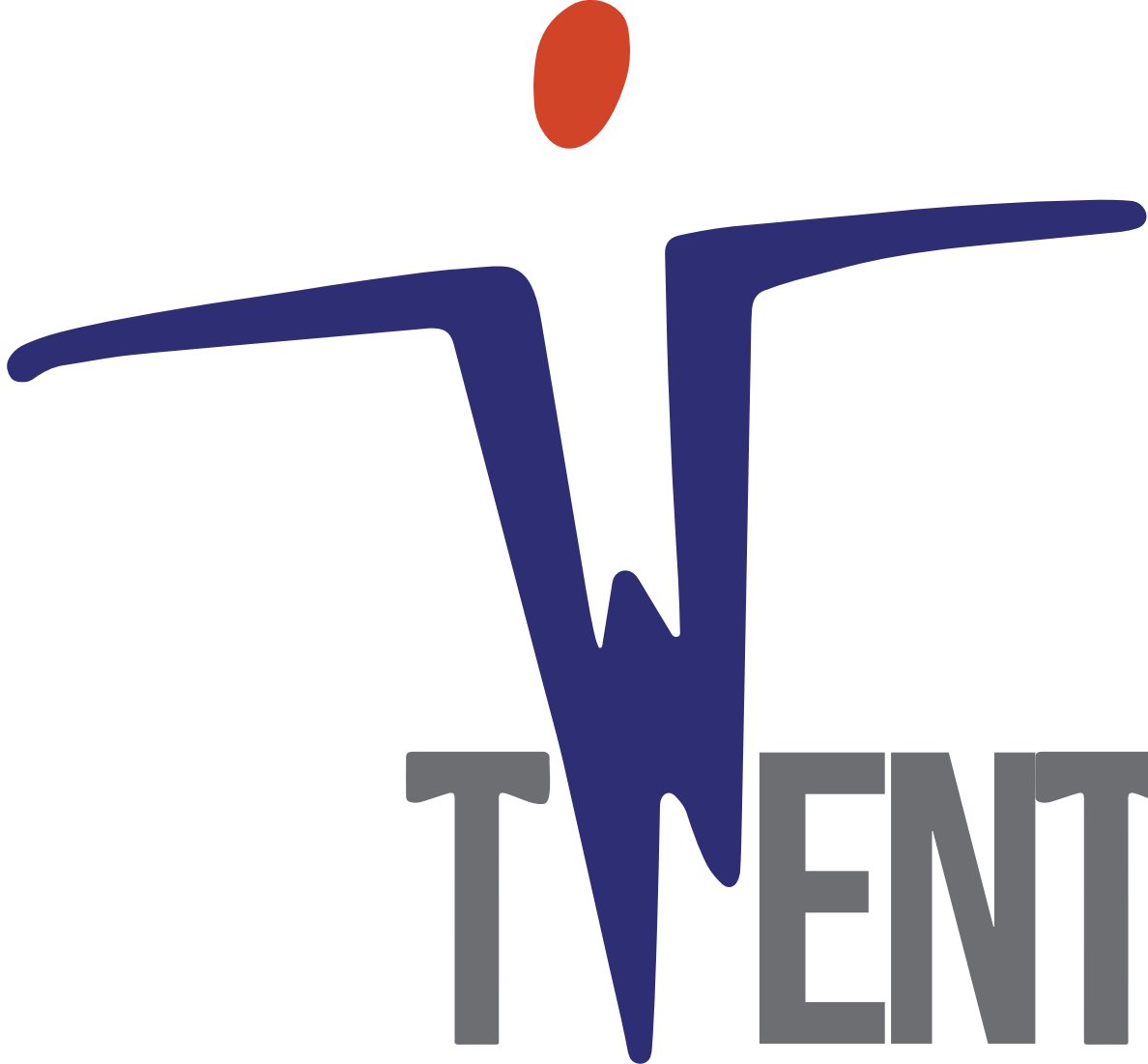




TWENTY TWC² ONE YEARS

OF JUSTICE, DIGNITY AND HOPE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

transient workers count too
IMPACT REPORT 2025



FOREWARD

TWC2's mission is to foster a fairer society by advancing the rights, welfare, and dignity of migrant workers. This report provides an overview of TWC2's initiatives and the improvements that we have secured for low-wage migrant workers in Singapore. It also details the ongoing challenges in advocating for migrant workers, and the work we have ahead of us.

OUR JOURNEY (2004 – 2025)

For more than twenty years, we've walked alongside thousands of migrant workers – providing meal support, offering shelter, paying for urgent medical care, and stepping in with financial support when employers fail their basic obligations.

Beyond that, our long-term goal is systemic improvement of the situation for migrant workers. We have been and will continue to be active advocates for migrant workers in Singapore across multiple areas: employment laws, recruitment reform, working and living conditions, the justice system, healthcare, and transportation.

We have done this work on multiple fronts. Drawing on the cases we see on the ground, we gather evidence about the issues that migrant workers face. This allows us to be a voice for workers in the press, and to comment authoritatively on labour issues and enforcement gaps in public spaces. We also engage a range of audiences, from international institutions to local schools and industry stakeholders, to lay the groundwork for policy reform.

Our work has become more important than before. In the post-Covid19 years, as the construction industry swelled, so have the number of migrant workers facing salary issues. According to MOM's 2024 Employment Standards Report, the incidence of foreign workers filing salary claims has more than doubled from 2.1 per 1,000 employees in 2021 to 4.64 per 1,000 employees in 2024.

Global shifts have also brought changes in our migrant worker landscape. New legislation in the EU on clean supply chains has brought shifts in Singapore's marine sector, making recruitment reforms more urgent than ever. Political issues in source countries also mean that migrant workers are more vulnerable than before.

As we respond to the changing situation on the ground, how has our organisation helped to improve the overall unfair condition that these migrant workers face?

Read on for the progress we've made, and highlights from the past year.

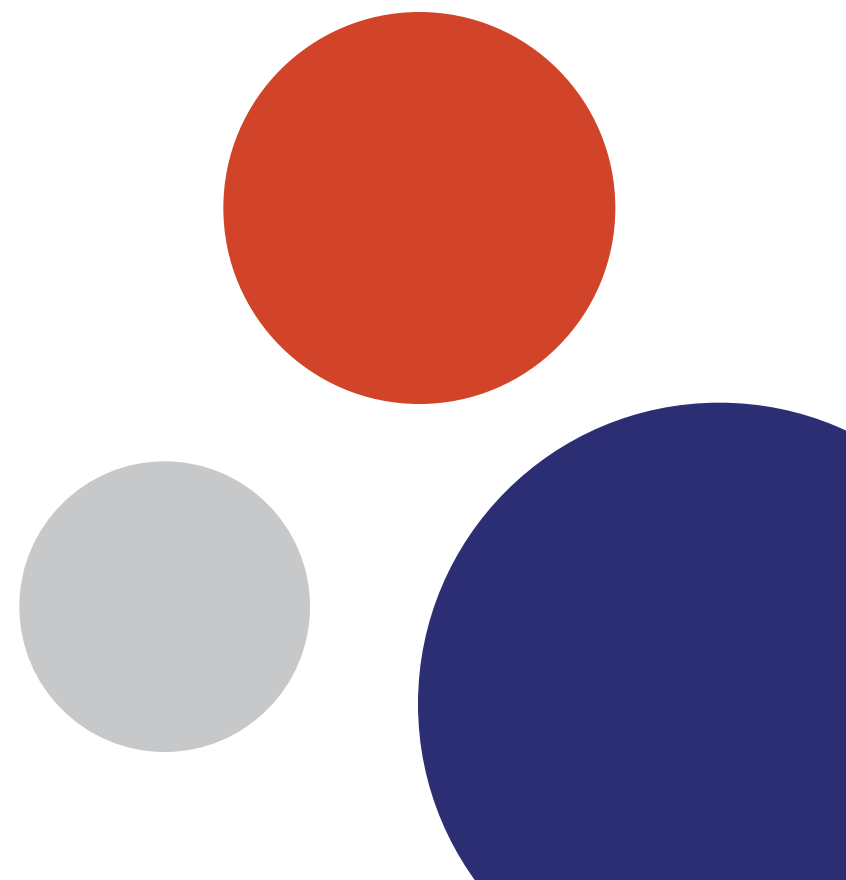


TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Foreward
4	2025 in review
5	Impact Area 1: Greater access to justice
6	Manipulation of evidence
6	Information dearth
6	Sustenance and vulnerability
6	No winning solution
7	What TWC2 did in 2025
7	Legal support
7	Helpful templates
7	Reaching out to the Myanmar community
7	Educating the public through media
8	Impact Area 2: Improve working conditions
8	Better dormitories
9	Better medical care
10	Impact Area 3: Reduce vulnerability
10	Empowerment
11	Enforcement
12	Special mention for Myanmar workers
13	Impact Area 4: Raise the profile of migrant workers
14	2025 Impact by numbers
15	Two focus areas for the long term
16	Support us



2025 IN REVIEW

Last year, TWC2 issued its first ever impact report. In the report, we covered the following impact areas, formed from two decades of understanding the needs and priorities of migrant workers themselves.

GREATER ACCESS TO JUSTICE

1

Singapore has law protecting migrant workers, but justice depends on everyone's ability to navigate the legal system - something many workers lack the means to do so. TWC2 bridges the gap, making legal redress more accessible. The result: Justice feels within reach, and employers are put on notice. Mistreated workers can, and do fight back by taking them to court.



IMPROVE WORKING CONDITION

2

Sometimes laws and regulations fall short in Singapore. Policymakers have to set them right by plugging the gap. TWC2 together with other civil society actors have triggered some of these necessary policy reforms.



REDUCE VULNERABILITY

3

TWC2 offers food, shelter, transport, and living allowances - crucial support that reduces dependence on abusive employers and gives workers the strength to speak up and seek justice.



RAISE THE PROFILE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

4

Through consistent research and reporting on our website, TWC2 has kept migrant worker issues in public view. The Ministry of Manpower reads us. So do MPs on both sides of the house - some even raise our concerns in Parliament, using our findings to demand data and accountability.



A year has passed. In this update, let's talk about what has happened across these four areas.



IMPACT AREA:

1 GREATER ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Giving low-wage migrant workers better access to justice means empowering them with information about their rights. This includes knowledge on how to report abuses safely, as well as how to obtain affordable legal help and language support. It also means ensuring that workers are protected from retaliation, and that our legal systems are efficient and transparent.

What are the key issues that migrant workers face?

The following stories of two construction workers, Bissek and Proddi (names changed for their protection), are illustrative of the kinds of cases we see at TWC2.

Bissek, a construction worker, had not received his salary for three months. When his boss finally gave him the money in cash, he also made Bissek sign on blank payment vouchers in front of a camera. Subsequently, Bissek was forced to return the cash or face

cancellation of his Work Permit. While the boss promised to deposit the money into his bank account the following day, it did not happen. Bissek complained to MOM, and his employer cancelled his Work Permit within two days.

<https://twc2.org.sg/2026/03/03/boss-does-not-pay-salary-prefers-a-cover-up-bisseks-story/>

Bissek and Proddi were among well over a hundred employees of a cluster of three companies who were similarly owed months of salary. They came to TWC2 seeking help in the months of Nov-Dec 2025.

After failing to pay him for five months, Proddi's boss forced him to thumbprint blank salary vouchers in an attempt to cover up for the nonpayment. Proddi reached out to TWC2, and we helped him to file a complaint with MOM.



Screen grab of Proddi's video, in which his boss forces him to thumbprint blank receipts in a car

<https://twc2.org.sg/2026/03/09/boss-does-not-pay-salary-prefers-a-cover-up-proddis-story/>

These are not isolated cases. Their numbers point to a system that leaves workers vulnerable to exploitative employers. Singapore has laws against such exploitation. However, when things go wrong, access to justice does not come easily to migrant workers. Why is that so?



Here is a profile of the hurdles that a migrant worker may encounter while seeking justice:

MANIPULATION OF EVIDENCE

To sustain a complaint against an employer, proof is needed. The burden of gathering such evidence falls unfairly on workers like Bissek and Proddi. Migrant workers are disadvantaged when unscrupulous employers fabricate evidence, or fail to issue the right timecards and payslips.

INFORMATION DEARTH

Low-wage migrant workers, especially those new to Singapore, may not know their employment rights. When they encounter issues at work, they then face a series of frightening questions: where and how to seek help?

SUSTENANCE AND VULNERABILITY

This is underpinned by several key considerations. Filing a claim against an employer usually means losing a job and facing difficulties with basic needs: food, accommodation, and remittance for the family at home. Although Singapore’s laws compel recalcitrant employers to continue providing accommodation and food, experience tells us there is no guarantee that these would be adequate.

NO WINNING SOLUTION

For migrant workers, reclaiming owed salaries does not necessarily constitute a satisfactory outcome. Too often, victory comes at the cost of losing their jobs, while not being allowed or able to find another job. Yet, because of exorbitant recruitment fees incurred for their jobs in Singapore, it is crucial for them to stay and continue earning money. The thought of going home to service a crippling debt is a great deterrent to seeking redress. Thus, putting up with the injustice becomes the preferred hardship; and the exploitation continues.

WHAT TWC2 DID IN 2025

Over the years, TWC2 has built a team of caseworkers and volunteers who reach out to workers, plug information gaps and, where necessary, guide them through difficult processes. At the same time, TWC2's suite of services (food, shelter, medical assistance, and legal support) goes some distance to alleviate the worker's anxiety. Starting with one Case Officer in 2010, we now have three, as well as a Legal Officer. Years of experience have sharpened our expertise, and improved the efficacy of our work. We continue to empower workers with knowledge about their rights, and stand by those who choose to seek redress.

LEGAL SUPPORT

IMPACT

TWC2 **assisted** in 12 legal cases (3 civil claims, 3 cases of enforcement of Employment Claims Tribunal (ECT) orders, 2 complaints to the Law Society of Singapore, 2 objection proceedings under the Work Injury Compensation Act (WICA), 1 criminal case, and 1 appeal against an ECT order).

TWC2 also provided support for quasi-legal cases (25 ECT salary claims, 11 ECT wrongful dismissal claims, and 1 Small Claims Tribunals claim).

TWC2 volunteers **supported** 12 clients as Community Courts and Tribunal friends for ECT hearings

HELPFUL TEMPLATES

IMPACT

For the best chance at success, migrant workers need to present their cases in a cogent and organised way. TWC2 has provided templates to help them calculate owed salaries, or resign from their jobs. We have added more templates in 2025:

- Request to transfer (i.e. Can I transfer?)
- Steps to transfer
- IPA cancellation (edited to match MOM's form)

REACHING OUT TO THE MYANMAR COMMUNITY

IMPACT

We have increased the Burmese content on social media, so that workers from Myanmar also have access to key information on their employment rights here. Support provided to Myanmar workers on TWC2's omni-channel call centre was further improved with the addition of one new Burmese translator, bringing the Burmese translator team to two. In 2025, we responded to 3,329 Burmese workers on our helpline, and assisted 156 of them with their cases.

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE MEDIA

IMPACT

Together with other advocacy-driven NGOs like AWARE, TWC2 highlighted gaps in our current justice system, and amplified the importance of access to justice to migrant workers

Example:

- AWARE representatives wrote a letter to the Straits Times Taking employers to task for discrimination: How easy is the legal process?" which was published on 29 Dec 2025

<https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/taking-employers-to-task-for-discrimination-how-easy-is-the-legal-process>

- TWC2's response Forum: Improve access to justice at the Employment Claims Tribunal" was published on 6 Jan 2026.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/forum/forum-improve-access-to-justice-at-the-employment-claims-tribunal>



2

IMPACT AREA:

IMPROVE WORKING CONDITION

Improving working conditions means making jobs safer, fairer, and more humane. Migrant workers should have adequate pay, reasonable hours, proper housing, access to healthcare, and be treated with respect.

We are happy to note a couple of bumper announcements on workers' living conditions in 2025/2026:



Artist's impression of room at ESST Tukang Dormitory
(Photo: nesst.sg)

BETTER DORMITORIES

The Straits Times on 17 January 2026 reported that Singapore will provide **over \$100 million** to retrofit about **900 migrant worker dormitories housing ~200,000 workers** to meet post-Covid-19 health, safety, and space standards. Improvements include lower occupancy, better ventilation, en-suite toilets, and isolation facilities.

Dormitories for some 200,000 migrant workers to benefit from \$100m retrofitting grant [The Straits Times](#)

Such improvements come on the back of years of advocacy, and became especially urgent during the Covid-19 pandemic. Long before 2020, however, TWC2 had highlighted issues with crowded dormitories to the authorities, urging alternative housing and stronger enforcement to better protect migrant workers' health and safety.

TWC2 had also highlighted poor living conditions of migrant workers on earlier occasions:

2012: <https://twc2.org.sg/2012/04/15/welcome-to-our-private-hell-30-men-4-beds/>
2013: <https://twc2.org.sg/2013/09/01/andrew-loh-reports-on-workers-dormitories-in-industrial-buildings/>

In addition, **ESST Tukang Dormitory** (opened January 2026) is the first Government built and Government owned dormitory to fully meet the **New Dormitory Standards (Sept 2021)**, showing the standards are achievable.

Straits Times Forum: Employers' practices leave foreign workers vulnerable to infection (23 March 2020) [Straits Times Forum](#)

Covid 19: the risks from packing them in (3 April 2020) [Covid 19](#)

Raising the standards of migrant worker accommodation is a work in progress beginning from a low starting point. More can be done but things are moving in the right direction, and TWC2 is proud to have been the voice of migrant workers on this issue.

Here's hoping that crowded amenities like this would quickly and steadily be a thing of the past.

BETTER MEDICAL CARE

TWC2's advocacy on migrant worker healthcare is aimed at ensuring that all migrant workers can seek timely and affordable care, without fear or delay. Whenever we come across a medical emergency or other significant gaps in medical care for workers, we flag them to MOM. We continue to foster official awareness of the need to improve access to healthcare for the workers.

For low-wage migrant workers, employers play a central role in arranging access to primary care, treatment for workplace injuries, and other medical conditions. We often see workers afraid or unable to seek the care they need because of a power imbalance between worker and employer, fear of retaliation, or administrative delays.

Over years of tireless advocacy, we have seen some improvements. Since the launch of the Primary Care Plan (PCP) in 2022, polyclinic and GP visits have become much more accessible and affordable for migrant workers living in dormitories. The Workplace Injury Compensation Act (WICA) has also been strengthened over time, with increases in the compensation limits and minimum coverage amounts. In 2019, the WICA system was overhauled so that insurance companies are now in charge of processing WICA claims, amongst other changes.

In 2025, we saw further progress. Healthcare reforms in 2025 for migrant workers included improved clinic access, simplified PCP (Primary Care Plan) enrolment, standardised \$5 co-payments for all consultations, as well as revised medical insurance rules that strengthened mandated coverage for Work Permit and S Pass holders.



(Photo: Straits Times)

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/migrant-workers-to-get-better-clinic-access-mom-to-launch-portal-for-health-plan-enrolment>



Migrant workers continue to face a range of issues when accessing healthcare. Some injured workers are left without their medical leave wages, while others are deprived of their medical documents and adequate rest. Moving forward, we will continue to engage healthcare workers and policymakers on this issue to ensure that the most vulnerable groups in our society will be cared for.

<https://twc2.org.sg/2023/08/05/mc-money-not-paid-again/>

<https://twc2.org.sg/2026/01/20/broken-ankle-but-no-medical-leave/>



3

IMPACT AREA:

REDUCE VULNERABILITY

Reducing vulnerability means lowering workers' risk of exploitation and harm - by strengthening legal protections, ensuring fair contracts and pay, improving access to support and information, and reducing dependence on employers for basic rights

Low-wage migrant workers are often vulnerable because of debt bondage and situations in their home countries. Many are thus afraid to take their employers to task, or seek justice through the channels available. Doing so often means losing their jobs, and being sent home. If we want workers to ask for help when needed, reducing vulnerability is that important first link in the chain.

In 2025, we continue to reduce the barriers to justice faced by workers, through our direct services, outreach, and advocacy.

Our suite of services includes The Cuff Road Project (TCRP – an accessible onsite platform for low-wage workers to seek guidance as well as free meals), Project Roof (providing shelter to small number of workers), CareFund, casework helpline, and more. Please see table “2025 Impact by numbers” on page 14 for more detail.

EMPOWERMENT

In terms of empowering workers with information and knowledge, we launched various campaigns and outreach programs in 2025 including:

IMPACT

Outreach by the sea

at Lazarus Island on 27 April 2025 – for nearly 300 workers from Indian, Bangladeshi and Burmese communities that combined fun activities with informal talks from TWC2 case officers about worker rights, employment issues, and how to seek help. The aim was to raise awareness of TWC2's services



IMPACT

Tamil-language videos

done with the help of a new volunteer

IMPACT

WhatsApp acknowledgment strategy

for cash salary payments / cash payment for purchasing items for company

IMPACT

Resignation

documentation guidance

ENFORCEMENT

TWC2 continued to push for existing laws to be better enforced, so that workers are protected in reality. While we noted some improvements, we continue to see workers bearing the cost of bad behaviour by employers. See our comments in the article we published on our website.

<https://twc2.org.sg/2025/05/16/how-compliant-is-singapore-with-ilo-convention-29-on-forced-labour/>

How compliant is Singapore with ILO Convention 29 on forced labour?

“

TWC2 argues that while Singapore’s laws align with ILO Forced Labour Convention 29, enforcement is weak. High recruitment debts, fear of job loss and limited convictions despite many wage claims leave migrant workers vulnerable, enabling excessive overtime and pay abuses that amount to forced labour in practice.

”

As happy as we are with the progress made so far, we view improving enforcement actions as a major impact goal in our advocacy work. Stronger penalties and proactive investigations are sorely needed. Stronger enforcement action will better protect workers in the areas of recruitment fee, salary theft, lack of ability to change jobs, poor living and working conditions.



SPECIAL MENTION FOR MYANMAR WORKERS

They are particularly vulnerable due to the ongoing civil war in their home country. Large numbers of people have been compelled to leave Myanmar in search of safety and livelihood overseas. For these workers, returning home is not a viable option.

Learning to save ourselves [🔗](#) (27 Nov 2025)

Our survey of 172 Burmese Work Permit holders shows widespread recruitment abuses. Nearly 90 percent paid high fees, often thousands of dollars, mainly through agents. Many signed contracts only after arrival or worked in different jobs than promised, exposing them to deception, insecurity and legal risk.

This situation heightened the vulnerability of Myanmar workers in Singapore. Unscrupulous employers have taken advantage of their fear of repatriation, using the threat of dismissal or repatriation to suppress complaints, withhold wages, or impose abusive working conditions. Thus, is essential to see how we can adjust our policy on repatriation, at least for Myanmar citizens while the conflict in their country lasts.



Reflecting this growing vulnerability, **the number of Myanmar workers seeking assistance from TWC2 increased by 83% year-on-year**, from 242 tickets in 2024 to **442 tickets in 2025**.



IMPACT AREA:

4 RAISE THE PROFILE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Progress and reform only come when the public is made aware of the issues. We need to remind stakeholders - government, employers and public - that while working conditions for migrant workers have improved, things are still wanting

Singapore has long had problems with the mistreatment of foreign workers. This was what led to the setting up of TWC2 in 2004. For those who have worked in this area for the past 21 years, we get the impression that migrant worker issues have a higher profile in public consciousness today. It was a gradual evolution. These are indicators that give us hope: political and social leaders acknowledge the contribution of foreign workers more; schools invite NGOs to talk to their students about the issues; NGOs tackling the varied issues faced by foreign workers are growing in numbers; the state engages NGOs working with foreign workers.

Again, TWC2 is proud to have done our part in this shift. One can liken it to the phenomenon of water dripping on stone. Over a long period, it makes an impression. The important thing is that we do not give up.

In the year 2025, we have done our usual best to highlight the problems of migrant workers, including the following:



- The **whistleblowing impact of a May 2025 article** telling of the hiring of unusually large number of workers brought into Singapore under the guise of a Training Employment Pass (TEP) when they were in fact deployed as cheap labour doing menial jobs. TWC2 and the mainstream media published more articles on the subject and questions were asked in Parliament. MOM responded that it was acting to curb the scam.
- We published **at least 2 articles monthly** on our website. These included **7 reports**, highlighting our findings and insights on a range of issues including preparedness for extreme heat and haze among employers and workers working outdoors, to survey findings of Myanmar workers recruitment journeys to Singapore
- **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** is a process run by the United Nations Human Rights Council where every United Nations member state has its human rights record reviewed every few years. TWC2 participated fully in the UPR consultation sessions that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held with civil society groups in 2025. As in previous review cycles, TWC2 and Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics (HOME) prepared a joint report that was sent to the Geneva based Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights in October 2025.
- In the **September 2025 Singapore parliamentary sitting**, several Members of Parliament asked the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) questions concerning migrant workers, with official responses. TWC2 published our analysis and commentary in a series of articles published on our website on 2, 3 and 5 December 2025.

<https://twc2.org.sg/2025/12/02/parliamentary-questions-september-2025-part-1/>

<https://twc2.org.sg/2025/12/03/parliamentary-questions-september-2025-part-2-training-employment-passes/>

<https://twc2.org.sg/2025/12/05/parliamentary-questions-september-2025-part-3-change-of-employer-letters/>

2025 IMPACT BY NUMBERS

26,056

conversations across all channels on our call centre platform



2,406

new cases registered
1,605
cases handled



45,498

free meals served

THE
CUFF ROAD
PROJECT

1,000+

workers assisted at TCRP (walk-in consultation at Little India every week night)

\$1,252

Legal expense
Dedicated legal support team



12

cases going for **litigation**

25

ECT cases with 15 resulted in favour of workers



60

cases of **Wrongful Dismissal**
39 **claims** filed



\$28,290

Project Roof
15 workers housed



\$103,400

Care Fund
vs \$92,210 in 2024



\$24,744

FareGo
(transport subsidy)
for 262 workers

4

Outreach events
(490 workers)



14

Discover Singapore events
(815 workers)

30

Interviews & talks
with student groups, foreign NGOs, embassies etc



7

Research papers
published



More than
50
articles
published

Regular engagement
with MOM officials and
dialogue with employers

TWO FOCUS AREAS FOR THE LONG TERM



#1 Better enforcement of existing labour protections

Over the past 12 months, Singapore has made progress in legislative and regulatory reform affecting low-wage migrant workers, particularly around dormitory regulation and housing standards. However, we continue to see a range of abuses, stemming from violations of existing laws. While laws exist to protect migrant workers, poor compliance, monitoring, and enforcement means that they are not always followed in practice.

MOM has on occasion pursued criminal cases against employers and employment agencies for false declarations, kickbacks, and work-pass abuses.

Examples:

- In July 2025, a Singaporean was convicted for collecting \$112,400 in kickbacks from migrant workers and was ordered to pay restitution in addition to fines.

- MOM has also publicised lists of employers convicted for salary violations and excessive working hours, signalling a greater willingness to name and sanction offenders.

Singapore has strengthened enforcement actions and imposed more visible penalties on errant employers and employment agencies over the past year. However, the current operating model still depends heavily on workers reporting abuses, and the burden of gathering the requisite evidence falls on them.

We continue to advocate for more proactive inspections and automatic investigations triggered by indicators such as unpaid salaries or excessive deductions, rather than worker complaints alone.

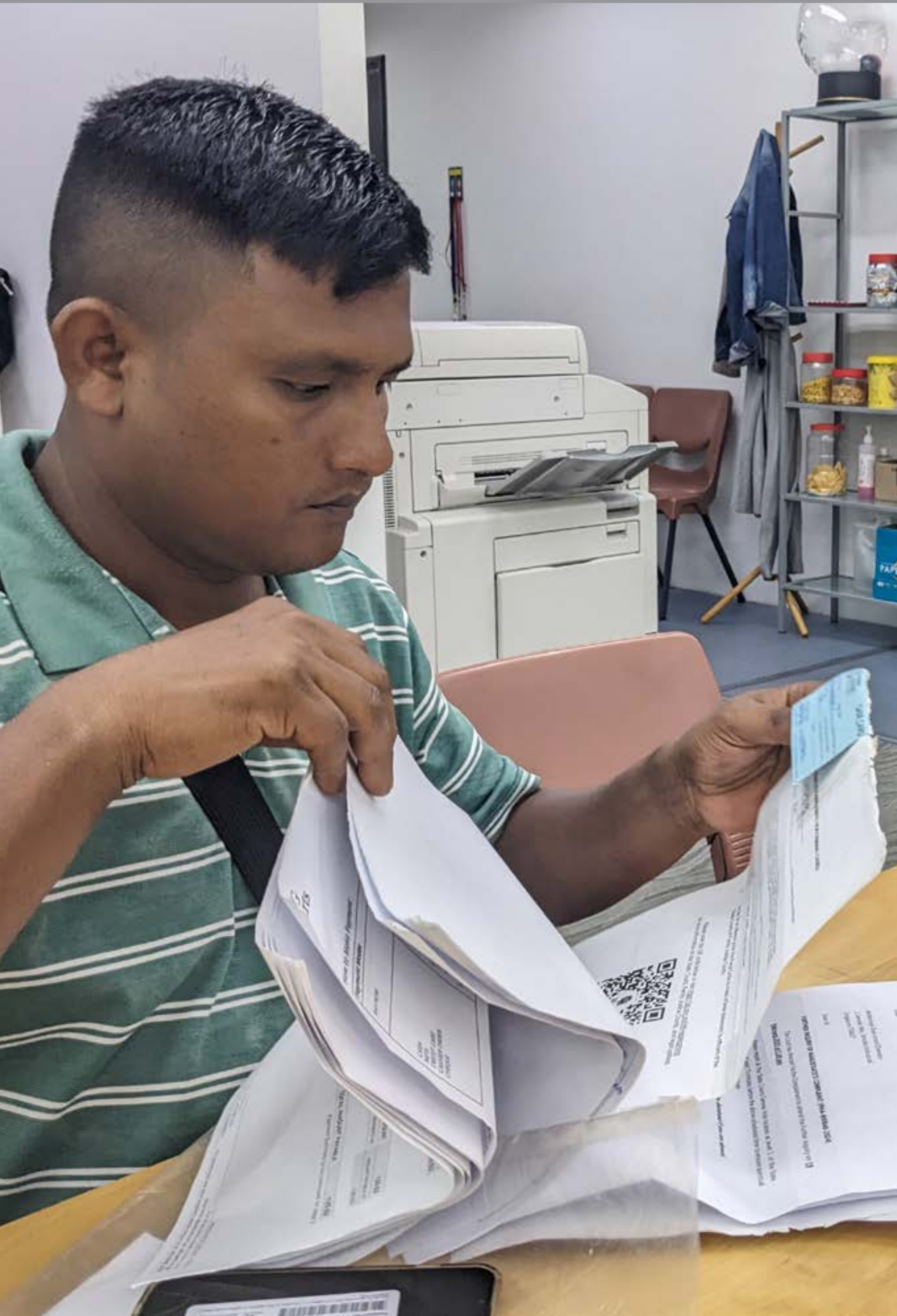


#2 Reduce Exploitation of Worker Vulnerability

In our last report, we reiterated the following key vulnerabilities:

- Excessive overtime & salary abuses
- Deceptive practices ranging from misleading job promises to withholding of passports or contracts
- High recruitment fees

Many low-waged migrant workers remain reluctant to complain because of fear of repatriation, job loss, or lengthy claim processes. Removing factors that create such vulnerabilities is key to progress. As Singapore continues to develop and diversify, the well-being of its migrant workforce is both a moral imperative and a foundation for shared prosperity. TWC2 remains dedicated to championing low-wage migrant workers, amplifying their voices, and advancing systemic change. Through the continued support of our partners, donors, and volunteers, we strive for a future where every worker is valued, protected, and empowered.



SUPPORT US

Areas	2026 Expenditure	SGD
Rental & utilities	A main office in Bencoolen plus a drop-in centre in Little India	\$137,956
Administrative staff	An executive director, an administrative officer, advancement officer & two part-time accounts officer	\$337,404
IT cost	Website development, leasing of servers and software, & social media advertisement to promote outreach to workers	\$55,000
Case work	One legal officer, three case workers & three translators (covering Bangladeshi & Burmese)	\$290,023
Direct services for workers	Free meals Transport Subsidy (FareGo) Medical Emergencies Accommodation Assistance (Roof) Financial Relief (e.g. airtickets, mobile phones, etc.) Legal Support Self Improvement & Recreational Programmes	\$180,000 \$27,000 \$50,400 \$36,000 \$70,000 \$5,000 \$32,800
	Sub total	\$401,200
Outreach	Communications and Miscellaneous	\$125,000
Miscellaneous	Maintenance, office stationery, staff welfare, insurance, etc.	\$69,000
2026 total		\$1,415,583

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS, PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, AND ALL WORKERS WHOSE COURAGE INSPIRES OUR MISSION.

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