemic. **Post-pandemic, many still continue to work over 45 hours a week.**

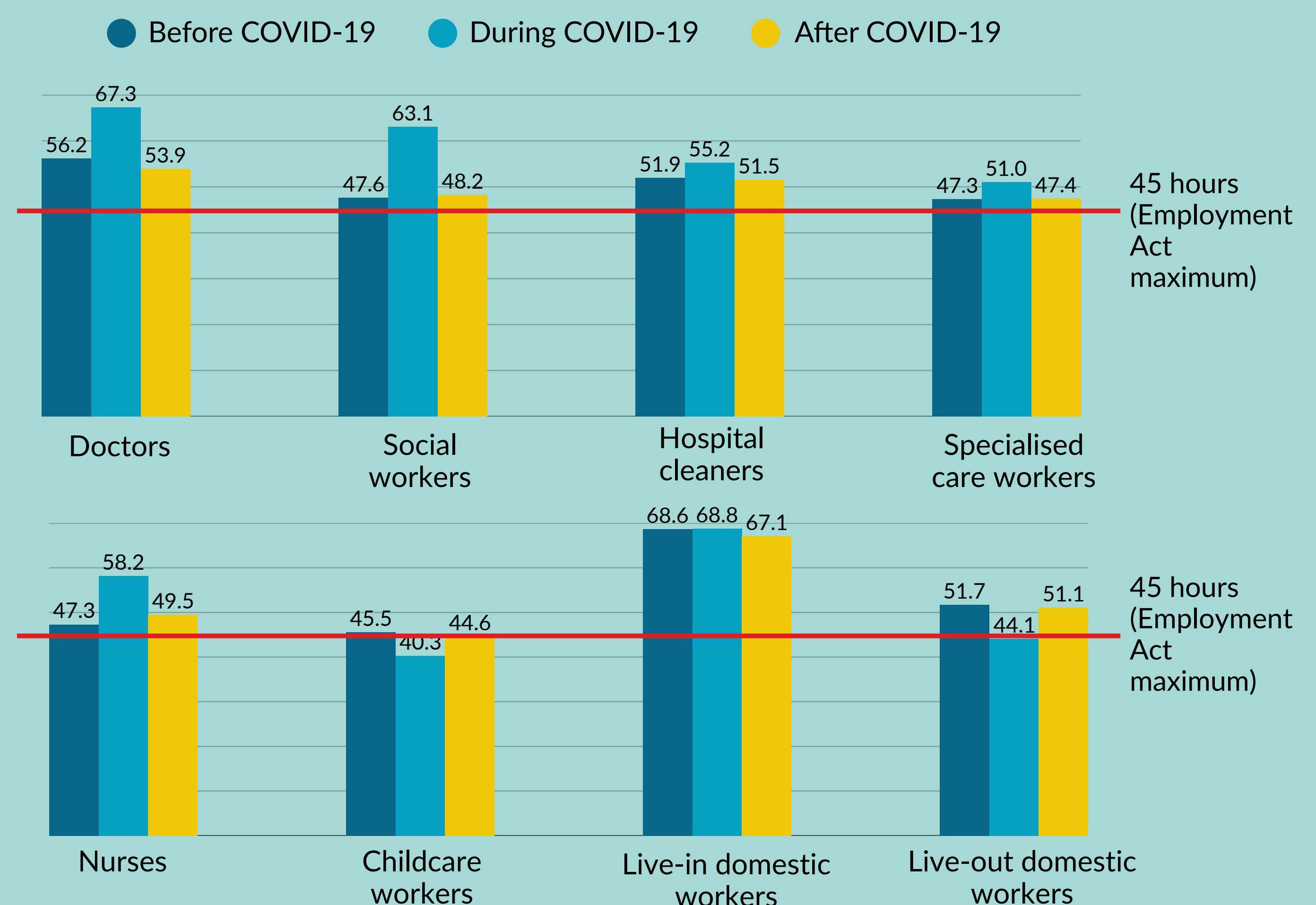


1 IN 3

CARE WORKERS (30.3%) REPORTED **WORKING OVER 70 HOURS A WEEK DURING THE PANDEMIC.**

POST-PANDEMIC, CARE WORKERS SPEND AN AVERAGE OF 52.6 HOURS PER WEEK ON PAID CARE WORK

Figure 1. Average number of hours of time spent on paid care work per week across time, by occupation



On top of their paid care work, care workers also have to manage their **unpaid care responsibilities**. For women in households with high care demands, this **can require, on average, up to 40 hours per week.**

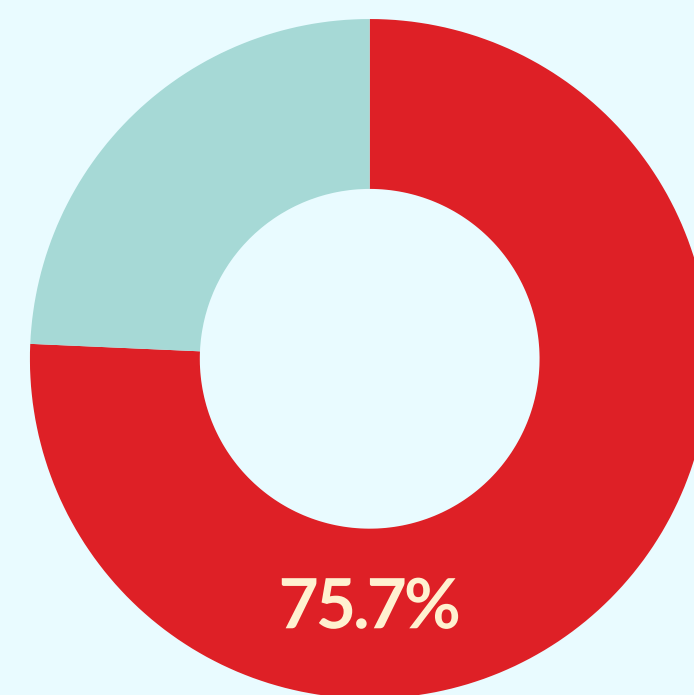
SNAPSHOT TWO

In the RE:CARE survey, wellbeing was measured through four contributing aspects: Satisfaction with physical and mental health, job satisfaction, satisfaction with work-life balance, and satisfaction with support for unpaid care work. The long hours of the profession, coupled with personal care responsibilities, have a combined impact on wellbeing.

Figure 2. Aspects of overall wellbeing measured in the RE:CARE survey.

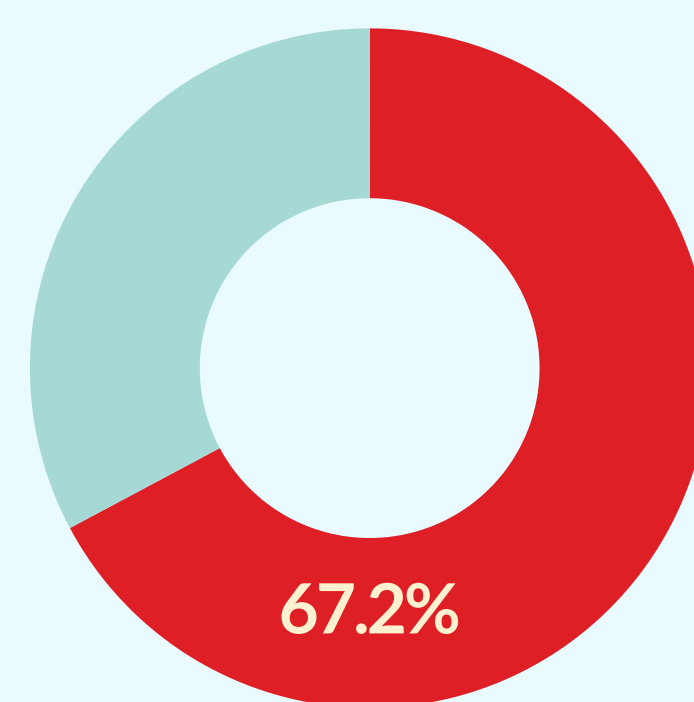


Figure 3. Three in four care workers (75.7%) were hit by a decline in wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic (n = 1,534).



3 IN 4
CARE WORKERS
EXPERIENCED A **DECLINE**
IN WELLBEING DURING
THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC

Figure 4. Concerningly, two thirds of those who faced this decline (67.2%) have not recovered to pre-pandemic levels of wellbeing (n = 1,161).



2 IN 3
CARE WORKERS WHO
EXPERIENCED THIS
DECLINE **HAVE NOT FULLY**
RECOVERED TO PRE-
PANDEMIC LEVELS OF
WELLBEING

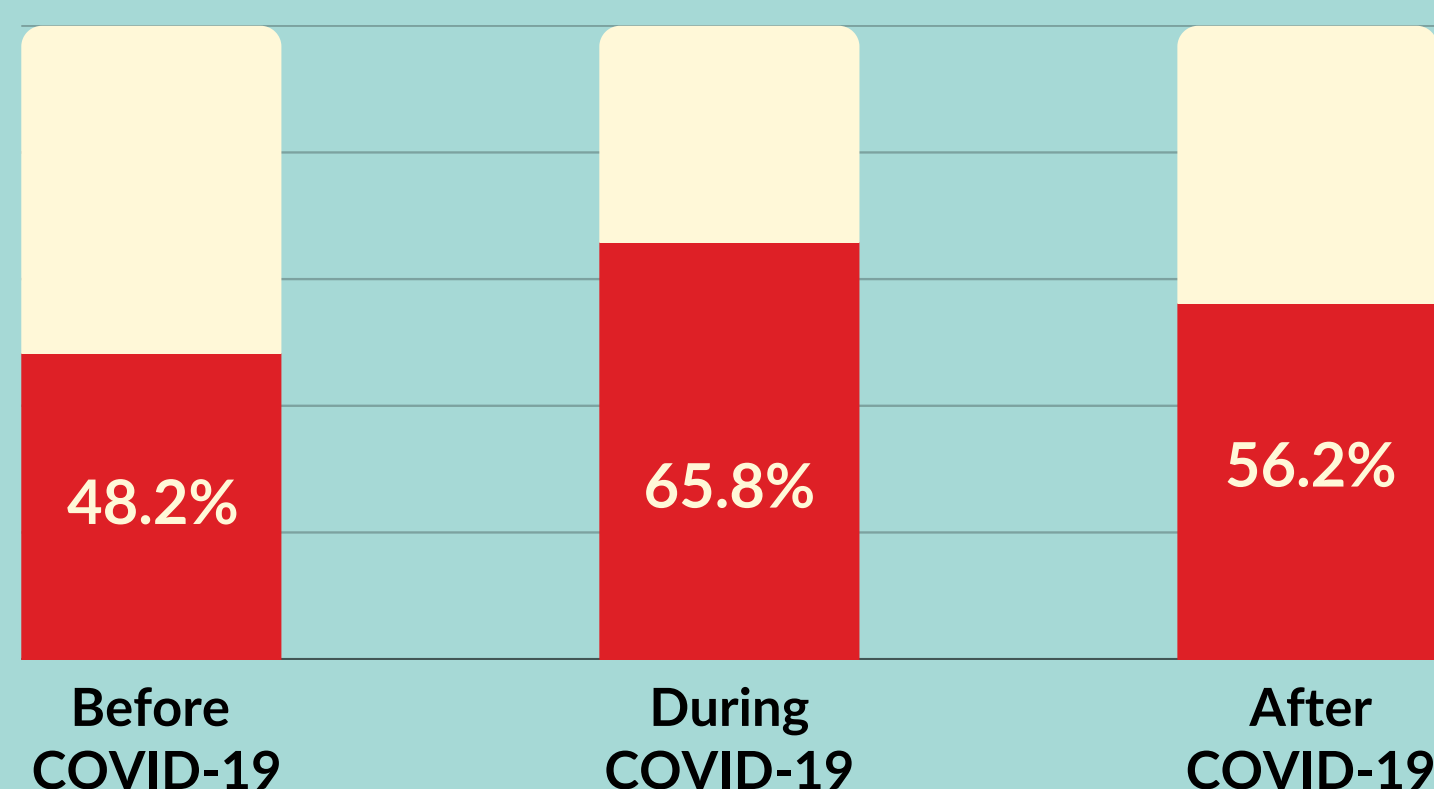
SNAPSHOT THREE

OVER HALF

OF CARE WORKERS (56.2%) ARE **STILL EXPERIENCING BURNOUT** POST-PANDEMIC.

Figure 5. Proportion of Care Workers Who Experienced Moderate to Severe Levels of Burnout Across Time (n = 1,534).

● Moderate to High ● No to Low



Consequently, amongst 1,221 Malaysian care workers surveyed, 1 in 3 care workers (34.5%) have stated they intend to leave their current position within the next five years.



1 IN 3

MALAYSIAN CARE WORKERS
(34.5%) **INTEND TO LEAVE**
THEIR CURRENT POSITION
WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE
YEARS.

This data snapshot was compiled by Anis Farid, Shazana Agha, Wani Hamzah, and Alicia Lee Syin-Syin based on key findings from the report "Towards a Resilient Care Workforce: Lessons from COVID-19 in Malaysia."

The RE:CARE Project is a collaboration between researchers from Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), Universiti Malaya, and the University of Alberta, with support from the Ministry of Health Malaysia and Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp). It is a part of the Women RISE Initiative focused on women's health and economic empowerment for a COVID-19 Recovery that is Inclusive, Sustainable and Equitable, and is funded by Canadian research agencies - International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). For more information, visit www.recare.my.