



Transient Workers Count Too
DIGNITY OVERDUE

NEWSLETTER

WEEKLY
DAY OFF
FOR ALL

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Editorial

Our society originated in The Working Committee Two in 2003, and then its work was exclusively around domestic workers. In 2004, Transient Workers Count Too was established as a registered society, and it broadened its horizons to cover all work permit holders, female and male. Now, in this issue of the newsletter, we take a look at problems concerning S-Pass holders. They are the workers who are meant to have higher qualifications than work permit holders and to be paid a minimum of \$2000 a month.

So is TWC2 once again expanding the scope of its work – and this time to people who have less need of support than work permit holders?

Yes and no. S-Pass holders have been coming to us for help since our helpline was launched, but we are seeing more now, and they can be every bit as much in need of our assistance as other migrant workers. Their position is usually very similar to that of work permit holders and those who turn to us are generally being paid at work permit holder rates, in violation of the law. This was the case with most of the 17 Chinese women workers assisted by our social workers in 2011, for example. They tend to work for small businesses that want low-cost workers and who can't recruit them either locally or as work permit holders. They feel cheated and exploited.

At the moment, there is ongoing discussion about what kind of Singapore citizens would like to have in the future. These include vital questions concerning balancing growth against meeting pressing social needs, green issues, housing, education and health, and migrant workers also figure in the discussion, though not as contributors to it. It seems that it is often not appreciated how their presence and role influences every other element of discussion: they build, they free up many Singaporeans to take on white collar work, they take on jobs locals don't want to do – and yes, they need space to live and there are sometimes frictions.

The reality is that, even if overall migrant worker numbers steady or even fall with productivity growth, a long-term migrant presence in Singapore is pretty certain. Building a society in which they are kept at the margins and kept as a class of low paid labour, defined by national origins and non-citizen status, but how many people would really be comfortable with that as they look to a more caring and inclusive society for themselves?

Migrant workers need to be considered not as disposable production units there merely for others' convenience, but as partners for the future. Respecting the rights of migrant workers and ensuring that they are treated with the consideration that citizens would ask for themselves is an integral part of shaping a tomorrow in which all benefit.

International Migrants' Day

This year's TWC2 International Migrants' Day (IMD) event will be a sports day. When we discussed ideas in June with workers, they were keen on this. We're going to have futsal and volleyball contests, with leagues for men and for women. This will be an all-day event held on Sunday December 16th (the nearest Sunday to IMD – December 18th), and will take place at the East Campus of United World College.

Team recruitment is under way. For insurance purposes, we need to register teams by November 23rd, so we'd like to hear from people who get a team together or who'd like to join one. (More information on page nine)

We'll be pleased to have people come along as volunteers or just to watch as well. Of course, it takes money to put it together (about \$7000), so we'd also welcome contributions to get us there.

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Events

26th August: Worker outing sponsored by law firm. A hundred Indian and Bangladeshi workers went on a trip to Singapore Zoo, through the generosity of TSMP Law Corporation. They were accompanied by ten TWC2 volunteers and met by lawyers from the firm, who wore red shirts with shark logos on them. One lawyer explained, "people like to compare lawyers with sharks, but we're sharks with a heart!"

The men are all receiving assistance from TWC2 and have little to get by on, so they were pretty excited to be able to go to the zoo. Writes Rachel Hui on TWC2's website:

'Many of the men were most impressed by the tiger exhibit, where they were able to get up close with two prowling White Bengal Tigers – the national animal of both India and Bangladesh.'

Quite a lot were also fascinated by the snake enclosure. The workers tried to see as much as they could before the time came for lunch and a lucky draw. Hui writes:

In fact, some of the men were in such high spirits by the end of the day that a spontaneous medley of song and dance broke out to much applause and laughter, and to the amusement of many curious onlookers who hurried into the amphitheatre to check out the unscheduled performance.

There are two stories about the visit on the TWC2 website, with photos by Alex Tay:

<http://twc2.org.sg/2012/09/07/tsmp-laws-zoo-trip-lifts-a-hundred-spirits-part-1/>

by Rachel Hui

<http://twc2.org.sg/2012/09/07/tsmp-laws-zoo-trip-lifts-a-hundred-spirits-part-2/>

by Xinlin

9th September: Over 100 people crowded into a room in Little India to see 'The Agent' and 'The Lawyer', two plays based on workers' experiences and written and performed by Bangladeshi workers.

The Agent takes place in Bangladesh, where agents and sub agents climb over themselves to extract huge fees from their clients - would-be migrant workers. The agents giggle in delight at the news of land and gold being sold for the privilege of working abroad, and show no remorse when that sought-after job evaporates into air. They promised comfortable jobs with desirable salaries, and have no shortage of men willing to pay their fees.

The Lawyer focuses on Bangladeshi legal assistants who prey upon injured workers and keep them ignorant of the injury compensation process in order to justify their extravagant fees, sometimes without the knowledge of their employer, the Singapore lawyer. The lawyer closes a blind eye as long as the clients keep coming, while the legal assistant finds ways to use traditional Bangladeshi methods of threats and intimidation to keep clients from complaining. The legal assistants in the play mentioned the drama being performed and complained about their devious ways being exposed in a humorous self-referential scene.

The plays were jointly organized by Banglar Kantha and Dibashram. Sprinkled among the Bangladeshi workers who came to see them were Indonesian domestic workers, TWC2 and other NGO workers, MOM staff and representatives from law firms that evidently have more ethical practices than those portrayed on stage!

23rd September: The Indonesian Family Network had its Halal Bihalal event in Toa Payoh Park – the biggest so far, with food, entertainment and short speeches from guests.

30th September: The Archdiocesan Commission for Migrant and Itinerant People (ACMI) held a Migrant Sunday celebration.

4th October: A well-attended TWC2 research sub-committee meeting saw the launch of six projects, and plans made for two others. For anyone who is interested in joining in, you can still do it, by writing in or coming to the next research meeting, which will be in the last week of November.

6th and 13th October: TWC2 laid on day schools for NUS Geography students on migrant workers at a Little India venue. The schools combined talks with a walk around the area to see more of the life of migrant workers there. The day school programme has been running for much of this year and has mostly been attended by students from JCs. For many, it is quite an eye-opener.

How Many Migrant Workers?

In a recent blogpost in the Manpower blog, Acting Minister for Manpower, Tan Chuan Jin, provided some up to date statistics on migrant worker numbers and their breakdown by employment category. They are more detailed than any other recent statistics on migrant workers in Singapore. More information can be found on the TWC2 website at:

<http://twc2.org.sg/2012/10/12/manpower-minister-provides-5-year-data-for-foreign-workforce-numbers/>

By persons

Pass type	Dec 2007	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	June 2012
Employment Pass	99,200	113,400	114,300	143,300	175,400	174,700
S Pass	44,500	74,300	82,800	98,700	113,900	128,100
Work Permit						
Foreign domestic worker	183,200	191,400	196,000	201,400	206,300	208,400
Construction	180,000	229,900	245,700	248,100	264,500	277,600
Other Work Permit	393,900	448,700	414,600	421,700	437,800	445,200
Subtotal Work Permit	757,100	870,000	856,300	871,200	908,600	931,200
Total foreign workforce	900,800	1,057,700	1,053,500	1,113,200	1,197,900	1,234,100

Columns may not add up due to rounding

Landmark treaty for domestic workers to come into force

The ILO's Convention on Domestic Workers has now been ratified by two countries, meaning it will come into effect in a year's time. The Convention extends basic labour rights to tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide. News | 05 September 2012

GENEVA (ILO News) – The Philippines has become the second country to ratify the ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, thus allowing the first global standard for domestic workers to come into force in twelve months' time.

"Today's ratification by the Philippines sends a powerful signal to the millions of domestic workers who will be protected when the Convention comes into force. I hope it will also send a signal to other member States and that we will soon see more and more countries committing to protect the rights of domestic workers," said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia.

The historic Convention extends the ILO standards to a sector which continues to be poorly regulated and remains largely part of the informal economy.

Convention 189

Domestic workers who care for families and households must have the same basic labour rights as other workers. These rights include:

- Reasonable working hours,
- Weekly rest of at least 24 consecutive hours,
- A limit on in-kind payment,
- Clear information on terms and conditions of employment,
- Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Recent ILO estimates based on national surveys and/or censuses in 117 countries place the global number of domestic workers at around 53 million. But since this kind of work is often hidden and unregistered, experts believe that the total number could be as high as 100 million.

In developing countries, domestic workers make up at least 4 to 12 per cent of wage employment. Around 83 per cent of these workers are women or girls, and many are migrant workers. Globally, domestic workers make up 3.6 per cent of wage employment.

The new standard covers all domestic workers and provides for special measures to protect those workers who, because of their young age or nationality or live-in status, may be exposed to additional risks.

Uruguay was the first country to ratify C189, on 14 June 2012.

From the website of the International Labour Organisation. On September 13th, Mauritius became the third country to ratify the convention; Nicaragua ratified it on October 17th.

First Employment Agency Fined for Overcharging

For the first time, an employment agency has been fined for charging workers over the permitted fee level. The company was fined \$5,000 and given six demerit points, reported Amelia Tan in 'The Straits Times' (Employment agency fined \$5k, 4th October 2012). An agency that accumulates over 12 demerit points risks losing its license. The agency was found to have overcharged a man and a woman in the manufacturing sector. The Ministry of Manpower reported that it was investigating a number of other alleged cases of overcharging. The agency was charged under the amended Employment Agencies Act.

One difficulty in countering overcharging is the lack of documentation by home country and Singaporean agents of what placement charges are made up. In TWC2's proposals for the amendment of the Employment Agencies Act submitted in 2010, we said:

(T)o the extent that agencies are permitted to charge fees to job-seekers, agencies should be required to provide all job seekers with written statements as to what fees the job-seeker may be charged and how these are calculated, in order to promote greater transparency between agencies and job-seekers. Agencies should also be required to show the actual deductions in written statements and to seek the worker's written consent in relation to each cost to be incurred before making such deductions. (Singapore's Employment Agencies Act and Rules – Proposals for Amendment –viewable at <http://twc2.org.sg/2010/05/25/proposals-for-the-revision-of-the-employment-agencies-act/>)

Domestic Workers' Quality of Life

Sabrina Jordan

Have you ever travelled on rail? There are times when the tram or train reaches a split on the track. Usually, the driver pauses, waits for the split to switch to the direction he is travelling towards, before continuing on the journey. Some people take this for granted. However, there is a great life lesson that we can draw upon. Is the track leading us to the right direction? If not, should we pause and re-examine our direction?

It was not too long ago that I was privileged enough to have the independence to choose a research project of my own. I knew that there is always a greater reason behind such privileges. Having worked in Singapore as a foreign worker before, I was naturally drawn to this topic. At the time, Singapore had just completed its Universal Periodic Review with the United Nations. As I narrowed down my focus, I felt strongly that an independent study on the quality of life of foreign domestic workers in Singapore is a necessity.

Measuring subjective well-being, or quality of life, or whatever else you may call it, does not examine the root of the problem. Rather, it provides an avenue for comparison. For example, when one compares the rating for quality of life of someone who has dementia, to that of the general public, an observer can make an objective comparison despite a lack of expertise in the area – a comparison that is somewhat evidence-based.

Interestingly I found that the average quality of life of foreign domestic workers in Singapore was worse than healthy adults in other countries. If you have survived paralytic stroke before, the ladies feel slightly better than you physically and psychologically, but worse socially and environmentally. Surprised?

There is an ancient proverb that says "For every hundred men hacking away at the branches of a diseased tree, only one will stoop to inspect the roots." Often, we are too preoccupied by the symptoms rather than focusing on the root cause. I attempted to inspect the roots, by asking the workers what caused them stress, and what they do when they feel stressed. Many respondents reported excessive work quantity, problems with employers, family expectations, and financial issues as causes of stress.

It is heartening, however, to notice that some ladies found their close and trusting relationship with employers act as a buffer for stress. Some ladies found comfort in praying, going to places of worship, and meeting relatives and friends (the ladies had a day off weekly or fortnightly). Imagine other ladies who work seven days a week. Imagine yourself working seven days a week for a company that fears you will leak some intellectual property such that they keep you in the office 24/7. Would you last long?

From 1 January 2013 onwards, all new domestic work permits and renewals will entitle their holders to one day off a week. This is a step in the right direction, but we forget workers who obtain their permits this year. They have to wait, probably two more years, before they get that entitlement. Would you last that long?

As a society, Singapore has reached that split on the track. Should we listen to the voice of the workers? How do we mitigate the anxiety of employers? I urge policy-makers to pause to examine the reports, the research evidence, and the white papers. Do inspect the roots, while remembering that these ladies are human too. As the driver of the vehicle, please make sure the society is travelling on the right track.

Sabrina Jordan is an Organisational Psychologist

S-Pass Problems Grow

Most of TWC2's work with migrant workers is with work permit holders, but we have been seeing some S-Pass holders since 2008 and, from our own experience and reports from others, it seems that the volume of complaints from S-Pass holders is growing. In this article, we consider the reasons behind the growth in the number of S-Pass holders and the kinds of problems they face.

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) recently made available statistics on the numbers of foreign workers at all levels present in Singapore from December 2007 to June 2012. The number of Employment Pass holders, the highest paid category, rose from 99,200 to 174,700 (a 76% increase); the number of Work Permit holders, which includes all workers now on salaries of less than \$2000 a month, including domestic workers and construction workers, rose from 757,100 to 931,200 (23% more). The largest percentage increase was in S-Pass holders, the 'in-between' group, whose numbers rose from 44,500 to 128,100 (187% more).

What has produced this extraordinary growth?

It is clearly demand-led. When the S-Pass was first introduced in 2004, it was said that it was intended to help firms facing a shortfall in mid-skilled local staff. It was a time of steady economic growth, when the withdrawal of Singaporeans from low paid, low status jobs that had started in the domestic worker sector in the 1970s had spread up to the service sector – and the trend has continued. Restaurateurs and shop managers complain that they can't find Singaporeans to take on jobs with them, and those who do join them generally don't last long because they are not prepared to accept unsocial hours, the six day weeks common in sectors such as retail or the kinds of work asked of them.

In its eligibility criteria, the MOM on its website says 'Mid-level skilled foreigners (e.g. technicians) who wish to work in Singapore may apply for an S Pass.' This makes it sound as though the people expected to come on S-Passes will fill junior office jobs or perform skilled industrial tasks, and that is what the 'broadly' described criteria would lead an uninformed reader to expect:

A minimum [fixed monthly salary](#) of \$2,000

Educational qualifications

A degree, diploma

Technical certificates can be considered. These are, very broadly, courses that train the applicant to be a qualified technician or specialist in their chosen field. The certification should comprise of at least one year of full-time study.

Type of job (e.g. professional, specialist or technician)

Number of years of relevant work experience

The S-Pass holders encountered by TWC2 and whose complaints have been most reported in the media don't match this 'white collar' profile. They are in the service sector: elderly care, restaurants, hotels, shops. The jobs they do require some skills, most of which can be acquired quickly on the job with little difficulty: they certainly don't amount to the qualifications required in order to obtain an S-Pass in the first place and many could easily be done by work permit holders.

So what makes an employer want to hire a worker on an S-Pass?

Flexibility is one reason. There are quotas for work permit holders in each industry that can't be exceeded. Workers have to come from 'approved source' countries, which vary somewhat by sector. The allowable maximum for S-Pass holders in a firm started off at just 5% of the workforce in 2004, but has risen (It is determined by a 'Dependency Ratio Ceiling', which sets different rates: the sub-DRC for all sectors, since July 1st, has been 20%; the services DRC, 45% and the manufacturing DRC, 60%).

The level of the monthly levy on foreign workers is another consideration. Monthly levy payments shrink as skills levels rise, so that employers of the least skilled workers pay the highest levy per worker. This is meant to give them an incentive to upgrade their workers' skills and thus promote productivity, as well as to be a disincentive to employing workers from abroad in jobs that could be mechanized or filled by locals. In the service sector, the levy on work permit holders ranges from \$240 to \$500 a month, whereas the levy on S-Pass holders ranges from \$200-\$320.

If S-Pass holders were employed at the minimum rate required by MOM regulations (\$2000) and their employers paid the levy on top of that, they would still normally cost their employers significantly more than work permit holders, but quite a few employers clearly pay their workers illegally at work permit levels while paying the S-Pass levy, which amounts to less, in some

cases, than they would pay to employ a work permit holder. For example, TWC2 has encountered restaurant workers who were paid \$700-\$800 a month while officially being employed at S-Pass level, which would probably save the employer money on a work permit holder, although in these cases, the primary consideration for the employer seemed to be obtaining enough staff.

In April this year, Civic Ambulance Services was charged with falsely declaring that its foreign staff would be paid S-Pass rates, and it was noted in the report that *'Employers falsely declare salaries to get S Passes in order to save on monthly levies, which are lower for S-Pass holders than for unskilled Work Permit holders. (Janice Heng, "Nightingale Nursing Home in more trouble", 'Straits Times', 27th April 2012)*

The basic problem is that there are many establishments that find it hard to obtain the staff they want at the salary they feel able and willing to pay, and this creates an incentive for them to resort to dishonesty. They take on workers as S-Pass holders with no intention of paying S-Pass rates, which obliges them not only to lie about what they are doing, but to require their S-Pass workers to do so too. They don't ask too many questions about the qualifications of prospective workers: if the worker can produce something that looks like a convincing degree or certificate, and an agent has assured them that the worker was qualified, they don't want to enquire further.

It might be noted, in passing, that this issue is closely related to that of 'phantom workers', which arises when an employer falsely inflates the number of Singaporeans employed in order to be legally entitled to hire more migrant workers – in small companies, often by placing relatives on the salary roll.

Some employers just don't pay the declared salary and keep false accounts to disguise the fact. Some pay the whole sum and then claw part of it back. In September 2011, three people were reported to be facing 74 charges of over-declaring salaries in employment or S-Pass applications: they ran two cleaning companies and their employees alleged that they had been made to pay back part of their salaries to their employers. (*'Employers charged with over-declaring salaries', Today, 30th September 2011*) *'In 2012, 78 employers were convicted for false declaration offences and in March this year, for the first time, an agent was imprisoned after being convicted of assisting an employer to declare a false monthly salary for four S-Pass holders.'* (Janice Heng, *'Agent jailed for falsifying S-Pass holders' salaries', 'Straits Times', 27th March 2012*)

Some workers take on these jobs fully expecting to be paid the amounts declared, and they may decide to lodge a complaint with the authorities, although the usual migrants' worry about losing their jobs and being sent home intimidates most into silent and discontented collaboration with their employers.

Others know full well that they will be underpaid, but are so desperate to obtain a job that they go along with the deception from the start. The same thing happens over fake qualifications; if told by a recruiter or an agent that they must produce an authentic looking qualification in order to get a job, then they will do as they have been told.

Some of those with genuine qualifications, on the other hand, feel frustrated with the work they are asked to do. They went to college or university, but their countries did not have jobs for them, so they applied for jobs abroad that they thought would allow them to put their qualifications to use, only to find that they were passports to semi-skilled and low paid work.

What can be done to counter such problems?

A punitive approach towards law breakers is certainly one way to go, although TWC2 considers that, when it comes to faked qualifications, penalties for workers who have clearly acted out of desperation and at the urging of others who profit from their placement should be lower than those for the people who encouraged the deception for their own gain.

Giving greater security to S-Pass holders so that they feel able to complain without risking deportation, would help. So would making sure that itemized pay slips are provided and that, as required by S-Pass conditions, salaries are paid by Giro.

In the longer term, a modified policy on work quota levels and approved sources is desirable: if jobs can be done by work permit holders and locals show no sign of interest in taking them on, wouldn't it be better to have a higher proportion of work permit holders employed legally, rather than impel employers and workers to act illegally? Couple that with countering the worst forms of exploitation at this level by means such as a minimum pay policy plus provision for workers to change jobs more readily than at present, and many of the problems now witnessed would simply not arise. As in other sectors, this should be in the context of aiming to have workers staying longer and adapting better to life in Singapore, rather than undergoing rapid turnover.

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Soman Murugappan, a 26-year old from Tamil Nadu, India, has a diploma in electrical and electronics engineering. He came to Singapore this year on an S-Pass and was then underpaid by his boss, while being urged to sign salary vouchers saying that he was paid \$2000 a month. You can read his story at: <http://twc2.org.sg/2012/10/14/mopping-is-for-diploma-holders/>

TWC2's CAREFund Beneficiaries

At the Cuff Road Project we offer some 2,000 meals weekly to about 500-600 individuals. The majority of these men are undergoing treatment and pursuing a work injury compensation claim. Others are forced to remain in Singapore because of a salary dispute or investigation into illegal deployment. While most of these issues are completed within about six months, some take much longer. All this time, the men are not permitted to work.

Anything can happen during this time. Because the men are regular visitors to the two restaurants where the meals are served, we are often their first, perhaps only, means of assistance with medical assistance. We hand out panadol and plasters for fever and cuts; we purchase eye drops and soap for dry eyes and skin problems; we refer the men to Karunya Clinic where a doctor sees them and later bills TWC2. Here are some of the men assisted recently:

BITDUT



One of the commonest ailments requiring treatment is infected teeth. We often refer men to a dentist for the extraction of infected teeth and filling of cavities. In one case, the dentist noticed on an X-ray, next to a tooth that needed to be extracted, a lesion in the bone that might be cancerous. The CareFund paid \$1,079 for a biopsy and lab results. Fortunately, the results were normal, and the tooth was pulled. Bitdut is very pleased not to have this worry in addition to his workplace injury.

JITU



Jitu suffered a massive fracture of the bones in his left leg when a concrete wall fell on him. The police found him abandoned by the roadside and took him to Singapore General Hospital for emergency surgery. He was working illegally, meaning the employer had bought no insurance and could not be help responsible for his medical fees. The police paid for the initial

operation. He would have been sent home after that if TWC2 had not offered additional funds, more than \$20,000 for bone grafts and internal metal supports.

REAZ

The TWC2 CareFund paid for an operation at SGH to remove a growth of soft tissue on Reaz's knee. Since his back injury at work in March 2012, he has been sleeping outside while continuing with physiotherapy. Reaz isn't used to this sort of indignity, coming from a moderately wealthy family. His family would be horrified to learn that he has no regular living arrangements but he did share his worries about the knee. His father wisely (and rightly) told him that this was not as serious as he feared, and that he should trust the TWC2 volunteers. He cried when the funds for the surgery were handed to the SGH staff. He would never have been able to produce the \$2,400 on his own.

SHEKAR ROY

It's not only medical support, but compassion assistance that the CareFund provides. Shekar Roy was left paralysed from a stroke after finishing a long day at work. Since the stroke was not considered a workplace injury, he was not eligible for work injury compensation. He was sent home barely able to sit up or to control his arms and legs, to a family that we hope would be able to continue the physical rehabilitation that the hospital had begun. The TWC2 CareFund gave him \$2,500, a small amount to assist the family with his care and loss of earnings.

RUHUL AMIN



Ruhul Amin was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer only weeks before he returned home. Hospitalized and on oxygen, it soon became clear that he didn't have long to live. Tan Tock Seng Hospital was able to negotiate with a private plane to transport Ruhul Amin back to Bangladesh on its return flight for a fraction of the usual price. We used the CareFund to pay the \$12,500 required to repatriate him so that he could spend time with his family. Ruhul Amin died only hours after returning and seeing his wife and children.

Debbie Fordyce, Coordinator, Cuff Road Project

These are just some examples of how TWC2's CareFund has assisted migrant workers. It has also been used to support migrant workers of all nationalities in less extreme but also difficult circumstances. We need to top up the fund, which has been depleted by the demands on it in recent months. Any assistance in doing this will be appreciated.

Finding Time to Act: Dulal's Case

Dulal, a Bangladeshi worker who was injured but healing well, was discovered to have a Hepatitis C infection that needed treatment for which an employer would not be obliged to pay. This would consist of 24 weekly injections, and he could not miss a single one. After he'd received his 16th injection, he was informed by the Ministry of Manpower that, as the processing of his work injury compensation claim (for which he was awarded nothing) had been completed, it would not extend his Special Pass. So what could be done to ensure that he continued his course of treatment?

TWC2 first thought of getting him an extension and requested one from the ICA. He was given two weeks more, but it was made clear that there would be no further extension. That gave him two more weeks of injections, but also, two more weeks during which TWC2 was able to confirm the drug treatment he required, verify that it would be available in Bangladesh, and arrange a smooth transition to being treated in his home country. He was given \$3000 to take home (each injection in Singapore had cost \$500) – enough to get him through the rest of the course.

Since his return, Dulal has telephoned TWC2 to say that he is being treated by the University Hospital in Dhaka.

International Migrants' Day 2012

December 18th is International Migrants' Day, marked by activities around the world. In Singapore, it has normally been celebrated since 2005 on the nearest Sunday, to provide the best opportunity possible for migrant workers to take part.

This year, TWC2 is holding a sports day, with futsal and volleyball games. Certificates will be awarded to domestic workers who have been employed in Singapore for over ten years. There will be a buffet lunch. It should be great fun for all taking part.

There are two things we need to do urgently:

1. Recruit teams

For the futsal games, there should be teams of six players (five plus one reserve).

For the volleyball, there should be teams of eight players (seven plus one reserve).

There will be leagues of men's and women's teams: the first women's teams had already registered by 20th October, but no men's teams had registered by then. We need to get the word round far and wide to bring in more players. TWC2 would like to hear from people who form teams as well as from people who would like to join a team but don't know other people who want to join one: we can put you in touch.

We need to hear from teams or people interested in joining a team by **23rd November**, so that we can make sure that players are insured. If you're interested, please give your full name and IC number to Christine at the TWC2 office as soon as possible. She can be reached at her email address: <adminofficer@twc2.org.sg> or at 62477001 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

2. Raise money to pay for the event

Altogether, venue hire, food, prizes, publicity and miscellaneous costs will come to \$7000. That needs to be found. Any contributions would be helpful and much appreciated. Raising money for IMD always involves a lot of anxiety, and sports days usually cost more than other forms of celebration. If you send a donation for IMD, please make any cheque out to 'Transient Workers Count Too' and write 'IMD' on the back.

Details:

Date: Sunday, 16th December

Time: 9.00am-5.00pm

Location: United World College (East Campus), 1 Tampines Street 73

Other matters:

**We'd like to hear from domestic workers who have been in Singapore for over ten years, or from their employers.*

**We already have some volunteers, but may need more on the day.*

**Volunteers from a team from the National Institute of Education are helping with publicity and publicizing the need for sponsorship and goodie bag contents, but more help would always be appreciated!*

If you'd like to volunteer on the day or just come and watch, please register in advance to assist us with planning.

Our next IMD planning meeting is at the TWC2 office at 11.30 on Sunday 11th November.

Superheroes



Photo credit Sam Chin

10 Years of Shooting Home is an exhibition celebrating the tenth anniversary of 'Shooting Home', a photography programme of Objectifs, a visual arts centre. It is being shown at the National Museum from 20th October to 27th December. One set of photographs is called 'Superheroes', and shows groups of male migrant workers in their work clothes. Photographer Sam Chin writes, 'SuperHeroes is an attempt to photograph various groups of Migrant Workers in a different light. Placing them against a backdrop and making them strike poses like super models, my intention is to change the negative connotation locals have on this group of people and return them the dignity they deserve. Migrant workers from all over the region contribute to our economy and growth and should not be sidelined by our society.'