

Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2)

Annual General Meeting 2018

Committee Report 2017

Executive Committee 2015-2017 (up to 23 Apr 2017)

President	Noorashikin Abdul Rahman
Vice-President	Russell Heng
Secretary	Bashir Basalamah
Treasurer	Alex Au
Member	Yew Kong Leong
Member	Debbie Fordyce
Member	Shelley Thio
Member	Christine Pelly
Member	Loh Wei Hung

Executive Committee 2017-2019 (elected 23 Apr 2017)

President	Noorashikin Abdul Rahman
Vice-President	Russell Heng
Secretary	Bashir Basalamah
Treasurer	Alex Au
Member	Yew Kong Leong
Member	Debbie Fordyce
Member	Christine Pelly
Member	Loh Wei Hung (<i>until 31 Dec 2017</i>)
Member	Beverly Shaddick

Sub-Committee Chairs

Research	John Gee
Direct Services	Debbie Fordyce
Communications	Alex Au
Fundraising	Russell Heng
Human Resource	Russell Heng
Public Engagement	Christine Pelly

Project Chairs

Cuff Road Project	Debbie Fordyce
Dayspace	Gwee Min Yi
Discover Singapore	Irene Ong & Marcel Bandur
Outreach	Lee Kang Yao (<i>until Sep 2017</i>) Alfiyan Mohamed Sadali (<i>from Sep 2017</i>)
Project FareGo	Jill Ratnam & Silvester Goh
Project LifeLine	Noorashikin Abdul Rahman
Project Roof	Siva Govindasamy
Road-to-Recovery (R2R)	Loh Wei Hung & Hana Gwee
Wednesday Clinic	Pat Meyer & Tamera Fillinger

Audit Committee 2016-2018

Clarissa Tan
Wang Eng Eng

Staff

General Manager

Ethan Guo (*from Jan 2017*)

Social Worker

Jason Lee Kang Yao (*from Jun until Sep 2017*)

Social Work Associate

Gwee Min Yi

Social Work Associate

Rashiqa As-Shafi'i Abdul Rashid

Social Work Associate

Alfiyan Mohamed Sadali

Admin Officer

Christine Scully

Accounts Officer

Christina Chng

INTRODUCTION

The Committee Report is an overview of TWC2 activities in 2017 in pursuit of its mission:

- 1) through ground research and engagement with policy makers and employers, to advocate a more enlightened policy framework for migrant labour in Singapore;
- 2) to extend assistance to workers in need to ensure that they have fair resolution of their cases, dignity in work and living conditions, access to medical care, and protection of their rightful autonomy; and
- 3) through public education, to promote the social conditions in which exploitation, abuse and injustice become history.

The Report is in three Parts: Advocacy, Direct Services, and Organisational Support.

PART 1 – ADVOCACY

Our Advocacy activities encompass Research, Communications, and Engagement with the Public and Stakeholders.

1.1 Research

TWC2's major research release in 2017 was "Labour Protection for the Vulnerable: An Evaluation of the Salary and Injury Claims System for Migrant Workers in Singapore". This was a major research project focused on the MOM dispute resolution system as experienced by migrant workers with salary and injury claims. The research, which began in 2016, brought together nearly 100 volunteer researchers from SMU, NUS, Yale-NUS, other Singapore schools, A&E doctors, occupational therapists, lawyers, industry representatives and NGO volunteers and staff. Administrative assistance and publication costs were financed by a generous grant from Chen Su Lan Trust. The report gives an overview of workers' experiences with the injury and salary claims system and the underlying legislative framework, followed by a legal analysis of the current gaps in the law, regulations and enforcement of protections for migrant workers. Policy recommendations to close gaps were included.

Following the release of the Report, Policy Briefs were developed on four of its priorities: electronic payment, the sponsorship system, standard employment contracts, and dual reporting of workers' injuries. The aim is to use these Policy Briefs to galvanize policy change as well as raise public awareness.

Another major research project looked at recruitment and placement processes in different jurisdictions. We have published briefs on 12 jurisdictions which provide reference points for best practices. In the second stage of this project, expected to complete this year, we are looking at practices that may be applicable to Singapore.

The monthly Research Forums have been a highly successful part of the Research Sub-Committee's work. They are a regular opportunity to share our own research and for invited speakers to present theirs. Discussions have been lively and attendance has generally been around 50 people each session.

On a more short-term basis, research team members cooperated to produce a number of papers, including one with proposed amendments to the Employment Act, a submission for amendments to the Workplace Safety and Health Act, and another on the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. These papers are posted on the TWC2 website.

Other notable research projects include:

- The Recruitment Costs project on the costs for migrant workers to come to Singapore;
- The Dual Reporting project which aims to address the under-reporting of workplace accidents and incidents in Singapore;
- The Non-Financial Difficulties/Emotional Costs project involving in-depth interviews with a small number of Bangladeshi workers to examine the social and emotional impact of migrating to work in Singapore; and
- The Mandatory Two Days Off project which looks into the motivations of domestic workers who choose to forego their mandatory weekly day-off in exchange for compensation and on the feasibility of implementing a mandatory two days off a month.

Besides these projects under the Research Sub-Committee, TWC2 published in Oct 2017 the findings of a survey of 468 female domestic workers on their access to medical care for minor ailments. The study highlighted several gaps that disadvantage FDWs.

In Apr 2017, we published the results of a survey of 577 male Work Permit holders regarding their working hours. We found that two-thirds of our respondents worked so much overtime that on a monthly basis, the total hours would breach the statutory maximum of 72 hours of overtime a month.

In Feb 2017, we published the findings of a survey conducted in 2016 which showed that recruitment costs for Bangladeshi workers were climbing. Average recruitment costs for first-time workers were around \$15,000. For repeat workers, there is also an increase, but smaller.

In Jan 2017, we published the findings of a survey of 910 non-domestic work permit holders on the subject of their work history. We found that on average, a worker has worked about 4 years in Singapore. However, starting salaries for first-time workers have flat-lined over the years. Adjusting for inflation, these salaries have actually declined slightly.

1.2 Communications

Our Facebook page has over 12,000 followers and continues to engage a high number of Facebook users even organically (that is, without depending on sponsored posts).

The average reach hovers around the low thousands and climbs to tens of thousands for posts that are shared widely. In 2017, the highest engagement was garnered by the story of Islam Rafiqul – he was owed several months of unpaid wages and was still not paid despite a Labour Court order. TWC2 obtained press coverage for Rafiqul in The Straits Times and ran a successful online fund-raiser so that he would not return home empty handed.

Through 2017, we maintained regular contact with mainstream media. On a few occasions, this resulted in stories highlighting specific problems faced by workers. We were invited to contribute a commentary to both Mediacorp and The Straits Times, but unsurprisingly, on both occasions their editors declined our proposed commentary.

Besides Islam Rafiqul, we used social media successfully to raise funds for a few other deserving cases in 2017. Sometimes, we made the call for donations our through own social media platforms, but more often we worked with Give.asia, which has a better reach.

There was also good response to some of our web articles that were shared on Facebook. Stories that stood out included one on an attempted forced repatriation of an injured worker, and another on a worker who was paid only \$130 a month for nine months.

In all, we published 120 stories on our website in 2017. Most were based on worker interviews by our Communications team. Others were feature articles about our activities, such as fundraising, research, Discover Singapore outings and legislation submissions.

Our website is a kind of permanent online library. While each article does not always get a lot of hits (seldom over 1,000), the website provides search access to a huge compendium of

knowledge on migrant worker issues. Equally important, it allows us to signal to MOM, who are known to read our articles soon after publication, the key issues that need addressing.

1.3 Public Engagement

The Public Engagement (PE) team is the voice of TWC2 to groups and individuals interested in knowing more about foreign worker issues in Singapore in general and TWC2's role in advocating for the welfare of these workers. Members of the PE team have been volunteering with TWC2 in many capacities and have the breadth of knowledge and experience to speak to researchers and special interest groups, make presentations to large students groups and assist students with their projects and position papers in matters related to migrant workers in Singapore and in particular TWC2's role in this regard.

The PE team is most often asked to respond to requests from primary, secondary and tertiary students, journalists, and visitors from foreign universities and institutions, by offering presentations to large and small groups, leading walking tours around Little India and Farrer Park, meeting groups with projects in mind to discuss and guide them along, speaking by Skype or phone, and answering questions over email.

For groups of up to thirty people, we typically offer a presentation and Q&A session at DaySpace, followed by a guided tour or visit to the TCRP meal programme for an insight into the lives of South Asian workers.

In 2017, we met with secondary school and junior college students from Dunman High, St. Gabriel Secondary, Anderson Secondary, Whitley Secondary, Yuhua Secondary, Holy Innocents High, Hwa Chong Institute, Raffles Institute, Nanyang Junior College and United World College SEA; polytechnic and university students from Ngee Ann Poly, National Institute of Education, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (NTU), NUS Communications and New Media, NUS School of Medicine, Singapore Institute of Management (Global), Peaceboat Global University Programme, University of Liverpool, Keele University UK, University of Adelaide, Georgia Tech USA; and various other groups and researchers.

Talking to local and foreign students allows us to present facts and statistics about transient workers and explain TWC2's stance and objectives. In engaging students we hope to provide alternative perspectives and narratives on the lives and role of transient workers in Singapore. We too learn in the process by understanding misconceptions and assumptions about low-wage workers so as to better target our presentations and connect with students, who hopefully may one day assist TWC2 as volunteers, or be in a position to assist in working towards more humane treatment for these men and women. There have been heartening situations where students who have had an earlier engagement with us coming back to pursue projects and studies in greater depth and keener understanding.

As for Heartbeat, our main entry point for new volunteers, we had 266 people attend and register on Bahamas in 2017 for 12 Heartbeat sessions. This included a mini Heartbeat with a few participants from the Research team, to ensure that new volunteers in Research also have access to opportunities in other direct and indirect services at TWC2. In addition, Heartbeat also saw the start of a streamlined sign-up process via Bahamas, which has been a great improvement from the manual input of earlier years. Although the numbers are not as high as in 2016, there have been efforts to also engage more with current volunteers to encourage them to continue volunteering with us. By comparison, in 2016 across 11 sessions (none in Dec), we had a total of 289 participants, while in 2015 there were 153.

1.4 Engagement with Policy Makers and Stakeholders

Through 2017, TWC2 had several meetings with MOM on aspects of case management. They were an opportunity for us to share data and highlight gaps. Whilst policy reform, in our opinion, will be fundamental to any real and lasting improvement of the situation for migrant workers, the meetings tended not to cover this area. Nonetheless the confidence building that in time will result should create a good platform for deeper engagement.

In Mar 2017, TWC2 joined HOME to submit a country report on Bangladesh, as part of the country review under the UN's Convention on Migrant Workers. TWC2 was represented at the UN in Geneva in Apr 2017 when Bangladesh came under oral review.

In Apr 2017, TWC2 and HOME held a joint workshop with the participation of the Indonesian Family Network (IFN) to submit a country report on Indonesia in Aug for the UN's Convention on Migrant Workers. Unfortunately, no one was available to represent TWC2 at Geneva when the oral review was conducted.

In Oct 2017, TWC2 was part of a coalition of 13 NGOs concerned with women's issues which contributed to a shadow report on Singapore for the 68th Session of the UN Committee on CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women). Besides the coalition report, a joint shadow report was also submitted by TWC2 and HOME on issues pertaining to migrant domestic workers in Singapore.

Through 2017, TWC2 engaged regularly with two Members of Parliament. We consulted on matters that could be raised during question time and issues that could be prioritised in their speeches to the House.

Through 2017, TWC2 maintained an active engagement with Migrants Forum in Asia (MFA), a regional alliance of NGOs working in the same field. TWC2 was represented at most meetings called by MFA which dealt with issues at the regional and global level, including the ASEAN Consensus on Migrant Workers and the UN's envisioned Global Compact on Migration. Through MFA, TWC2 has built good contacts with other NGOs in neighbouring countries.

We also had regular meetings with law firms interested in migrant worker issues. Through these connections, pro-bono help has been obtained for several court cases. More generally, these conversations help the legal fraternity to understand migrant worker concerns better.

PART 2 – DIRECT SERVICES

Direct Services allow us to attend to the immediate, tangible needs of destitute migrant workers while supporting advocacy to address the deeper issues.

2.1 Indicators of the Coverage of Direct Services

Due to the multiplicity of services provided by TWC2 and cases that cross year-ends, no single number can represent the number of workers or cases we help. However, there are a couple of indicators that help us assess the reach and effectiveness of our work.

One such indicator would be the number of new case registrations received in 2017.

Tables 1 and 2 below show the number of new individuals registered for assistance in 2017, by nationality, gender and compared to 2016. A total of 2,169 workers were newly registered with TWC2 in 2017. This figure is 26.1% higher than new registrations in 2016.

Table 1 – Workers new registrations 2017

Nationality	Gender	Count	%
Bangladesh	Male	1,958	100.0
	Female	0	0.0
	All	1,958	100.0
India	Male	182	99.5
	Female	1	0.5
	All	183	100.0
China	Male	10	90.9
	Female	1	9.1
	All	11	100.0
Other nationalities*	Male	8	47.1
	Female	9	52.9
	All	17	100.0
Total	Male	2,158	99.5
	Female	11	0.5
	All	2,169	100.0

Table 2 – New registrations, 2017 vs 2016

Nationality/Gender	2017	2016	%
Bangladesh	1,958	1,465	33.7
India	183	225	-18.7
China	11	10	10.0
Other nationalities*	17	20	-15.0
All nationalities*	2,169	1,720	26.1
Male	2,158	1,698	27.1
Female	11	22	-50.0
All genders	2,169	1,720	26.1

* Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Spain, Sri Lanka, Unknown

However, this figure of 2,169 new registrations understates the actual number of people we helped in the year. This is because every year, clients who had previously registered with us (and whose cases have concluded) do come back with new problems. Another reason is that some workers present more than one problem. We use the word “case” to mean a problem faced by a worker. For example, a client with an injury and a salary problem would count as one worker but two cases, since they need two different sets of interventions.

Thus, the number of cases registered in any year will always be slightly higher than the number of workers newly registered. In 2017, we registered 2,388 new cases, representing a hefty 31.9% increase over 2016.

Even this figure of 2,388 understates the number of cases we assisted in 2017, since it only records new case registrations. Many cases that were registered in 2016 stretched into 2017; they continued to be assisted by us.

Table 3 – Types of cases, 2017 versus 2016

Problem types recorded in year	2017		2016		% change 2017 vs 2016
	Count	%	Count	%	
Injury, work	1,326	55.5	1,209	66.8	9.7
Salary/deductions	803	33.6	375	20.7	114.1
Recruitment fail, scam/misrepresent	48	2.0	30	1.7	60.0
Criminal investigation/charges ¹	47	2.0	25	1.4	88.0
Premature termination	29	1.2	35	1.9	-17.1
Other classifications	135	5.7	136	7.5	-0.7
Total	2,388	100.0	1,810	100.0	31.9

A second indicator comes from the Cuff Road Project: 2,641, which is the total number of clients issued with at least one meal card in 2017. But again this figure slightly understates the total number of individuals we helped, because there were clients who did not need or receive a meal card from us. Typically, they would be domestic workers (for whom we have separate arrangements), Chinese workers (who wouldn't take to the food we serve), or others living in company dormitories or far away from Little India where our meals are served.

To sum up, no single set of data gives a comprehensive picture of the reach of our Direct Services. In our best estimate, based on a triangulation of all these indicators, we helped in 2017 somewhere in the region of 2,700 – 2,800 individuals, representing about 3,000 cases.

2.2 Case Work & Helpline

Out of the 2,169 new registrations of workers and 2,388 new cases in 2017, TWC2's Social Work team took up 636 for case work, which involves consultation, follow up and case management. This figure represents 26.6% of all new cases presented during the year, and an increase of 48.3% over the 429 cases newly taken up by our Social Workers in 2016.

The table below excludes cases taken up in 2016 which crossed the year into 2017.

Table 4 – New cases taken up by Social Work team in 2017

Problem types recorded in the year	2017		2016	
	Count	%	Count	%
Injury, work	170	26.7	138	32.2
Salary/deductions	367	57.7	195	45.5
Recruitment fail, scam/misrepresent	12	1.9	10	2.3
Criminal investigation/charges ¹	17	2.7	8	1.9
Premature termination	9	1.4	12	2.8
Other classifications	61	9.6	66	15.3
Total	636	100.0	429	100.0

While the figures mean that 'only' a quarter of the 2,388 new cases during the year were taken up by the Social Work team, and three-quarters were not, this is not a surprising ratio. Many workers are represented by lawyers; to avoid giving conflicting advice, our social workers do not get much involved. Others have relatively straightforward cases and choose not to consult

¹ This category is for any worker required to remain in Singapore in connection with an MOM or police investigation. He may not necessarily be the accused, but may be the complainant or a witness. The problem that TWC2 tries to help with is that of enforced stay without income.

with us. However, being on Special Pass and not allowed to take up paid employment, they still need assistance from TWC2’s other direct services.

TWC2’s social work team also handles calls from individuals who simply need some information or referral to another, more appropriate organisation. These calls and brief consultations are not counted as registrations, since we do not ask for their personal details, nor do we need to extend our direct services to them. Thus, the figures below are in addition to the numbers presented in earlier tables.

Information & Referrals that did not progress to case work	2017	2016
Helpline calls:		
Male caller	213	127
Female caller	18	26
Subtotal helpline calls	231	153
Other I&R contacts/conversations (e.g. email, face-to-face)		
Male caller	105	90
Female caller	11	17
Subtotal other modes of contact	115	107
TOTAL	347	260

Free 3G Mobile Phone Distribution Exercise

In anticipation of the 2G mobile network shutdown in Apr 2017, TWC2 also provided help for workers who would otherwise be left without any means of contacting family back home. 200 workers were given replacement 3G phones in this exercise. This follows a six-month campaign from late 2016, which collected 300 used phones donated by the public, only about half of which were in sufficiently good condition to be given away. Over \$11,000 in monetary donations were used to purchase an additional 100 phones. Distribution events were held over two weeks to allow eligible workers registered with the Cuff Road Project to collect their 3G phones. A small batch of phones were also given away to workers assisted by the Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics (HOME) and HealthServe.

2.3 Cuff Road Project (TCRP)

Ten Years of The Cuff Road Project “You never give food, I die ‘ready”

The Cuff Road Project (TCRP) celebrates two major milestones in 2018: ten years since its inception in Mar 2008, and one million meals projected for Oct this year. The success of the project can be considered in several ways.

The project feeds migrant workers who are prevented from engaging in any form of employment and have no means of financial support.² TCRP clients are not permitted to work after having lodged a claim for work injury compensation, salary non-payment, or a complaint about kickbacks and illegal agent fees. They are required to remain in Singapore until the claim or investigation is resolved. The hardship that this imposes on them and their families

² The special pass issued to those with claims or investigations states: “You are **not** allowed to engage in any form of employment, or in any form of business, profession or occupation during the validity of the said pass unless you are issued with a valid work pass.”

should be acknowledged and addressed by government organisations with greater resources than TWC2. Our efforts to feed them and provide other basic services can only help to sustain them while in Singapore for the duration of their claim.

Because TWC2's main focus is advocacy, our interactions with the thousands of TCRP clients each year informs us of the ways that work permit holders stumble into this dire situation. This information assists us in uncovering failures and flaws in the recruitment, employment and enforcement processes and allows us to make recommendations about how these problems might be addressed.

TWC2's research team also makes use of information from this group to better understand aspects of their working and non-working life such as recruitment fees, kickbacks, salaries, work and living conditions, medical care, educational levels, etc. The insights also help TWC2, local and foreign media and researchers to understand Singapore's treatment of transient workers and compare our conditions and regulations with other destination countries.

Of the number of clients under the programme in 2017, 19% had lodged salary claims, 66% presented with work injury compensation claims, and rest were no longer working due to such issues as recruitment scams, criminal investigation, kickbacks, etc.

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Clients*	2641	2062	2246	2041	2169	2106	1733	2130	1875

*Numbers show individuals served each year. Many carry over from one year to the next.

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Meals/year	140,859	77,086	82,227	88,282	105,544	101,775	85,151	94,143	46,368	34,730
Running total	856,165	715,306	638,220	555,993	467,711	362,167	260,392	175,241	81,098	34,730

Through 2016 and into 2017, we received repeated reports of poor quality food served by our meal contractors. Several of our volunteers documented pictorially the meagre servings of meat and vegetables offered. We became concerned about the poor level of nutrition offered to our clients in the meals. In Apr 2017, we overhauled the system to introduce a degree of market competition as a means of keeping our meal providers on their toes. Instead of the previous arrangement of exclusive contracts with 2 restaurants, we switched over to non-exclusive contracts with 5 restaurants. At the same time, we increased the price we were prepared to pay per lunch and dinner by about 30% in order to ensure that the restaurants would find it viable to improve the quality of their meals. Moreover, where previously, the men were served prepacked meals, now they can select the type of meat and vegetable they like from the buffet counter. We held the cost of breakfast more or less steady.

Despite expecting our total cost to increase by about 20 - 30%, TCRP expenditure ballooned. What happened was that quality improved by leaps and bounds with the introduction of market competition among the providers. Many clients who would otherwise have turned up their noses on the previously poor food, returned and ate with us more regularly than before. They liked the fact that they now have a choice. New registrations also took meals from us more often. Difficult times and downsizing in the marine and construction sectors which employ large numbers of foreign workers is another likely cause of the increase in numbers.

As a result, the total TCRP expenditure in 2017 was \$375,736, more than double the 2016 figure of \$171,372. While we are happy that we are able to assist more workers and provide them better nutrition and that we are now getting far better value per dollar spent, we expect this higher level of expenditure to continue. This will put pressure on our fundraising.

2.4 Dayspace

Opened in 2015 and managed by our Social Workers, Dayspace is well-utilised particularly on weekends and weekday evenings. Located right smack in Little India, it is a convenient venue for meetings, talks, training, medical clinics and day schools. On Sundays, Dayspace is used by the Filipino and Indonesian Family Networks for enrichment classes and activities, and by two migrant-worker initiatives, a music band and a lending library which started in Dec.

Dayspace is also an emergency shelter for workers denied housing by their employers or who fear repatriation if they returned to their dormitories. In 2017, we sheltered 19 such cases.

2.5 Discover Singapore

The Discover Singapore programme organises excursions and social activities for TWC2 clients. They aim to raise awareness among migrant workers about Singaporean culture and landscape, and provide opportunities for interaction with locals whilst sharing their own insights. Importantly, the outings allow them to take time off from everyday struggles and engage in much-needed social interactions. We hope that, despite their misfortunes, these workers will go home one day with beautiful memories of their time in Singapore, and remember Singaporeans as kind, caring and generous.

The majority of our trips are organised in collaboration with local partners, including Night Safari, Gardens by the Bay, Esplanade, Shimano, Singapore Kindness Movement, Mobike, InMyShoesSG, Yale-NUS, NIE, ITE, St Andrew's Secondary School, and St. Patrick's School. They provide in-kind donations, such as admission tickets, bus transfers, free bike rides, sports equipment and attire or goodie bags. In addition, F&B outlets like Pezzo and Ben & Jerry's support our events by donating meals, snacks and beverages. While we depend on TWC2's financial support, we try to minimize costs to TWC2 whenever possible.

DS runs at least one and usually two outings per month, organised by 58 active volunteers and two coordinators. Each outing benefits a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 60 clients. 2017 destinations and outings included Chinese New Year at the Istana Palace, Holi at the Esplanade, a sleepover at St John's Island, Gardens by the Bay, Changi Airport Terminal 4 Open House, Xmas walk on Orchard Rd, Esplanade Indian Music event, and the Night Safari.

2.6 Project FareGo

Project FareGo provides public transport subsidy in the form of EZ-Link Card top-ups to assist distressed clients who need to attend medical consultations and physiotherapy sessions. As a matter of resource allocation, volunteers work to a rule that disallows any individual from getting another top-up for four months after the first. However, volunteers are given a degree of discretion to give small sums of transport money if they find a particularly deserving case that might not otherwise be eligible.

Project FareGo	2017	2016	2015
No of clients	739	799	641
Total expenditure	\$25,505	\$25,262	\$22,177

In 2017, Project FareGo dispensed 774 topped-up EZ-Link cards and 379 small sums of transport money, assisting 739 workers (some workers were helped more than once).

In addition, TWC2's social work team is also empowered to dispense EZ-Link cards and small sums of transport money. They do this sparingly, only if the client is not eligible under FareGo rules, and the client has a pressing need. In 2017, the social work team dispensed 33 EZ-Link cards, and 78 lots of transport money, assisting 93 workers (including female domestic workers). 10 of these 93 workers benefitted from both FareGo and social worker help.

2.7 Road-to-Recovery (R2R)

The objective of TWC2's R2R programme is for injured migrant workers to receive the medical treatment that they need. This is done by accompanying them to hospitals, interfacing with hospital staff and making co-payments where their employers have delayed or refused to pay. Transport to and from hospitals is also provided for those with mobility issues. Health supplements are also available for cases requiring special diets.

	2017	2016	% change 2016-2017	2015
Number of hospital visits by R2R volunteers	158	270	-41%	213
Number of foreign workers assisted	90	132	-32%	89
Average number of hospital visits/worker	1.8	2	-10%	2.4
Average number of hospital visits/month	13	22	-41%	18
R2R expenditure	\$8,944	\$15,374	-42%	\$11,483
Average cost per hospital visit	\$57	\$57	0%	\$54
Number of active volunteers at end of year	10	18	-44%	14

R2R volunteers are supported through briefings on topics such as the Work Injury Compensation Act and the MOM claim process, various R2R policies, and injury case studies. Training for volunteers also includes shadowing opportunities.

Mt Alvernia Outreach Medical Clinic

	2017	2016 (from Apr)
Number of patients seen	666	311
Number of sessions held	24	not available
Average number of patients/ session	28	not available

The partnership with Mt Alvernia Outreach continues to provide free primary healthcare (GP) services to needy migrant workers who are ill. The clinic operates fortnightly at TWC2's Dayspace, on alternate Wednesday evenings, 6.30 - 8.30 pm.

Under the partnership arrangement, Mt Alvernia provides a doctor, 2 clinic staff and prescription medicine; TWC2 provides the space and case management of workers who require follow-up treatment or tests through the R2R programme. Medical students frequently volunteer their time at the clinic.

In 2017, Mt Alvernia Hospital and TWC2 jointly supported the referral of a client from the Outreach clinic for specialist treatment at the hospital.

2.8 Medical Interventions

Besides R2R, special medical assistance was provided for three Bangladeshi workers in 2017.

The first had suffered a fall that resulted in extensive injuries to himself, and the death of his colleague. He had metal implants placed in one leg, one hand, and to stabilise his fractured spine and pelvis. As the employer had exceeded the \$36,000 required insurance for workplace injuries, they refused to pay for the metal implants to be removed as advised by the doctor. TWC2 paid \$10,060 to remove the implants in the spine and pelvis in late 2016, and \$1,575 to remove the implant in the leg in early 2017. The doctor did not advise removal of the metal in his hand.

A second client was already a TCRP beneficiary – having filed a claim for a back injury – when he fell in his dorm and broke his tibia (leg bone) in early 2017. The doctor cast the leg while waiting for a Letter of Guarantee from the employer, to pay for internal fixation. But efforts to contact the employer and to seek MOM’s help to get them to pay proved fruitless, so TWC2 provided the necessary payments. Total cost \$8,880.

The third large medical expense was for a client who developed an infected fistula (abnormal opening between two hollow spaces in the body) after sitting on a wire. He initially thought this was a small injury, but with infection it became painful and more difficult to treat. The first surgery was performed in 2017, costing TWC2 \$1,308. This was followed by two more surgical procedures in early 2018. MOM did not accept the claim for work injury compensation, and the employer failed to respond to requests for repayment.

TWC2’s assistance in attending to these medical needs meant that these three clients have a much better chance of achieving a successful recovery from their injuries.

2.9 Project Roof

Project Roof provides short-term housing subsidies for a maximum of 10 clients, chosen based on severity of injury, degree of indebtedness, mental state, and the importance of their continued presence in Singapore for medical or legal issues.

Project Roof	2017	2016
No of clients	20	30
Total expenditure	\$20,330	\$25,870

2.10 Outreach

Outreach is aimed at informing the wider migrant-worker community of our mission. In 2017 our team of Social Workers led 10 Outreach Sundays assisted by volunteers from each month’s Heartbeat session. They went to locations like Lucky Plaza, Little India, Aljunied and City Hall, targeting Filipino, Bangladeshi, Indian, Chinese and Burmese workers. Our Social Workers were assisted by members from the Indonesian Family Network (IFN) during their Outreach at Paya Lebar, an area frequented by many Indonesian domestic workers.

2.11 Wednesday Clinic

Started in 2014, Wednesday Clinic’s aim is to support our Social Workers in managing more complex salary, injury or criminal cases. The team’s name derives from its practice of meeting clients at the office every Wednesday. The team helps clients understand their options and the associated costs and risks, prepare for meetings or court appointments, and access pro bono legal representation if needed. The team also monitors and tracks MOM practices, key court rulings, and identifies gaps in the law or its application faced by migrant workers.

As in previous years, Wednesday Clinic experienced a marked increase in the number of cases in 2017. All 107 clients were male Bangladeshi or Indian Work Permit or S-Pass holders, most from the construction or shipyard sectors.

Wednesday Clinic	2017	2016	2015
Clients	107	57	36
Volunteers (not including interns)	12	7	3
Interpreters	15	-	-

In Apr 2017, MOM's salary claim process was significantly altered due to the enactment of the new Employment Claims Act. The process now includes Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Mediation (TADM) for mediation (replacing MOM) and the Employment Claims Tribunal (ECT) for adjudication (replacing MOM's so-called Labour Court). The new process is more efficient and transparent, but also more formal and no legal representation is allowed for either party. In this more traditional court setting, it is essential that workers are prepared to clearly present their case, and detail and evidence the salary owed.

During the year, we saw a jump in the number of salary claims at Wednesday Clinic. Nearly three quarters of our cases were either salary claims or enforcement of salary claims. There was also an increase in enforcement problems, where a worker receives a court order for his employer to pay owed salary, but the employer does not pay.

Eighteen percent of our cases were injury cases, mainly where the worker claims that he sustained an injury at work, but the employer denies that it was a workplace injury. Wednesday Clinic assisted these workers by helping obtain and organise medical evidence to support their claim. Another eight percent were criminal cases and Wednesday Clinic helped the clients obtain legal advice about their options and legal representation where required.

In conjunction with the Law Society, Wednesday Clinic held a well-attended open house for lawyers. Clinic members also spoke at events organised by Justice Without Borders, Yale-NUS, and Linklaters Singapore to educate prospective volunteers on the ways they can help migrant workers. The Pro Bono Services Office of the Law Society of Singapore and numerous law firms and lawyers provided generous assistance to TWC2 clients this year. In addition, Linklaters Singapore Pte Ltd is interested to provide \$10,000 financial support for the Clinic's clients and operations, and in having their staff volunteer with the Clinic.

Among our volunteers, Wednesday Clinic enjoyed strong support from our Bengali and Tamil interpreters and translators. These two volunteer communities now provide TWC2 daily assistance if required – in person at the office, attending meetings with lawyers, debriefing clients by phone after meetings, and translating documents.

In addition to interpreters, there were 12 regular volunteers and about eight student/intern volunteers. Besides meeting in the office on Wednesdays, our volunteers helped educate clients about their claim options, calculated owed salaries and prepared claim statements, and accompanied clients to make police reports, to meet with lawyers, or to attend court.

In 2018, we aim to continue to standardise and formalise our orientation, training, and systems processes for better coordination and communication inside and outside TWC2, and

to deepen our collaboration with MOM, the Law Society, NGOs, universities, and the legal community.

2.12 Filipino Family Network & Indonesian Family Network

FFN and IFN are independent support groups of Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers affiliated to TWC2, many of whom are also our members. We support them by providing the space and some funding for their activities. They in turn contribute to our work in many areas, including public and media engagement, research, outreach and case counseling.

IFN participated in a TWC2-HOME joint workshop to draft a shadow report for submission on issues faced by Indonesian migrant workers to the UN 27th Session on the Migrant Workers Convention. Past president Ummairoh represented TWC2 at the ASEAN Framework Instrument on Migrant Worker and ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour meetings organised by Migrant Forum Asia (MFA). At the year-end IFN graduation, 99 students received certificates for successful completion of Dressmaking, English language and computer literacy at basic, intermediate and advance levels as well as handicraft and Javanese Bridal make-up courses. IFN volunteers also took part in two of our TWC2 Outreach Sundays.

FFN participated in the ASEAN Summit Workshop jointly organised by TWC2, HOME and MFA and collaborated with other organisations to conduct other skills upgrading courses for its members. At their year-end graduation, 52 FFN students received certificates for successful completion of courses including Yoga, Photography, Crochet Arts and Dressmaking.

Both IFN and FFN took part in our International Migrants Day Celebration held in Dec in conjunction with the annual fund-raiser, ♥@theMovies.

PART 3: ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Organisational support through Human Resource, Fund-Raising, and IT Support is essential for us to pursue our core activities.

3.1 Human Resource

In Jan 2017, TWC2 hired a General Manager to run the office. All of TWC2's staff now report to him. Ethan Guo was selected from 17 applicants shortlisted for a job interview. Ethan comes with many years of work experience in media and public relations. In his first year at TWC2 he helmed a very successful 3G Phone donation campaign among his other managerial duties. The hiring of a General Manager has provided much-needed relief for some core Executive Members who were devoting many hours to the daily running of the organization. This has freed them to devote more time to oversee or invigorate major TWC2 projects that are reliant on volunteers.

The number of social work associates dropped to three when Jason Lee Kang Yao left in Sep 2017. TWC2 did not think it necessary to hire a replacement. The existing work load can be handled by the remaining three associates with the help of volunteers and the General Manager who wants to familiarise himself with case work. Overall establishment strength was down from seven to six (five full time and one part-time) by end of the year.

In 2017, TWC2 hosted six interns, three each from Singapore and foreign universities. This compares with 11 in 2016. One reason for the reduced number is a conscious decision not to take more than 2 interns at any one time because of space constraints in the office. Over the years, usage of the office by volunteers has grown as TWC2 broadens its range of activities.

3.2 Fund Raising

Total expenditure rose to more than \$880,000 from around \$580,000 in the previous year. Finding the money to cover the expanded cost was a constant worry through the year. This significant increase of about 52% arose from two causes. First was the increased cost of the Cuff Road Project when, beginning in Apr 2017, TWC2 raised the quality of meals provided by paying more per serving to the vendors. This was in response to persistent feedback from workers and volunteers that the food provided was not up to standard. The numbers seeking to eat with TCRP also increased. The 200 or so that would normally turn up for dinner swelled to 500 on some occasions. As a result, the annual expenditure for TCRP more than doubled from \$170,000 to \$370,000 in 2017. The second contributing cause to TWC2's higher overall expenses for the year was the salary for the new General Manager position.

Fortunately, funds raised in 2017 were sufficient to cover the amount and the organization's accounts did not go into the red. For this TWC2 has to thank Lee Foundation. In response to a request, the Foundation donated an additional \$250,000 on top of its annual funding for TWC2. This was to help cover the TCRP budget. TWC2 continues to be grateful to other major donors such as Chen Su Lan Trust, Ms Stefanie Yuen, Mr Ho Kwon Ping as well as others who have chosen not to be named.

For its annual fundraiser in Dec 2017, TWC2 organised ♥@theMovies for the second time. A blockbuster Thor Ragnarok was screened at The Projector with lunch and lots of prizes for the workers attending. As per tradition, this was held in conjunction with TWC2's marking of International Migrants Day. As in 2016, the event was made possible with a grant from Lee

Foundation. Once again, Cargill TSF Asia Private Ltd stepped in with a donation to buy a big batch of tickets. This year, NTUC Fairprice also donated shopping vouchers. The 2017 ♥@theMovies raised close to \$50,000, good but somewhat less than the record sum of \$60,000 raised in the previous year.

For 2018, we need to step up efforts to find funding for the \$420,000 budget which we expect TCRP will require.

TWC2 applied for IPC status on 8 Jun 2017. At the time of Exco approving the final draft of this report, the Ministry of Social and Family Development has not made a decision.

3.3 The Executive Committee

The TWC2 Executive Committee (*see listing on page 1*) meets on alternate months during the year. In 2017, the Exco met six times, twice in the 2015-2017 term and four times in the current term. In addition to the face-to-face meetings, the Exco also engaged regularly in online discussions. Where decisions are made following these discussions, they are formally adopted at the next face-to-face meeting.

In late 2017, Loh Wei Hung tendered his resignation from the Executive Committee, effective 1 Jan 2018. This Annual General Meeting will be electing a new Exco Member to take his place.

TWC2 Executive Committee 2017-2019
22 Apr 2018

Contributors:

Noorashikin Abdul Rahman, Russell Heng, Alex Au, Debbie Fordyce, Christine Pelly, Beverly Shaddick, Hana Gwee, Pat Meyer, Tamera Fillinger, Ethan Guo, and Staff of TWC2