

Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2) Annual General Meeting 2020

Committee Report 2019

Executive Committee 2019 -2021

President	Debbie Fordyce
Vice President	Alex Au
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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	Ethan Guo
Discover Singapore	Irene Ong & Marcel Bandur
Outreach	Ethan Guo
Project Farego	Alex Au
Project Lifeline	Ethan Guo
Project Roof	Ethan Guo
Wednesday Clinic	Pat Meyer

Audit Committee 2018-2020

Audit Committee 2018-2020 (from 22 Apr 2018) Sandip Talukdar
Antony Cherian

Staff (2019)

General Manager	Ethan Guo
Social Work Associate	Alfiyan Mohamed Sadali
Social Work Associate	Gwee Min Yi <i>until 23 Jan 2019</i>
Senior Social Worker	Lee Kang Yao, Jason <i>until 24th July 2019</i>
Social Work Associate	David Kalimuthu <i>started 19th August 2019</i>
Admin Officer	Christine Scully
Accounts Officer	Christina Chng

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.

The unprecedented situation with the Coronavirus came to affect everyone's life in January 2020. While we hope to continue as many of TWC2's activities as possible, we accept that drastic measures are necessary to reduce the rate of infection and to keep everyone safe. We also recognise the particular needs of migrant workers, given that they are away from home, and unable to access the same level of precautionary measures as Singapore residents. TWC2's ongoing work is therefore crucial in attending to the special circumstances of migrant workers during this time of uncertainty.

Part 1 – ADVOCACY

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

1.1. Research

Short-Term Projects

In April 2019, the Research Subcommittee completed a survey of the work history of our clients at TCRP. The report, “More of here, less of there”, was published in May¹. Data collection for a survey on IPAs (In-Principle Approvals) began in November 2018, but was stalled and finally completed in May. The report is pending publication. The results of a salary slip survey, conducted in August 2018, was published September 2019².

Aside from these short-term research projects, papers drafted by the sub-committee members included a submission to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) committee on the trafficking of women and girls and on the amendment of the Work Injury Compensation Act. Comments were contributed to a project on elderly care, with specific reference to the role of domestic workers and possible future directions involving migrant workers, and to a project on trafficking monitoring and other initiatives related to TWC2’s work.

Long-Term Projects

In 2019, the Research Subcommittee completed several existing projects. Drafting of individual policy briefs on seven key issue areas began earlier, and two briefs, Reducing Recruitment Costs and A Look to the Horizon, were completed in 2019. Both are pending publication.

Two long-term research publications were completed. Maid To Last? Foreign Domestic Workers’ Access to Weekly Rest Days³ was published in August 2019. Publication of a paper on recruitment costs is expected in 2020.

Our outstanding long-term publications have been completed. In December 2019, we opened recruitment for seven new projects:

- Legislative & policy changes over the years
- Quality of care between private & public healthcare providers
- Establishing a workplace injury
- Days off & abuse of domestic workers
- Outcomes of Employment Claims Tribunal (ECT)
- Enforcement of court orders
- Insolvency schemes in Singapore & other jurisdictions?

Research Administration

Data collection is expected to pick up in 2020, with the recruitment of a dedicated team to oversee survey design and logistics. We expect to increase frequency of data collection, and reduce turnaround times for short-term reports.

¹ <http://twc2.org.sg/2019/05/27/more-of-here-less-of-there-increase-in-repeat-workers-and-fat-profits-for-the-underground-job-broker-in-singapore/>

² <http://twc2.org.sg/2019/09/16/salary-slip-survey-2018>

³ <http://twc2.org.sg/2019/08/20/maid-to-last-foreign-domestic-workers-access-to-weekly-rest-days>

We faced a challenge in 2019 concerning the venue for the research forums. Research forums were held bimonthly until mid-2019, but were halted in July after communication with the venue liaison fell through. New venues are being finalised, and we hope to resume the forums in May 2020.

Goals for 2020

We aim to strengthen the sub-committee by bringing in and training new participants in 2020. By setting up better data collection procedures, we expect to increase research output and quality, and thus continue to provide current information about migrant workers in Singapore.

1.2 Communications

Our website underwent a complete revamp in 2019, the first revamp since 2011. Our chief objective was to make the website mobile-friendly, in light of the fact that nowadays, more people go online via their phones than via their computers. Additionally, we wanted a few new functionalities that the old design did not have. At the same time, the developers were instructed to maintain a similar look as the old site, in order not to overturn our branding, and to ensure that all content on the old site should remain easily accessible on the new site.

The project took about four months and was successfully concluded. It was relaunched in August 2019. Because of the changeover, we slowed down the publication of new articles quite a bit during the middle of the year, but after the change-over, we went back to the usual pace of putting up two new articles a week.

After having trailed our clients and volunteers for a year, documentary filmmaker Lei Yuan Bin's observational art film premiered in December 2019 at the Singapore International Film Festival. The film featured one migrant worker assisted by TWC2 and his post-injury life, through to his journey home, accompanied by TWC2's General Manager. It provided good exposure to the plight of migrant workers in Singapore and the work done by TWC2 to help them.

There was continuing good coverage by mainstream media featuring the work of our cases. This included a prime-time television news report on an employer's unsanitary conditions at a local bakery. Social media users meanwhile respond forcefully to any post that showcase the injustices faced by clients of TWC2.

1.3 Public Engagement

Raising awareness of migrant worker issues among local and foreign students, researchers, media and the general public is an important activity for TWC2. An informed understanding of how foreign male and female work permit holders are recruited, employed, paid, treated, housed, managed, restricted, and perceived is crucial to TWC2's mission to improve their welfare in Singapore.

Our public engagement team interacts with a wide range of groups regularly, by meeting with students, delivering presentations, sharing information with researchers, sitting on panel discussions, talking to media groups, assisting film makers, and speaking to Singapore government bodies. Some of these interactions are informal chats over coffee; others are formal presentations to a large audience. We hope that in communicating about transient workers and

TWC2's activities that more enlightened regulations and a more compassionate approach will eventually prevail.

Some of these groups have had a long-standing relationship with our members. This is especially true with researchers involved in migration issues and foreign universities who regularly sponsor students to visit Singapore. Other groups make contact with TWC2 through our office and are referred to the appropriate individual or to the Public Engagement team. We have a record of 50 interactions over the past year, but it is safe to say that contact between our public engagement members and outside groups is far greater than that.

The list below does not include those who have generously donated useful items to assist the workers that we represent. Many have made use of our meal program to distribute items such as used clothing, toiletries, fruit and other items to the men in our regular meal program.

We welcome the chance to talk to others and share our findings, experience and conclusions. Students who contact TWC2 for information relating to school projects are encouraged to conduct some research before contacting us, to keep an open mind, and to look beyond common assumptions such as xenophobia or segregation as the main cause of problems for migrant workers. We are honoured to have established connections with such interesting individuals and diverse groups.

Among the groups that our Public Education team met with in 2019 are those listed below. The many individual researchers have not been listed.

Singapore bodies: MOM; MFA; MOE; Straits Times; MediaCorp; fellow NGOs; AWARE; HOME; HealthServe; other charities and NPOs; St Ignatius Church; EmancipAsia.

Singapore schools and universities: SOTA; RI; UWCSEA; NJC; RP; NUS; NTU; NTU.

Foreign governments, institutions and corporations: US State Department; Norwegian University of Science and Technology; Humboldt University Berlin; Loughborough University; University of Sydney; The University of Adelaide; Aajeevika Bureau Rajasthan; Institute for Human Rights and Business; IBM; Google; Edelman.

1.4 Engagement with Policy Makers and Stakeholders

TWC2 participated in two meetings with the Ministry of Manpower during 2019 in which we discussed significant cases and trends.

Our caseworkers regularly raised case-related issues with the Ministry through MOM's "Caseref" email address. A rough count of the email threads involving "Caseref" came to a total of 264.

TWC2 also participates actively in international networks. In 2019, we participated in one conference organised by the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), two conferences organised by the Institute of Human Rights and Business, one organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation and five by Migrant Forum Asia.

Early in the year, we released a report on where Singapore stood in relation to the standards envisioned by the UN's Global Compact on Migration. In late 2019, we submitted a report on the impact of digital technology on migrant workers to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

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 and Helpline

There was a total of 2,069 new registration of workers in 2019, of which 716 cases were taken up for case work, which involves consultation, follow up and case management. This figure includes cases handled by both the Social Work team as well as TWC2 volunteers.

Case handling stats in 2018 and 2019

Type of problem	New problems registered		Cases handled	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Injury at work	1,131	988	483	269
Salary claim	697	835	420	308
Investigation	80	78	32	31
Recruitment scam	12	19	9	15
Premature termination	16	23	10	17
Injury outside work	12	14	8	12
Illness	9	3	4	3
Work pass revoked by MOM	8	1	5	1
Kickbacks	3	6	3	5
Other classifications	120	102	59	55
Total	2,088	2,069	1,033	716
Nationality	2018	2019	2018	2019
Bangladesh	1,747	1,698	906	595
China	2	15	3	13
India	319	311	110	88
Indonesia	1	3	1	1
Malaysia	1	10	1	8
Myanmar	1	0	1	0
Philippines	3	1	3	1
Sri Lanka	13	25	8	6
Other	2	6	0	4
Total	2,088	2,069	1,033	716
Gender	2018	2019	2018	2019
Male	2,075	2,054	1,025	702
Female	13	15	8	14
Total	2,088	2,069	1,033	716

The lower number of cases taken up in 2019 reflect the corresponding drop in the number of workers who come to us for daily free meals. This is explained in part 2.2 The Cuff Road Project (TCRP).

The table above excludes cases taken up in 2018 which crossed the year into 2019. There were 43 such cases from 2018 that required active management through the end of 2019.

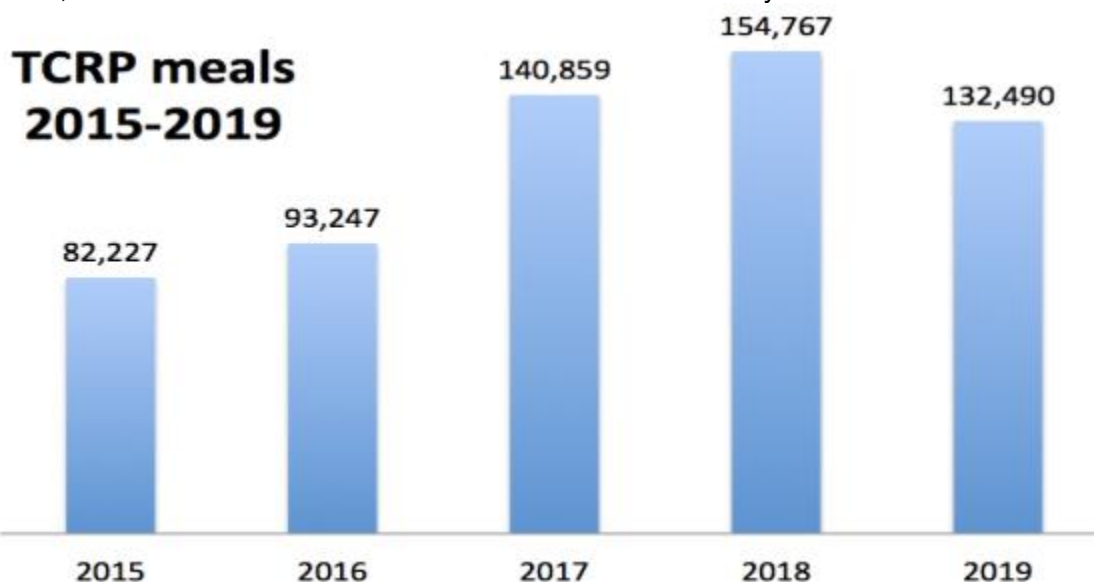
We handled more salary cases than injury cases. Salary claims typically require many man hours to help resolve, involving salary calculations, compilation of documentary evidence and preparation for hearings at the Employment Claims Tribunal, and guiding clients through their arguments.

Bangladeshis remain the largest nationality of workers helped but an uptick was seen in Chinese workers, many of whom were referred via word-of-mouth by our previous clients.

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 135 helpline calls in 2019, including about 10 from female domestic workers.

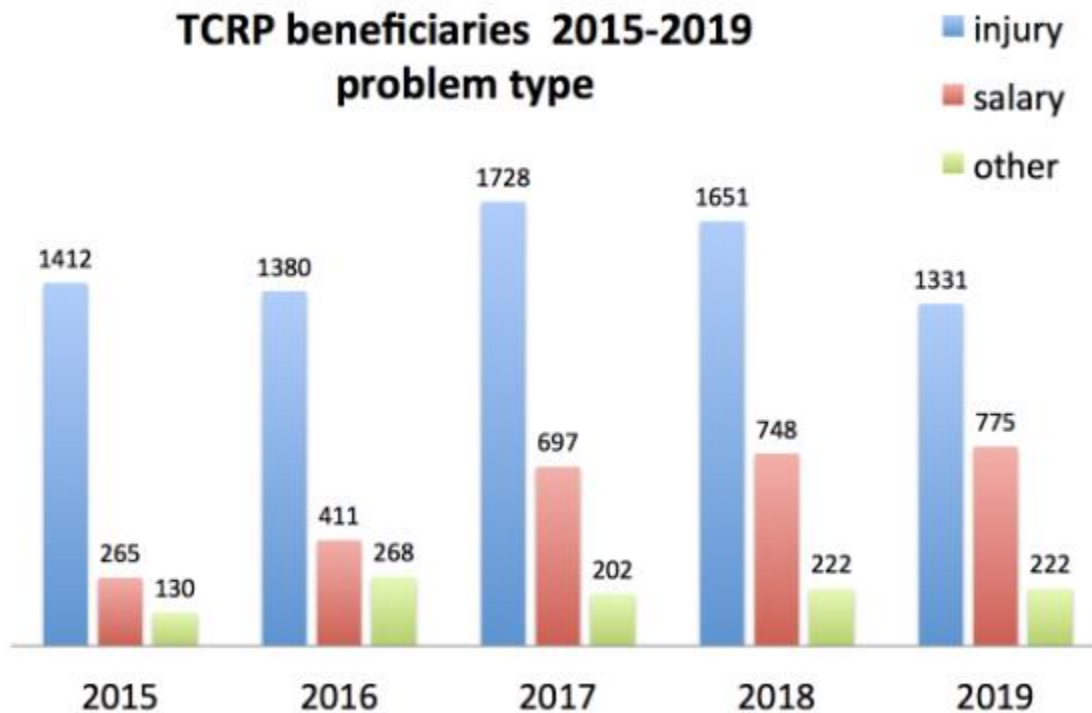
2.2 The Cuff Road Project

The Cuff Road Project continues to consume the largest portion of the TWC2 budget, occupy the largest number of volunteers, attract the most researchers and students, allow the easiest access for groups and individuals wishing to bestow generosity, and of course draw the largest number of workers to TWC2. The men are those who have filed claims or complaints with the Ministry of Manpower, or otherwise required to remain in Singapore without access to work or other sources of income. It can be a devastating time for these men, powerless to support families or repay debts, and unable to access the comforts of home and family.



These beneficiaries are provided with meals 11 times each week, morning and evening from Monday through Friday and lunch on Saturday. They are given a choice of restaurants for their meals, and the restaurants receive \$2.00 for every breakfast and \$2.80 for every lunch or dinner they serve.

The meal program is open to those who are not permitted to work during the processing of the claim, complaint or investigation. The special pass, which is issued when the work permit is cancelled, clearly states that the holder is not able to engage in any form of employment. The men who approach TWC2 for meals are those whose employers are unwilling or unable to provide them with food, and some equally resistant to providing accommodation or medical expenses.



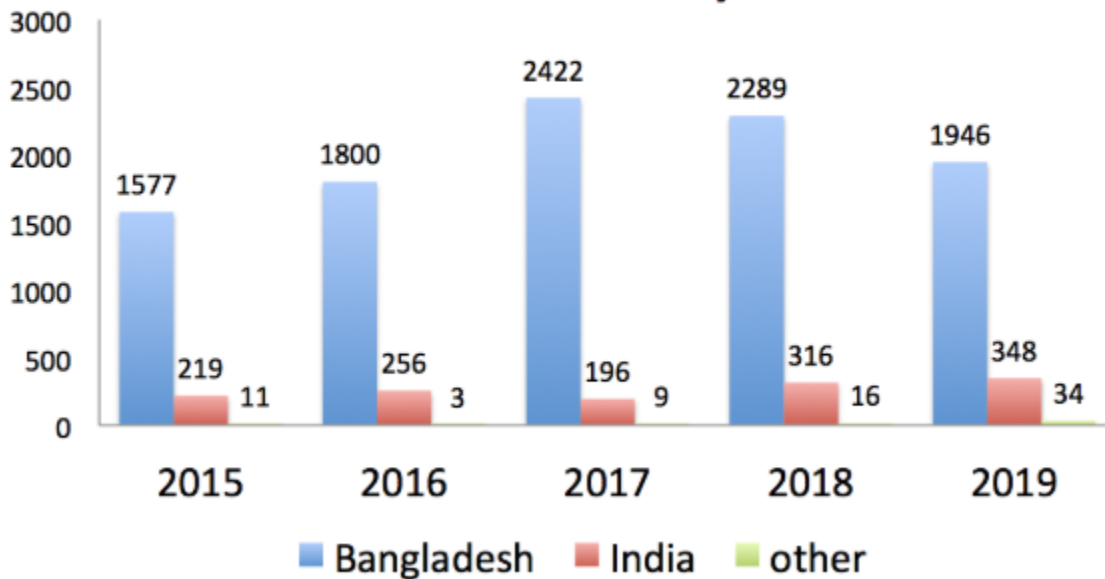
Meeting these men regularly over an extended period of time, months or years, allows TWC2 to see trends and problems that manifest over time as a result of policies, systemic gaps and unintended consequences. Many of these men require intensive assistance and support while undergoing the claims process.

The chart shows a decrease in injury claims over the last two years, which should not be interpreted as a drop in injury claims. We understand that many would prefer to stay near areas with parks, commercial outlets, places of worship and other social services, especially if the claim extends for a lengthy period. The Ministry of Manpower, however, has been encouraging men with such claims to remain in purpose-built dormitories, which are far from those amenities, and far from access to the meal program. Some injured men travel to our meal program only sporadically; others are unable to afford the journey.

The rise in salary claims over the years could be attributed to the TADM (Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management) system, which is faster and more transparent than the previous Labour Court salary claim system. Although faster, TADM has not been shown to provide more positive

outcomes. The employers who fail to pay salaries properly are just as unwilling to comply with the TADM settlements or the Certificates of Order issued by the ECT as they were previously. We note that salary claims in the past were more often for short payment of salaries, whereas in the past two years there have been more involving several months of complete non-payment. This might be a result of the downturn in the Singapore economy, or of employers being emboldened by the apparent lack of adverse consequences when workers are not properly paid even orders to pay are issued.

TCRP beneficiaries 2015-2019 nationality



The large majority of the workers with TCRP are from Bangladesh⁴. Indians are far fewer in number, and other nationalities, such as Sri Lankan, Malaysian, or Chinese are only occasionally seen at the food program. Because the Bangladeshis continue to pay the highest recruitment fees and earn the lowest salaries, they are the most vulnerable in terms of forced signatures on unfavourable contracts, false promises, illegal salary deductions, lengthy overtime, unsafe conditions, workplace injuries, and lengthy indebtedness.

We see this program as essential in meeting basic needs of these workers. While addressing these fundamental needs, the information also provides TWC2 with information necessary to analyse the causes and the effects of unfair treatment on South Asian male work permit holders.

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

⁴ Many of the individuals remain with the meal program from one year to the next. The total number of individuals at TCRP is not the sum of the yearly figures. The total number of individuals who benefitted from TCRP from 2015 to 2019 is 8,898.

day schools; Sunday enrichment classes and activities under FFN and IFN⁵; a lending library and studio for a migrant-worker music band; and as an emergency shelter⁶.

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 2019, there were 12 events where we partnered with South East Community Development Council, Hwa Chong Institution, NUS Student Clubs, Netflix, Asiaworks, Esplanade and The Coffee Roasters. Most events see a 20-40 size group of migrant workers attend along with 3-5 volunteers. The Discover Singapore team has an active group of 15 people that attend. The destinations in 2019 include: Pulau Ubin, Gardens by the Bay, The Zoo, Deepavali Celebration at West Coast Park, Esplanade, Marina Bay Sands Rooftop Skypark and Sentosa.

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 2019, we spent \$31,538 on transport subsidies compared to \$33,208 in 2018. From around the middle of the year, a decision was made to distribute cash to top-up the cards instead of handing out topped-up EZ-link cards. This was to help alleviate the massive task of manually adding value to the 100 EZ-link cards needed for distribution each month.

	2019	2018
Total number of disbursements	988	1145
Unique beneficiaries	687	771
By Type		
• EZ-Link cards; FareGo	892	863
• EZ-Link cards; social workers	10	2
• Cash for transport	86	280
Total all types	988	1145
EZ-Link cards; average no. of cards issued per week	17.3	16.6
Expenditure on transport subsidies	31538	\$33,208

⁵ See 2.10 Filipino Family Network (FFN) and Indonesian Family Network (IFN)

⁶ See 2.7 Roof & Lifeline – Shelter Assistance

As a control measure, no client receives more than one EZ-link card every four months. However, to allow flexibility, social workers are authorised to give EZ-link cards to clients who do not meet the Farego conditions. They would typically be salary claimants (FareGo is only for injury cases) staying in a distant dormitory who need to attend case consultations with TWC2 or who have an appointment with MOM. FareGo volunteers and social workers may give out small amounts in cash such as \$5 to clients who need to make a single journey to hospital or MOM.

2.6 Road to Recovery

In May 2019, Road to Recovery (R2R) was disbanded when the coordinating volunteer left the organisation. R2R was restructured to come under the Social Work team so that the provision of such medical services could continue.

Now handled as part of regular casework, the Social Workers continue to support their clients in this respect, making hospital co-payments where employers have delayed or refused payment, also facilitating urgent medical intervention of non-work-related conditions such as heart attack.

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.

	2019	2018
Number of patients seen	440	472
Number of sessions held	23	22
Average number of patients/ sessions	19	21

2.7 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 2018 at \$16,375, and 21 clients in 2019 at \$23,415. Higher rentals were observed due to crackdowns by the authorities on non-licensed accommodations. Licensed ones, which the workers have to move into, hold fewer residents and cost more.

- 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 used as an activity centre. No rent is involved for these clients. 25 residents were sheltered in DaySpace in 2019.
- 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 2019, we sheltered four cases with a HOME facility.

2.8 Outreach

Outreach is aimed at informing the wider migrant-worker community of our mission. In 2019 our team of Social Workers led 4 Outreach Sundays assisted by volunteers from each month's Heartbeat session. They went to Tuas South Dormitory, Jurong East, Orchard and Paya Lebar, targeting Filipino, Indonesian, Bangladeshi, Indian, and Chinese workers.

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.

2.9 Wednesday Clinic

Since its establishment six years ago, Wednesday Clinic (WDC) has helped workers navigate the injury and salary claims system by providing legal and non-legal resources. We also work with other teams in TWC2 to advocate positive change in the development of law and policy affecting low-wage migrant workers. Occasionally, we assist workers facing criminal charges. Our goal is to help level the playing field by increasing the capacity of migrant workers to participate meaningfully in legal processes and procedures and to help them counteract the cost, delay and complexity of the legal system.

WDC aims to raise awareness of:

- employment laws and legal processes;
- processes by which workers can collect evidence;
- inadequacies and limitations of the legal system;

And to:

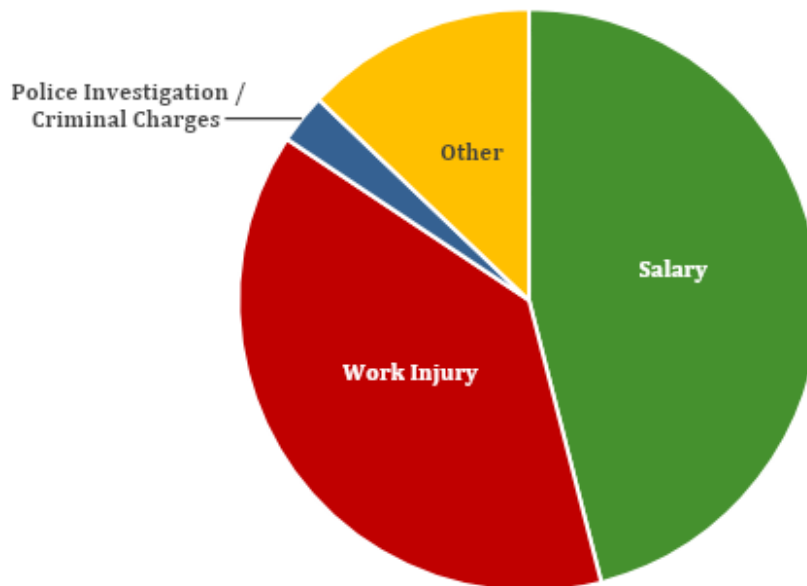
- reduce barriers to access the judicial system;
- assist workers with interpreters and volunteers familiar with the legal system;
- find advocates and funding for case-related costs.

Case Load

In 2019 our team of 29 volunteers and 16 interpreters (Bengali and Tamil) assisted a total of 287 TWC2 cases, with WDC volunteers acting as lead or auxiliary caseworkers for 83 new clients.

Nearly half of our clients (46%) had salary cases, similar to the proportion in 2018 (53%). About 38% had work injuries, an increase from 21% in 2018. Another 2.8% of our clients faced police investigations or criminal charges (compared to 6% in 2018). Lastly, about 13% had other problems (compared to 19% in 2018), including assisting MOM with investigations, scams or failed recruitment.

Clients seen by WDC in 2019



WDC often provides clients with immediate help through one-off consultations, interpretation, and calls or emails. For some clients, WDC works closely with others at TWC2 to provide multi-month assistance including calculating claims, organising evidence, writing statements, accompanying workers to hospitals or court and translating documents.

2019 Milestones

WDC has continued to refine a salary calculator tool to enable more efficient and accurate calculations of owed salaries based on the Employment Act (EA).

In response to the new law allowing employees to seek redress for wrongful dismissal, WDC initiated a pamphlet advising workers how to navigate their new legal rights. WDC further helped several cases of wrongful dismissal claims.

WDC initiated a project to explore the efficacy of legal avenues to enforce ECT orders and settlement agreements, with a view to understanding any gaps and deficiencies in the processes.

Court Cases

WDC assisted:

- Several workers in instituting or defending High Court appeals pertaining to work injury claims in cases that merited attempts to set legal precedents on labour law
- Several litigants-in-person by providing resources during the trial preparation and emotional support during the proceedings.
- Several workers with complaints made to the Singapore Medical Council and the Law Society of Singapore.

Collaboration With Lawyers

A pool of pro bono and low bono support lawyers from over 25 law firms help take TWC2 cases to court. These lawyer friends unstintingly supported TWC2 by providing their legal services free of charge or at low charges, for which we are truly grateful.

We thank LawLink volunteers from Linklaters, Credit Suisse, UBS and Microsoft who provided weekly legal support at the TWC2 office. LawLink's efforts make it possible to better put forward our cases.

Outreach

WDC participated in TWC2 meetings with MOM to exchange information on the resolution of workers' claims. WDC represents TWC2 at the Migrant Workers Group meetings run by the Law Society Pro Bono Services to discuss ways to assist migrant workers.

2.10 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.

At the FFN graduation ceremony at the end of the year, 53 students received certificates for successful completion of courses in subjects like Dressmaking, Reflexology, Crochet, Arts and Craft, Floral Arts and Photography.

While at the IFN graduation ceremony, 105 students completed courses in Computer Literacy, English Language, Cosmetology, Handicraft and Dressmaking.

FFN excursions in 2019 include places and events such as: Gardens by the Bay, Singapore Discover Centre, Wild Wild Wet, attending a Yoga Session at Facebook's Office and The Necessary Stage performance of "Acting Mad".

IFN excursions in 2019 include places and events such as: Coney Island, National Gallery Singapore, Gardens by the Bay along with a trip to Tanjong Pinang in Indonesia to visit an orphanage. They also actively participate in cultural dance and choir activities in groups such as Sekar Arum, Our Voice and Al-Hikmah.

PART 3 ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

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

3.1 Human Resource

TWC2 implemented a plan in 2018 to employ a Senior Social Worker to co-ordinate casework. Jason Lee Kang Yao (former TWC2 social worker) was recruited for the position in March 2019. We did not implement the plan due to Jason's resignation. Instead, in August 2019 we hired a Social Work Associate, David Kalimuthu, to help with casework. With that, TWC2's full-time social work team comprises two social work associates – Alfiyan and David – supervised by General Manager Ethan Guo. David was confirmed in November 2019. Aided by a core of senior dedicated volunteers, case work assistance continues to be a major pillar of TWC2's work, contributing to our knowledge of the migrant worker sector and enabling our advocacy work.

In 2019, TWC2 hosted four interns. One was Malaysian and the others were Singaporeans.

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 2019, we held 11 Heartbeat sessions at Dayspace, seeing a total of 230 potential volunteers who had registered on Bahamas. This has been a steady decline from 2018 (249), 2017 (266) and 2016 (289).

Several teams underwent reorganisation in 2019, resulting in limited recruitment for volunteers. The upheaval of covid-19 has meant restrictions on group gatherings, physical distancing and recommendations to remain at home for all non-essential activities. This will require TWC2 to make still more adjustments in 2020 to deal with the unprecedented situation.

3.3 Fundraising

Our financial situation at end of 2019 was healthy. In 2019, we raised about \$1.3 million. After deducting expenses of \$933,000, we have a surplus of about \$400,000. This plus our reserves mean we start 2020 with \$1.8 million in the bank. The ample surplus was not solely a result of increased funds raised. Expenditure in 2019 was lower than the \$985,950 of 2018 and also within the budgeted amount of \$1,046,000.

The largest item of expenditure – The Cuff Road Project – has experienced a reduction in numbers of beneficiaries and in meals provided. This probably is a result of the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) stepping up its enforcement of the policy requiring employers to pay for the upkeep of workers awaiting outcomes for their WICA (Work Injury Compensation Act)/ salary disputes, and for workers to remain in the dormitory provided by the employer.

Online donations have been increasing amounting to just under \$200,000 or some 17% of the total amount of donations in 2019.

For 2020 TWC2 expects expenditure to stabilise at the current level of just below \$1 million. Fundraising effort will be maintained to cover this as well as provide a small surplus for our reserves.

3.4 IT Support

In 2019, the Executive Committee decided to embark on a replacement for the current case management system which has been in use since 2015, and built by final year students of a local university. While the system has been functioning well, after four years' experience, we felt a number of additional features would be needed. A redevelopment of the case management system would be a huge project at a high cost, but we are well-supported by an understanding donor.

In 2019, we completed (a) the needs-assessment phase of the project, (b) the vendor evaluation phase, in which we evaluated eleven potential vendors, and signed a contract with the chosen vendor in December 2019. The actual development work will be in 2020. We will require all existing records to be migrated to the new system.

In 2019, we also installed the Kaching donations management system that simplified and streamlined the receipts-issuing process.

Also, in the same year, we upgraded our accounting software to the latest version.

TWC2 Executive Committee 2019-2021
23 April 2020

Contributors

Debbie Fordyce, Alex Au, Russell Heng, Beverly Shaddick, Ethan Guo, The Wednesday Clinic, Rebecca Liu, John Gee, Marcel Bandur, Sandip Talukdar