

Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2)

Committee Report 2018

Executive Committee 2017-2019

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	<i>Hana Gwee elected 22 Apr 2018</i>

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Dayspace	Gwee Min Yi
Discover Singapore	Irene Ong & Marcel Bandur
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Project Roof	Ethan Guo
Road-to-Recovery (R2R)	<i>Hana Gwee from 1 Jan 2018</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The Committee Report is an overview of TWC2 activities in the preceding year 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.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
PART 1 – ADVOCACY.....	3
1.1 Research.....	3
1.2 Communications.....	4
1.3 Public Engagement.....	4
1.4 Engagement with Policy Makers and Stakeholders	5
PART 2 – DIRECT SERVICES	6
2.1 Case Work & Helpline.....	6
2.2 The Cuff Road Project (TCRP).....	7
2.3 Dayspace	8
2.4 Discover Singapore.....	9
2.5 FareGo – Transport Assistance.....	9
2.6 Road-to-Recovery (R2R).....	10
2.7 Medical Grants.....	11
2.8 Roof & Lifeline – Shelter Assistance.....	11
2.9 Outreach.....	12
2.10 Wednesday Clinic.....	12
2.11 Filipino Family Network (FFN) & Indonesian Family Network (IFN)	13
FFN Activities	13
IFN Activities	14
PART 3 – ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT.....	15
3.1 Human Resource.....	15
3.2 Heartbeat – Volunteer Recruitment.....	15
3.3 Fund Raising.....	16
3.4 IT Support.....	16
3.5 The Executive Committee.....	17
Contributors.....	17

PART 1 – ADVOCACY

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

1.1 Research

Based on the findings of TWC2's 2017 research release, *Labour Protection for the Vulnerable*, as well as dialogue with senior TWC2 volunteers, the Research Subcommittee streamlined its focus into seven priority areas in 2018:

- a. Mandatory electronic payments
- b. Dual reporting for workplace injuries
- c. Standard employment contracts
- d. Labour mobility (allowing change of employer)
- e. Mandatory day off for FDWs
- f. Reducing recruitment fees and kickbacks
- g. Long-term vision

Policy Briefs on electronic payments, dual reporting, standard contracts, and labour mobility were completed and published in 2018. The aim is to use these Policy Briefs to galvanize policy change as well as raise public awareness. Policy briefs on mandatory days off, recruitment fees and kickbacks, and long-term vision are being drafted.

Three research projects under the Research Subcommittee were completed in 2018. *Costs of Low-waged Labour Migration: Difficulties, Implications and Recommendations* was published in Nov 2018. This project explored the non-financial difficulties experienced by low-wage Bangladeshi migrant workers, including the social and emotional costs of migration. The Mandatory Two Days Off project and the Recruitment Costs project are undergoing editing and are pending publication. The Mandatory Two Days Off project looked into the motivations of domestic workers who chose to forego their mandatory weekly day-off in exchange for compensation, and on the feasibility of implementing a mandatory two days off a month. The Recruitment Costs project investigated the costs for migrant workers to come to Singapore.

Besides research by the Subcommittee, TWC2 also published an analysis of 508 clients who obtained a meal card from TWC2 in Apr 2018. The findings showed that on average, clients wait 11 months for compensation. In Oct 2018, TWC2 published a report based on interviews with 106 Bangladeshi workers. The report found significant job-type churn amongst workers, as well as a major reduction of first-time arrivals of Bangladeshi workers after 2015.

The Research Subcommittee began coordinating large-scale data collection for quantitative research in 2018. In Aug, we collected 361 responses from South Asian construction and shipyard workers for a study on salary slips, particularly whether workers are receiving them. The report is currently being drafted. In Oct and Nov, we collected 216 responses for a study on IPAs, and whether workers receive them and are paid what the IPAs state they should be paid. Data collection was paused due to the onset of the rainy season, and will resume in 2019.

Besides research work, our monthly Research Forums continue to be highly successful. They are a regular opportunity for us and invited speakers to present and share research findings.

Discussions have been lively and attendance has generally been around 50 people each time, comprising a mix of TWC2 staff and volunteers, and external parties such as doctors or employment agency representatives.

On an ad-hoc basis, the Research Subcommittee also participated in the review process of legislation affecting low-wage migrant workers. In Nov 2018, we collaborated with HOME on a joint submission on the Employment (Amendment) Bill. The submission was sent to Members of Parliament for their consideration during the Second Reading debate.

The Research Subcommittee also participated in public consultations on Proposed Reforms to the Civil Justice System by the Civil Justice Commission and the Civil Justice Review Committee. The submission made in Jan 2019 addressed proposals relating to a judge-led approach and reforms to the enforcement regime.

1.2 Communications

We continued an active communications programme through 2018. On our website, we published a total of 111 posts, which was a mix of stories about workers' experience and articles of a more advocacy nature.

In June, we broke a story about the "\$1,600 scam" in which employers take advantage of the lower levy payable for experienced workers earning at least \$1,600 a month, without actually paying that salary.

While aimed primarily at the general public, the website posts also signal to the Ministry of Manpower the issues we see from our ground work, and the policy improvements needed. However, the increasingly dominant use of smartphones over computers to access the internet has made it urgent for us to update the structural frame of the website and make it mobile-responsive. This will be our project in 2019.

Our Facebook and other social media accounts remained active through 2018. But social media is not just for raising migrant worker issues. We use it to raise funds as well, especially for badly needed surgery for injured workers. We have featured the many types of work done by our staff and volunteers reaching out to the wider migrant communities.

With the help of a well-wisher, we were also able to boost our posts thereby increasing the reach of funding appeals and other messaging.

Our engagement with mainstream media continued and strengthened through 2018. We can count at least nine articles in the mainstream press that featured our work or our cases.

1.3 Public Engagement

The Public Engagement (PE) team is the voice of TWC2 to students, teachers, researchers, media and others special interest groups looking to know more about migrant worker issues and our advocacy. Wide media coverage has resulted in increased interest especially among students who are more often choosing to study this marginalised group for their projects and research topics. TWC2 receives calls and emails almost daily for information and meetings.

The PE team consists of senior volunteers with the necessary breadth of knowledge and experience to speak on the subject. Meetings may be conducted at TWC2 office, during the meal program at one of the restaurants, at TWC2 Dayspace, in schools or informally at coffee shops. One popular form of engagement consists of a presentation at DaySpace followed by a walking tour to places where workers congregate in Little India and Farrer Park.

In 2018, we gave presentations to students from River Valley High, Nan Chiau High and Holy Innocents High Schools; Anglo-Chinese, Catholic and Temasek Junior Colleges and United World College SEA; Ngee Ann Polytechnic; SUSS SR Nathan School of Human Development; NUS LKY School of Public Policy; NUS SSH School of Public Health; NUS Asia Research Institute; NTU School of Social Sciences; and Maastricht University, The Netherlands; Center for Sociology of Innovation of the Ecole des Mines, France; Department of Geography and Planning, Liverpool UK; Curtin University, Australia; University of Adelaide, Australia; Peaceboat University, Japan, and various other groups and researchers.

Talking to and engaging with local and foreign students, researchers and media allows us to present facts and statistics about transient workers and explain TWC2's stance and objectives. We hope to provide alternative perspectives and narratives about the lives and role of transient workers in Singapore. In the process, we also learn their opinions and assumptions about low-wage workers, which help us to better target our presentations and connect with people who may one day contribute towards a more humane treatment for transient workers.

1.4 Engagement with Policy Makers and Stakeholders

In 2018, TWC2 continued to attend case conferences at the invitation of the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) roughly every few months. These meetings on concluded cases and on-going generic issues are opportunities for us to seek clarification and highlight gaps. While the level of engagement could be better, these meetings together with an email back-channel for daily communication are helpful in establishing trust and a working relationship. In time, we hope this will lead to deeper engagement.

We also continued our engagement with Members of Parliament. In Feb, President Noor wrote to MPs proposing six topics on the theme of migrant worker welfare which they could raise in their speeches during the 2018 Budget debates. MPs also help us gain a better understanding of the government thinking behind a policy or measure through their questions to Ministers. We renewed this engagement in the latter half of the year when Parliament appointed a new batch of Nominated Members (NMPs).

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 Case Work & Helpline

We had a total of 2,088 new registrations of clients in 2018. Out of this figure, 1,033 were taken up for case work, which involves consultation, follow up and case management. The figure covers case work handled by the Social Work team as well as by TWC2 volunteers, which more accurately depicts the caseload seen across the entire organisation.

The table below includes cases initially registered in the previous year but handled through the year under review. Such cases are however few.

Case work stats in 2017 and 2018

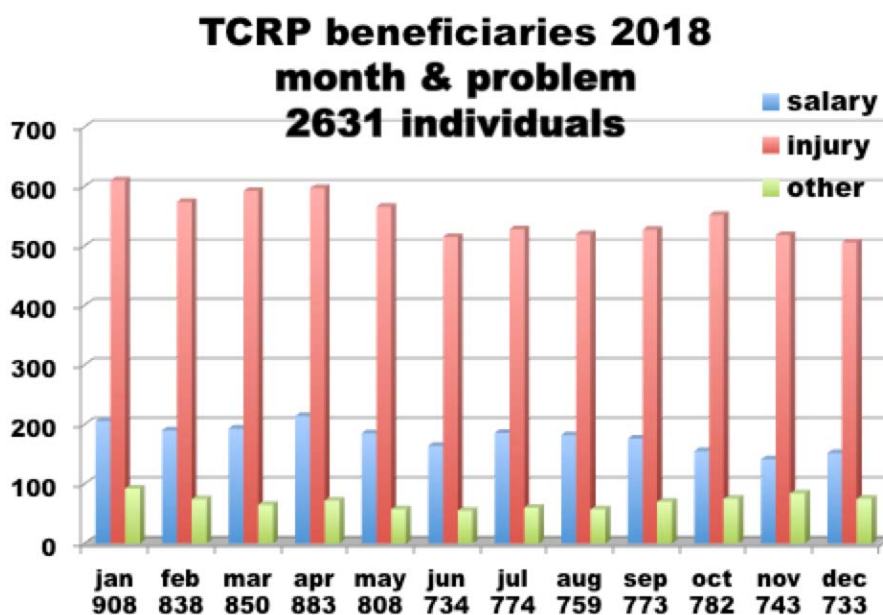
	New problems registered	New problems registered	Cases handled	Cases handled
Type of problem	2018	2017	2018	2017
Injury at work	1,131	1,325	483	512
Salary claim	697	800	420	455
Investigation	80	48	32	27
Recruitment scam	12	48	9	25
Premature termination	16	29	10	17
Injury outside work	12	7	8	6
Illness	9	10	4	6
Work pass revoked by MOM	8	11	5	4
Kickbacks	3	11	3	9
Other classifications	120	97	59	69
Total	2,088	2,386	1,033	1,130
Nationality	2018	2017	2018	2017
Bangladesh	1,747	2,161	906	1,008
China	2	12	3	11
India	319	396	110	99
Indonesia	1	5	1	5
Malaysia	1	2	1	0
Myanmar	0	5	1	3
Philippines	3	1	3	1
Sri Lanka	13	2	8	1
Other	2	2	0	2
Total	2,088	2,386	1,033	1,130
Gender	2018	2017	2018	2017
Male	2,075	2,374	1,025	1,118
Female	13	12	8	12
Total	2,088	2,386	1,033	1,130

A slight drop in work injury cases was observed. The number of clients with salary claims however remained high. Bangladeshi workers also remained the largest by nationality.

As always, Helpline numbers are hard to sort out as they include calls from those who simply need information or referrals. Such calls and brief consultations are not tracked since no direct services are extended. When diverted to Social Workers' mobile phones, Helpline calls are also mixed with direct calls from workers. It is estimated, however, that Social Workers fielded around 110 helpline calls in 2018, including about 10 from female domestic workers.

2.2 The Cuff Road Project (TCRP)

The Cuff Road Project serves an immediate need for sustenance. TCRP clients are typically South Asian male workers who have no right to seek employment after filing a claim with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) over injury, salary or other disputes¹, and who consequently have no reliable access to food or income support. TCRP began in Mar 2008² to reach out to these workers who were stranded in Little India and Farrer Park after quitting their company dormitories out of fear of repatriation, lack of access to medical treatment and violence or threats by the employer.

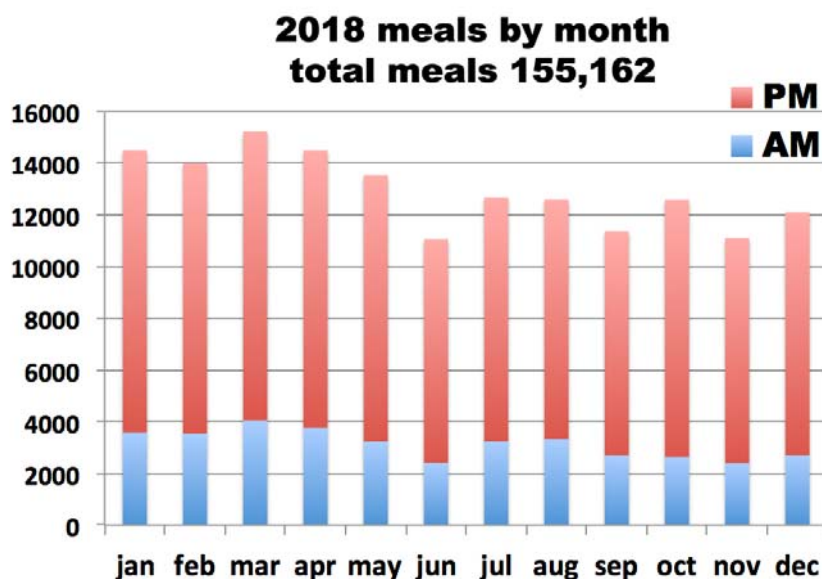


In 2018, TCRP supported 2,631 clients with a variety of services, primarily food. This figure includes new 2018 registrations as well as cases from 2017 or even earlier – clients whose cases remained unresolved at the start of 2018. Meals are served eleven times a week: mornings and evenings Monday to Friday, and lunch on Saturday. About 150 new clients are registered each month. Those with injury compensation claims tend to remain with the program for at least a year, because of the time needed for injuries to heal and permanent incapacity assessed. Salary claims are resolved more quickly.

¹ Other problems include criminal investigation, premature termination, assisting in MOM investigation into employer activities, and recruitment scams.

² In 2018, TCRP celebrated two milestones - its tenth anniversary and one million meals since it began.

The drop in number of clients – from 908 in Jan to 733 in Dec – is most likely due to increasing difficulty in finding housing in this area. Many second-floor shophouse rooms are considered unauthorised dormitories and are systematically being shut down.



Clients receive a token at each meal which can be redeemed at one of four restaurants, two Bangladeshi and two Indian. TWC2 pays the restaurants \$2.00 for breakfast and \$2.80 for the evening meal. Clients can top up the token with their own money if they want extra meat or vegetables. However, TWC2 ensures that the amount served on presentation of a token alone should be nutritionally adequate; there is actually no need for topping up.

Beyond the immediate need for food, we provide assistance in navigating the system of injury and salary claims and its legal complexities. Our volunteers are on hand to listen and assess the situation, and refer them to the TWC2 office or other TWC2 teams for help with more difficult issues. We are entirely dependent on volunteers to man the program – 172 in 2018, with 42 serving five to nine times, and 48 serving ten times or more. Without our regular volunteers to offer experience and knowledge, the program could not continue.

A prosperous and well-governed country like Singapore should be able to boast that migrant workers are content with their work, that their problems are managed humanely and expeditiously, and that they are able to return home with enough to support their family and improve their circumstances. Unfortunately, the problems plaguing our clients at TCRP demonstrate that Singapore is not there yet.

2.3 Dayspace

TWC2's DaySpace serves as our field office in Little India and Farrer Park where many clients live, and is where initial contact and provision of direct services mostly take place. Managed by our Social Workers, Dayspace is well-utilised particularly on weekends and weekday evenings. It serves as a convenient venue for multiple purposes: meetings, talks, training, medical clinics and day schools; Sunday enrichment classes and activities under FFN and IFN³; a lending library and studio for a migrant-worker music band; and as an emergency shelter.⁴

³ See 2.11 Filipino Family Network (FFN) & Indonesian Family Network (IFN)

⁴ See 2.8 Roof & Lifeline – Shelter Assistance

2.4 Discover Singapore

The Discover Singapore programme organises excursions and social activities for TWC2 clients. The aim is to foster meaningful interactions between migrant workers and the local community towards mutual understanding, empathy and respect. Importantly, the outings allow our clients to escape the monotony of daily struggles and engage in much-needed social interaction and outdoor activities. We hope that, despite their misfortunes, they will return home 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. In 2018, they included Night Safari, Gardens by the Bay, Esplanade, Netflix, Credit Suisse, Discovery Channel, iFLY Singapore, Indian Women's Association, CitiClub, Yale-NUS, NIE, and River Valley High School. They provided in-kind donations, such as admission tickets, bus transfers, 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 minimise costs to TWC2 whenever possible.

Discover Singapore runs at least one and usually two outings per month, organised by 83 active volunteers and two coordinators. Each outing brings out between 20 and 80 clients. 2018 destinations included St John's Island for a sleepover, Universal Studios Singapore, MBS Observation Deck, iFLY Singapore, Night Safari, Gardens by the Bay, RSAF50 Air Force Show, Trick Eye Museum and Singapore River Cruise. Our activities have been featured in local media, such as the Straits Times and radio stations.

2.5 FareGo – Transport Assistance

TWC2 provides transport subsidies to clients who have a real transport need but have no income because they are not allowed to seek employment. Project FareGo provides EZ-link cards to injured clients with medical appointments. This enables them to see their doctors and attend physiotherapy consultations.

In 2018, we spent \$33,208 on transport subsidies compared to \$25,505 in 2017. The increase was due mainly to an expansion of the FareGo programme in mid-2018, from a quota limit of 17 cards to 20 cards a week. Due to eligibility considerations, we do not always hit this limit.

	2018	2017
Total number of disbursements	1145	1265
Unique beneficiaries	771	822
By Type		
• EZ-Link cards; FareGo	863	771
• EZ-Link cards; social workers	2	37
• Cash for transport	280	457
Total all types	1145	1265
EZ-Link cards; average no. of cards issued per week	16.6	14.8
Expenditure on transport subsidies	\$33,208	\$25,505

As a key control measure, no client gets more than one EZ-link card every four months. But to allow some flexibility, social workers are authorised to give out EZ-link cards to clients who have transport needs but do not meet the Farego conditions. Typically, they would be salary claimants (FareGo is only for injury cases) who live in a distant dormitory but needs to attend case consultations with us or MOM appointments.

In addition, for those who need to make a one-off journey to a hospital or MOM, FareGo volunteers and social workers may also give out small amounts in cash (usually under \$5).

2.6 Road-to-Recovery (R2R)

For injured workers with regular treatment visits, R2R assists by accompanying them to hospital, interfacing with hospital staff and making co-payments where employers have delayed or refused payment. Transport to and from hospital is provided for those with mobility issues, and health supplements for those with special diets.

Table below shows volunteer and client numbers and expenditure for the past three years. In 2018 cases appeared to be more long-drawn, with more follow-up treatment needed.

	2018	2017	2016
Number of hospital visits with R2R	161	158	270
R2R expenditure	\$12,700	\$8,944	\$15,374
Average cost per hospital visit	\$79	\$57	\$57
Number of clients	68	90	132
Average hospital visits/worker	2.4	1.8	2.0
Average hospital visits/month	13	13	22
Active volunteers at end of year	8	10	18

R2R volunteers are supported with briefings on Work Injury Compensation Act, MOM claim process, R2R policies, injury case studies, etc. Training also includes shadowing opportunities.

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

Under the partnership arrangement, Mt Alvernia provides a doctor, two clinic staff and prescription medicines; TWC2 provides the space and case management of clients who need follow-up treatment or tests through R2R. Clinic volunteers often included medical students.

From 2018, Mt Alvernia has also made available subsidized MRIs on a case-by-case basis.

	2018	2017	2016 (from Apr)
Number of patients seen	472	666	311
Number of sessions held	22	24	Data not available
Average number of patients/ session	21	28	Data not available

2.7 Medical Grants

Besides the regular R2R programme, TWC2 also assists clients with significant medical needs that were beyond the employer's responsibility and/or ability to pay. While there is the mandatory \$15,000 insurance for non-work related injuries, some medical treatments far exceed this amount.

The following cases are cited using the client's initials.

The three largest medical expenses borne by TWC2 were for PS's cranial reconstruction, removal of lesion and reconstruction of MB's facial bones, and removal of MA's brain tumour.

PS suffered a head injury while cycling one night after work. The fall caused pressure in the brain, which doctors relieved by removing a large portion of the skull. The employer had paid a large amount by the time we were introduced to PS by a mutual friend. After working closely with the employers to discuss the cranioplasty, TWC2 paid \$34,000 for the operation to preserve the shape of S's head, protect the brain, and give PS the chance of a normal future.

MB was discovered to have a vascular lesion in his facial bones after a workplace injury. This was causing him breathing difficulties and frequent nosebleeds. The surgery required removal of bone in his nose and forehead, metal implants, and bone grafts. He was left with a visible scar on the nose but without the symptoms and worry of the lesion growing larger. TWC2 paid more than \$18,000 for this surgery and reconstruction.

MA was known to TWC2 due to his salary dispute in 2017. When he was injured at his subsequent job, he was found to have a brain tumour, slow growing but likely to increase in size and already affecting his hearing. As he had become a friend from the earlier problem, TWC2 felt a responsibility to assist. We were able to share the cost of the tumour removal with the employer, and paid over \$16,000 for this delicate surgery. Months after the surgery MA suffers only from hearing loss in one ear.

2.8 Roof & Lifeline – Shelter Assistance

Due to the high cost of housing in Singapore, it is beyond our means to shelter more than a handful of the most needy clients. In any case, employers are required by law to provide housing for their foreign employees until repatriation. We step in only under extraordinary circumstances, e.g. serious injury or major surgery that makes it difficult for them to use employer accommodation. It is not our policy to house salary claimants.

Shelter assistance is granted in three ways:

- a) **Project Roof** supports up to ten workers at any time with cash subsidies for renting a bunk in a rooming house. Due to the strict eligibility criteria, we do not usually get near the quota limit. Altogether, we assisted 20 clients in 2017 at \$20,330, and the same number in 2018 at \$16,375. Lower rentals account for the lower spending in 2018.
- b) **DaySpace** shelters injured workers whom we know well and trust and who have recovered enough to be able to help take care of the space, which is also an activity centre. No rent is involved for these clients.

- c) **Project Lifeline** supports emergency shelter for female foreign domestic workers, by defraying incidental costs, e.g. transport and toiletries. No rent is involved. Typically, the clients would have suffered mistreatment and cannot return to their employers. In 2018, we sheltered nine cases, two with a volunteer and the rest with a HOME facility.

2.9 Outreach

Outreach is aimed at informing the wider migrant-worker community of our mission. In 2018 our team of Social Workers led 11 Outreach Sundays assisted by volunteers from each month's Heartbeat session. They went to locations like Lucky Plaza, Little India, Aljunied and Paya Lebar, targeting Filipino, Indonesian, Bangladeshi, Indian, and Chinese workers.

For the very first time, the Outreach team had the opportunity to enter worker dormitories on two occasions, each time in Tuas, Penjuru and Kranji locations. We also had the support of the Indonesian Family Network (IFN) and Filipino Family Network (FFN) during the outreach to areas frequented by domestic workers (*see 2.11 FFN & IFN*).

2.10 Wednesday Clinic

Started in 2014, Wednesday Clinic's aim is to support our social workers in managing complex salary, injury or criminal cases that require extra time and assistance. The team's name derives from its practice of meeting clients at the office on Wednesdays. We help clients understand their options and the associated costs and risks, prepare for meetings or court appointments, and access pro bono legal representation if needed. We also monitor and track MOM practices and key court rulings, and identify gaps in the law and its application.

As in previous years, we saw an increase in number of clients in 2018. Most clients were male Bangladeshi or Indian Work Permit or S-Pass holders from construction or shipyard sectors.

In 2018, under a collaboration known as LawLink, two to three in-house lawyers and other volunteers from Linklaters, Credit Suisse and JP Morgan joined us on a rotating basis every Wednesday to review documents, do legal research, assist with cases, and bring fresh perspectives and approaches to our clients' issues.

In 2018, we standardised and formalised our orientation and training of new volunteers, and our systems processes to allow better coordination and communication inside and outside TWC2, and to further our collaboration with MOM, the Law Society, other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), universities, and the legal community. The orientation and training also included our LawLink volunteers.

During the year, the Law Society of Singapore also began hosting meetups of migrant worker NGOs to discuss current issues and ways they can help with training. TWC2 has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Law Society as part of the collaboration, which also included the Centre for Domestic Employees (CDE), Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Skills Training (FAST), Hagar, HealthServe, HOME and Justice Without Borders (JWB).

In late 2018, we discussed a collaboration with the Community Justice Centre (CJC) to allow our volunteers to attend meetings with migrant workers and to debrief them. This collaboration was organised to begin in 2019.

In 2018, of the 110 new cases, 53% were salary matters. Typically, these involved short payment and non-payment of salary and overtime. MOM's salary claim adjudication process was shifted to the new Employment Claims Tribunal (ECT) in the State Courts. In view of the more traditional court format, we assisted our clients to clearly present their cases and evidence of salary owed. Enforcement of successful salary claims remained very challenging.

Injury claims took up 21% of our cases. These are mainly claims for injuries sustained at work but denied as workplace injuries by the employers. We assisted in getting and organising the medical evidence to support the claims. In addition, a number of cases were referred to pro bono lawyers for assistance at the Labour Court. All of these cases were successful, and the clients were paid compensation.

Criminal cases form about 6% of our work, where we helped the clients obtain legal advice and legal representation where required. The remaining 19% of our cases were inquiries about non-work-related injuries, civil suits, employers withholding passports, or lawyer practices. In addition, Wednesday Clinic continued to work on 42 cases started in 2017.

The Law Society Pro Bono Services Office and the following law firms provided generous assistance to our clients in 2018: Covenant Chambers, Dentons Rodyk, Hoh Law, IRB Law, JWS Asia Law, Peter Low & Choo, Simmons & Simmons, Tan Kok Quan, TSMP Law, and Vision Law.

Our members spoke at events organised by Yale-NUS, NUS and at the TWC2 Research Forum.

Among our volunteers, Wednesday Clinic enjoyed strong support from our Bengali and Tamil interpreters and translators. In addition to Wednesdays, they now provide daily assistance to TWC2 – in person at the office, attending meetings with lawyers, debriefing clients by phone after meetings, and translating documents. Besides our interpreters, we draw from a pool of 13 regular volunteers and about ten student/intern volunteers who assist on Wednesdays and other days to educate clients about their claim options, calculate owed salaries and medical leave, prepare claim statements, and accompany clients to make police reports, to meet with lawyers or employers, or to attend court.

2.11 Filipino Family Network (FFN) & Indonesian Family Network (IFN)

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 counselling.

FFN Activities

Training

- 1) AIDA – Facebook Business Seminar, 28 Jan 2018
- 2) Migrant Forum Asia Preparedness for Migration, Development and Re-integration, 25 Mar
- 3) Justice without Borders Migrant Workers' Salary and Injury Claims Seminar, 20 May 2018

Outreach

Outreach with TWC2 social workers at Orchard Road, 25 Feb & 18 Nov 2018

Skills Classes – Total number of graduates: 39

- 1) Basic & Advanced Dressmaking
- 2) Facial Massage & Foot Reflexology
- 3) Crochet & Clay Arts
- 4) Basic Computer Literacy
- 5) Introduction to Basic Flash Photography

Social Gatherings

- 1) Necessary Stage Performance of the Underclass, Marine Parade CC, 27 May 2018
- 2) International Domestic Workers' Day Picnic at Sentosa, Jun 2018
- 3) Garden Festival at Marina Bay Gardens by the Bay, 22 Jul 2018
- 4) National Gallery Visit, 9 Sep 2018
- 5) Tour of Lian Shang Ling Temple and Monastery, 25 Nov 2018
- 6) 10th Anniversary Celebration and Graduation 2018 Ceremony, 11 Nov 2018
- 7) TWC2 Lunch with Heart on International Migrants' Day, 16 Dec 2018

IFN Activities

Training

- 1) Leadership Workshop, 4 Feb 2018, Kampung Ubi CC
- 2) Advocacy training on Indonesian Government's Performance Bond, 11 Feb 2018
- 3) Basic Counseling Skills Training, 29 Apr 2018
- 4) Justice Without Borders Case Clinic, 7 Oct 2018
- 5) Justice Without Borders Case Workers Training, 15 Jul 2018

Outreach

- 1) Outreach with TWC2 social workers, 23 Sep 2018, Kallang Park and Kallang MRT station

Skills classes – Total number of graduates: 103

- 1) Basic & Intermediate English
- 2) Basic & Intermediate Computer Literacy
- 3) Basic, Intermediate & Advanced Dressmaking
- 4) Dressmaking Design
- 5) Cosmetology
- 6) Handicraft

Cultural Activities

- 1) "Sekar Arum" Dance Group
- 2) "Al-Hikmah" Rebana (Hand-Drum) Choir
- 3) "Our Voice" Choir

Social Gatherings

- 1) Breaking of Fast, 20 May 2018
- 2) Hari Raya Celebration, 1 Jul 2018
- 3) FAST Foreign Domestic Worker's Day, 19 Sep 2018
- 4) IFN 2018 Graduation Ceremony, SCWO, 9 Dec 2018
- 5) TWC2 Lunch with Heart on International Migrants' Day, 16 Dec 2018
- 6) Christmas Celebration, 30 Dec 2018

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*

The year 2018 was the second year with General Manager Ethan Guo at the helm keeping the office running smoothly day-to-day. This is important as TWC2 grows its projects and steps up its advocacy work and international networking.

We had some staff movement when one of our three Social Work Associates, Rashika As-Shafi'i, resigned at the end of July. GM Ethan together with the two remaining SW Associates and a core group of experienced volunteers continued to bear the necessary case workload. Following a re-evaluation of the social work team, it was decided that the budget for three SW associates could more effectively support a better-qualified and experienced team of two, comprising a Senior Social Worker and an assistant. The Senior Social Worker would also co-ordinate case work by volunteers and report to the General Manager, who could thus devote more time to supervisory duties and other portfolios such as Public Communications.

During recruitment, the new position of Senior Social Worker was not advertised. Our requirements were very specific, which narrowed the choice down to people who had social work qualifications and/or years of experience in migrant worker issues. Two candidates were shortlisted and by end-2018, after rounds of interviews, we had selected Jason Lee Kang Yao who used to work as a Social Work Associate with TWC2.

Gwee Min Yi resigned early-2019 but was part of the Social Work team during the year under review. Jason Lee Kang Yao joined us as Senior Social Worker in Mar 2019, and now forms the team with Alfiyan Mohamed Sadali.

In 2018, TWC2 also hosted six interns.

3.2 *Heartbeat – Volunteer Recruitment*

Having a small staff, TWC2 continued to rely on teams of volunteers, and *Heartbeat* is our main volunteer recruitment point. In 2018, we held 11 *Heartbeat* sessions at Dayspace, seeing a total of 249 potential volunteers who had registered on Bahamas. This was a further decline from 2017 (266) and 2016 (289).

Actual attendance was marginally higher but not all signed up and not everyone eventually became regular volunteers. This is something we aim to track and improve on.

Attendees at the Heartbeat sessions were 80% Singaporeans and Permanent Residents, and 20% foreigners. Most learnt about TWC2 from online search for volunteer opportunities, word of mouth, news coverage or related activities like our monthly research forum. As for destination areas, the Communications team drew the most interest, followed by Discover

Singapore, Cuff Road Project and Research. In 2019, we expect similar numbers and hope to get more participants interested in field research and case support.

3.3 Fund Raising

Through the first 10 months of 2018, there was a prevailing worry that TWC2 may go into deficit because of larger expenditure. Fortunately we were able to raise more than a million dollars to cover our total expenditure of \$980,600. This gave us a modest surplus of some \$100,000 for 2018.

The larger sum raised was the result of several factors:

- Major donors like Lee Foundation generously gave more when informed of TWC2's financial stress arising from a sharp increase in Cuff Road Project meal numbers
- Increased use of online fundraising
- A higher public profile which attracted large one-off donations from corporations like Cargill TSF, Euromonitor, Paypal and McKinsey Consultants.

After two years of MovieWithHeart as the annual fundraiser in Dec, we decided to resume the old LunchWithHeart format because a suitably large indoor space at Khalsa Association was available. This year's event raised about \$48,000. TWC2 also succeeded in its application to Tote Board's 30th Anniversary Fund-raising Programme that would earn a 40% top-up to what was collected at Lunch With Heart.

There has been a large element of luck in TWC2's capacity to raise funds so far. But we cannot assume that the organization would always raise enough money by mere diligence. Not having an Institution of Public Character⁵ status continues to be a handicap.

Thus in Jun 2017, we applied for IPC status which would make a big difference for potential benefactors. In Aug 2018, however, we were advised by Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) that the application was rejected.

3.4 IT Support

In 2018 we began preparing for an upgrade to *CAMANS*, our case management system. Following internal discussions, an agreed list of required improvements was finalised. A donor gave us a sum of money late 2018 which should help with the cost of software redevelopment, expected to being in 2019.

BAHAMAS, the volunteer and event sign-up system, continued to be well-used.

⁵ Institutions of Public Character (IPCs) are able to issue tax deductible receipts for donors to claim tax deduction on their donation. This makes an IPC generally more attractive to potential donors.

3.5 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee meetings, held on alternate months, were well-attended as always. Early 2018, we started inviting Ordinary Members to attend, and now Research Sub-Committee and Wednesday Clinic are regularly represented. In Oct, we made the switch from even months and since Jan 2019 our meetings are held on odd months. In addition to face-to-face meetings, the Exco engaged in frequent online discussions and where decisions are passed, they are formally endorsed at the next bimonthly meeting.

Following Loh Wei Hung's resignation at end-Dec 2017, the Executive Committee was down to eight members for a couple of months, until Hana Gwee was elected at AGM 2018.

TWC2 Executive Committee 2017-2019
21 Apr 2019

Contributors

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