



## Committee Report on 2021

### Executive Committee 2021 to 2023

President	Debbie Fordyce
Vice President	Alex Au
Secretary	Beverly Shaddick
Treasurer	Russell Heng
Member	Yew Kong Leong
Member	Christine Pelly
Member	Mizue Sauco
Member	Sharon Tan
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### Sub Committee Chairs

Research	Alex Au
Direct Services	Debbie Fordyce
Communications	Alex Au
Fund Raising	Russell Heng
Human Resource	Russell Heng
Public Engagement	Christine Pelly

### Project Chairs

Cuff Road Project	Debbie Fordyce
Dayspace	Ethan Guo
Discover Singapore	Irene Ong and Marcel Bandur
Outreach	Ethan Guo
Project Farego	Alex Au
Project Roof and Lifeline	Ethan Guo
Wednesday Clinic	Mizue Sauco

### Audit Committee

Audit Committee 2020 to 2022 (from 20 Sept 2020 to present)	Gurbinder Singh
	Varun Iyer Mani

### Staff

General Manager	Ethan Guo
Social Work Associate	Alfiyan Mohamed Sadali
Social Work Associate	David Kalimuthu
Admin Officer	Christine Scully
Accounts Officer	Christina Chng
Accounts Assistant	Annie Ong
Communications Specialist	Eliza Thomas

## 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.

## Part 1 – Advocacy

### 1.1 Research

TWC2's research activities in 2021 were inhibited for two main reasons: Firstly, the continuing confinement of workers in dormitories through the entire year -- despite the number of infections falling to figures no worse than for the general Singapore population -- meant that our volunteers would face great difficulty accessing workers to do field interviews; secondly, there was no executive committee member taking a leadership role for research.

Despite these serious hurdles, we managed to complete five research projects. To overcome the first obstacle, we relied more on online surveys despite the limitations of such methods. Some topics can be investigated through online surveys, but many others do not lend themselves to this approach and these other topics will have to wait for another time. To overcome the second hurdle, two executive committee members stepped in temporarily to oversee the single research cycle of 2021 and those five projects. This however is not a sustainable solution, since these two executive committee members are already very busy with their own areas of responsibility.

The five completed projects were:

1. "Bravely into the minefield" -- a study on obstacles faced when workers seek to change employers<sup>1</sup>.
2. "No information on vaccination, yet no vaccine hesitancy" -- a study on male workers' access to information about vaccines, access to vaccination, and attitudes<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://twc2.org.sg/2021/03/19/switching-jobs-bravely-into-the-minefield/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://twc2.org.sg/2021/07/22/no-information-on-vaccine-yet-no-vaccine-hesitancy/>

3. "Barriers and facilitators to Covid-19 vaccination among migrant domestic workers" -- a similar study as (2) above but focused on migrant domestic workers<sup>3</sup>.

4. "On average, Indian and Bangladeshi migrant workers stay 4.2 years with the same employer" -- a study on how long workers tend to stay in their jobs and touching on related issues such as salary levels and recruitment fees<sup>4</sup>.

5. "Job restrictions, dorm restrictions, tasteless food" -- a study on migrant workers' own priorities and concerns rather than priorities assumed for them by others<sup>5</sup>.

We had an intern in late 2021, and as is our standard expectation of interns, he was given a topic to research. He chose to focus on workers' concerns over being blacklisted, imperilling their chances of returning to Singapore for subsequent jobs. His report was published in early 2022<sup>6</sup>.

## 1.2 Communications

TWC2's main vehicles for communication with the general public are our website and Facebook pages.

Through 2021, one of our main ways of getting human-interest stories from workers was rendered difficult because of the continued movement restrictions. Workers, including most Special Pass holders, remained confined to their dormitories and the footfall at The Cuff Road Project was reduced. Throughout 2021, it remained difficult to meet workers face-to-face for interviews.

Nevertheless, our website had no shortage of content, keeping up our organisation's public profile and trying to move the needle in terms of public perceptions and governance policies.

Many articles on our website through the year addressed cogent issues such as Covid-19 vaccination for migrant workers, the steady bleeding of migrant workers from the construction and related industries due to inflexible repatriation policies, infection rates among dorm-based workers, dormitory standards, difficulties of job transfers, employers recovering quarantine costs through salary deductions, etc.

We continued to highlight long-standing issues such as salary abuses, difficulty in accessing medical treatment and the deficiencies of the TADM salary claims process.

Our website also carried several research reports -- the research projects were carried out by volunteers -- and interns' reflections. Following the internal webinar that we held

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<sup>3</sup> <https://twc2.org.sg/2021/08/07/research-report-barriers-and-facilitators-to-covid-19-vaccination-among-migrant-domestic-workers/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://twc2.org.sg/2021/10/18/on-average-indian-and-bangladeshi-migrant-workers-stay-4-2-years-with-the-same-employer-our-survey-finds/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://twc2.org.sg/2022/03/20/job-restrictions-dorm-restrictions-tasteless-food-migrant-workers-priority-concerns/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://twc2.org.sg/2022/01/14/blacklisted-imagined-fears-or-unspoken-reality/>

in the middle of 2021 ('Hunger Games for real'), we carried a series of reports highlighting key points made by the speakers.

Our aim is that our website should be the leading repository for information about labour migration and the experiences of migrants themselves. From the way journalists and academics came to our site whenever they needed information – judging by how they were quoting facts and figures which were first featured on our site – we believe we are continuing to realise this aim.

On social media, with a new Communications staff member on board, new ways of engaging the public in advocacy were attempted. For example, a Valentine's Day campaign sought to seek empathy for the migrant workers who were still largely confined to their dormitories and were unable to spend time with their loved ones. More worker profiles and personal stories were also shared. The top posts of the year were linked to two social media influencers, who were engaged pro bono to help launch TWC2's TikTok channel. The use of TikTok remains at an experimental stage. Its popularity among the target audience is rising. However, the viral nature of TikTok videos make it a challenge to utilise in conventional ways for communications and outreach.

### **1.3 Public Engagement**

Our Public Engagement (PE) team engages with students, teachers, researchers, media, and special interest groups. Due to media treatment of migrant workers this past year, the topic has become increasingly common for student project work, so much of our interaction was with students.

The PE group responded to at least 65 requests for talks, zoom meetings, interviews, and written questions in 2021. Most requests are from local and international secondary schools, local JCs and universities. Pre-covid, we would often ask students to meet us where we interact with migrant workers. Given covid restrictions, meetings and conversations are easier to schedule digitally, but at the expense of the impact and personal connection of in-person meetings.

The media's focus on dormitories and transport vehicles has caused many students to choose projects that investigate these issues. Their suggestions for solutions are based on assumptions that employers would be willing to pay more to address the needs of the workers even when those changes are not mandated. Less apparent issues of recruitment fees, indebtedness, lack of minimum wage, job insecurity, adequate rest and days off are overlooked due to lack of public attention to these issues. Our response to students is generally to explain complex issues and refer to our website articles where these issues are well-covered.

We welcome the chance to talk to individuals and groups to share our findings, experience, conclusions and advocacy stance, and to understand their perspectives. Students who contact TWC2 for information are encouraged to conduct their own research before speaking to us, to keep an open mind, and to look beyond common assumptions such as xenophobia or segregation. In an environment where advocacy and questioning systemic issues is a challenge, we hope that engagement with TWC2

will encourage students to take an active role in being agents of and for change. We are pleased to have established connections with such concerned individuals and diverse groups.

Among the groups that our Public Engagement team met with in 2020 are those listed below. Other members of TWC2 may have been approached by media, students, and personal contacts.

**Singapore schools and universities:** Holy Innocents' High School, ACJC, Bedok South Sec School, Canadian International School, Yale-NUS, Eunoia JC, UWCSEA, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Institute of Policy Studies, Geylang Methodist School, NJC, ACS, SIM/SMIT, Woodlands Ring Sec School, Dunman High School, ACJC, NTU, JPJC, Catholic JC, SAS, NTU, and VJC

**Singapore bodies:** Tamil Murasu SPH, Moving Visuals, and Whitehatters

**Foreign governments, institutions, and corporations:** University College London, Southeast Asia Vu, Chulalongkorn University, London School of Economics, Solidar Suisse, Victoria University Canada

## **1.4 Engagement with Policy Makers and Advocacy partnerships**

With the good news that Covid-19 infections among migrant workers tailed off in the latter part of 2020, it also meant that media interest in the pandemic's effects on migrant workers declined. We continued to have regular engagement with journalists and various international and domestic media in 2021 but was not as frequent or intensive as in 2020.

At the same time, we were able to shift our focus, in our conversations with journalists, away from the immediate issue of Covid-19 infections to other issues such as the continued confinement of workers in dormitories and the absurdity of repatriating workers when Singapore's construction industry was so short of manpower.

These themes were equally covered in our own website. In the latter part of 2021, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) announced tweaks to policy allowing easier routes to job transfers for workers whose work permits expired without renewal or were prematurely cancelled. There were also baby steps to allowing more workers out from the dorms. It is not possible to say to what degree our persistence in raising these issues contributed to the policy shifts, but we believe we made a difference.

More interestingly, when MOM set up the job-matching scheme in the fourth quarter of 2021 together with the Singapore Contractors Association, we noticed that the scheme ensured that no worker needed to pay recruitment fees for the new jobs they were matched to. This is despite the fact that under the Employment Agencies Act, it remained legal to charge a fee equivalent to one month's salary for each year of contract (subject to a maximum of two months' salary). We see this as a sign that our years-long campaign to spotlight the cancer of high recruitment costs and to advocate for conformity to standards laid down by the International Labour Organisation – employer pays all recruitment costs – may be bearing fruit.

We will continue keeping the spotlight on this issue.

Our consultation meeting with MOM resumed in February 2021, when they declared that the Covid-19 situation had stabilised. One session was conducted for the year. In addition, MOM invited TWC2 to a special online meeting to provide feedback regarding preliminary ideas they had on enhancing the management of special pass holders. That meeting was fruitful and allowed TWC2 to present insights from the migrant workers' perspective that were not considered by senior policy makers. Another invitation was extended for us to attend a briefing on improved dormitory standards. And separately, we also met with MOM's Assurance, Care and Engagement (ACE) group to discuss partnering in migrant worker outreach events at the Recreation Centre.

In May 2021, Singapore's 4-yearly review under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – also known as the Universal Periodic Review – was conducted in Geneva. In the lead-up to this review, TWC2 had submitted a joint report with HOME in 2020. In the months prior to the May review session in Geneva, TWC2 had many conversations with diplomatic representatives of interested countries.

In late 2021, TWC2 submitted another joint report with HOME with respect to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. This was also followed by several engagements with diplomatic missions, and via online meetings, with members of the review committee in Geneva.

### **1.5 TWC2 Newsletter**

The newsletter was distributed on MailChimp to 1,425 contacts every two months in 2021, many of whom probably don't otherwise have regular contact with TWC2. It continues to cover a range of advocacy issues as well as to highlight various aspects of TWC2's work. The current editor, John Gee, and the chief lay-out person in the recent past, Phi Yen Nguyen, are hoping to hand over their roles in the near future: John will be spending more time outside Singapore in the future and Phi Yen now lives in Australia.



## 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 Casework and Helpline

There was a total of 914 new registration of workers in 2021, of which 563 cases were taken up for case work, which involves consultation, follow up and case management.

#### Case handling stats in 2020 and 2021

Type of problem	New registered problems		Cases handled	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
Injury at work	323	257	50	108
Salary claim	379	173	214	112
Investigation	51	31	10	15
Recruitment scam	7	10	4	8
Premature termination	19	21	6	7
Injury outside work	6	9	2	6
Illness	9	34	3	25
Work pass revoked by MOM	11	6	5	5
Kickbacks	7	1	11	1
Other classifications	195	372	152	276
Total	1,007	914	457	563
Nationality	2020	2021	2020	2021
Bangladesh	762	724	317	412
China	23	3	22	1
India	199	157	103	127
Indonesia	6	8	5	8
Malaysia	9	8	8	7
Myanmar	1	2	0	2



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Philippines	2	5	1	4
Sri Lanka	4	3	0	1
Other	1	4	1	1
Total	1,007	914	457	563
<b>Gender</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Male	984	898	439	549
Female	23	16	18	14
Total	1,007	914	457	563

While the number of new problems registered in 2021 is close to that of 2020, the number of cases handled has increased.

Included under the “other classifications” are 41 cases relating to repatriation and 148 cases of resignation / Change of Employer. There were also a number of workers reaching out from source countries because they had problems with their In-Principle Approval or were banned from seeking employment in Singapore and wanted help to know why.

The statistics presented above from our case management system represent the official casework numbers registered and handled.

There are however further insights that can be gleaned from the omni-channel communications platform that TWC2’s casework team uses to chat with clients via our Facebook properties (TWC2 Bangla, TWC2 Tamil and TWC2 Main), WhatsApp, Voice calls and Instagram.

Each conversation denotes a unique client that has reached out to us but some clients may contact us via more than one channel (e.g. voice call and WhatsApp).

## TWC2 hotline statistics in 2021

Number of conversations by channel	
FB Bangla	1,667
FB Tamil	544
FB Main	386
Voice call	1,323
WhatsApp	3,057
Instagram	16



Total conversations	6,993
Total number of messages across all conversations	165,204

Breakdown of selected conversations by labels *	
Salary	396
Wrongful dismissal	34
Transfer	1,423
IPA / Job application issues	320
Illness	198
Repatriation	249
Injury	297
Response to ad	826
SCAL related	43
PDPA collected	359

The system allows for labels to be tagged to conversations.

These label statistics are not necessarily representative of the entire year because labels can be created along the way. For example, the “PDPA collected” label denotes conversations that are translated into casework. However, this label was created only in March 2021 when the casework team identified the need to track this statistic. Conversations that are labelled “PDPA collected” denote those which are earmarked for further case work.

Transfers was the top issue as significant rule changes were made to this area in 2021. The inability of workers to seek clarification from MOM drove many workers to TWC2’s hotline. This however involved only a simple dispensation of advice on the new rulings and no casework was needed.

A few workers requested help relating to the new retention scheme administered by the Singapore Contractors Association (SCAL) after it was introduced in September 2021.

When workers respond directly to one of our ads by pressing the “chat now” button, we file this under “response to ad”. We are however unable to track those who have seen our ads or boosted posts, but who save our information to contact us later.

## Case outcomes in 2021

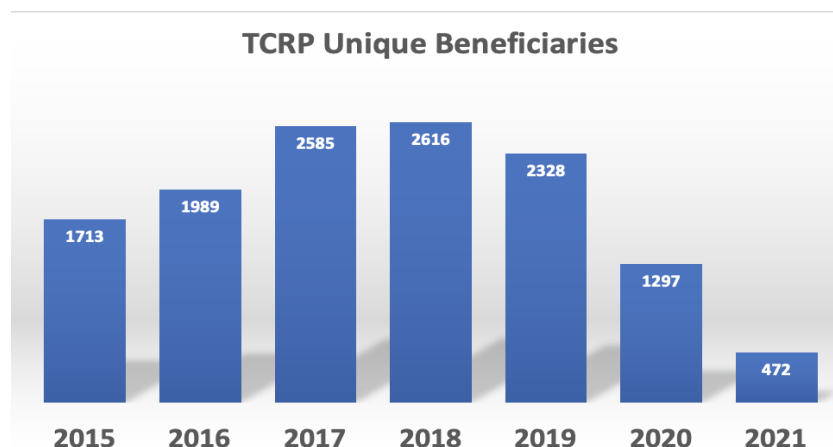
How and how many cases are ultimately resolved are notable but difficult statistics to track. The reasons for this include clients becoming out of reach, not responding, or having left the country. The nature of most case work is also such that there may not be a need for follow-up or further communication once the issues are resolved.

Where possible, however, the case work team tracks and logs case outcomes when such information is available.

Non-criminal case milestones
38 such cases were logged in 2021 with successful conclusions. These range from clients having their owed salary paid via a TADM settlement or ECT order, to clients being granted Change of Employer by MOM. There were also a few cases of clients completing their Workplace Injury Compensation cases and being paid following the final Notice of Assessment issued.
Criminal case milestones
5 such cases were logged in 2021. 3 cases involved clients being released from prison. 1 client was repatriated without further consequences. 1 received notification that they could not return to work in Singapore following a stern warning previously issued.

## 2.2 The Cuff Road Project (TCRP)

The Cuff Road Project (TCRP), the free meal program for destitute migrant workers not permitted to work, was TWC2's main access to male workers before covid. Since covid restrictions were enacted in early 2020, numbers at the free meal program in Little India have plummeted. From an average of over 2,000 unique beneficiaries for the five years preceding covid, fewer than 500 individuals were able to access the free meal program in 2021. As a result, TWC2 has developed a variety of digital means to communicate with workers.

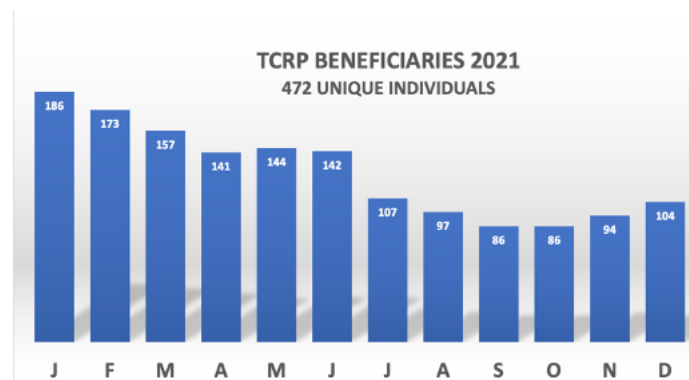




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Volunteers are present at every morning and evening meal session to attend to workers, offer information, advice and assistance. Our case officers are present several times a week to provide casework, EZlink and phone top-ups. Passers-by are also welcomed to drop by and make inquiries.

In spite of the lower numbers, TCRP continues to be an important avenue for male workers to engage with TWC2 on a daily basis. In operation since 2008, TCRP has developed a reputation for being able to attend to workers immediately and in person. Workers can find various types of assistance, from free meals to phone top-ups, transport money, room rent, donations from the public, information, advice and casework. Work injury claims make up the majority of the issue, but we also assist with non-work injuries, other medical issues, non-payment of salary, deductions, criminal charges, job terminations, resignations, transfers, food and dormitory conditions, etc. In return, our case officers and volunteers benefit from hearing and understanding the various issues affecting work permit holders, and from a personal connection with the clients.



We look forward to the relaxation of dormitory restrictions allowing more male work permit holders to visit public areas more easily in Singapore, whether or not they have issues to discuss with TWC2.

## 2.3 Wednesday Clinic

Our goal at Wednesday Clinic (WDC) is to help level the playing field for migrant workers by increasing their access to justice so that they can participate meaningfully in legal processes and procedures and counter the challenging complexity and cost of the legal system.

We help workers navigate the injury and salary claims system by providing legal and non-legal resources. Partnering with other teams in TWC2, we advocate positive change in the development of law and policy affecting low-wage migrant workers. Occasionally, we assist workers facing criminal charges.

### Caseload

In 2021, WDC assisted a total of 18 legal cases involving migrant workers in various areas pertaining to salary claims (3 cases), work injury claims (1 case), criminal charges (3 cases), complaints against lawyers (5 cases), civil lawsuits (3 cases) and others (3 cases). Although the total number of cases overseen by WDC has

decreased, the number of legal cases assisted by WDC has grown over the past few years.

### **Collaboration with lawyers**

Pro bono and low bono lawyers from a pool of over 38 law firms provided ad hoc advice or helped take cases to court. They offered migrant workers legal services free of charge or at low charges.

## **2.4 Roof and Lifeline**

Project Roof seeks to provide shelter to a handful of most needy clients. As employers are required by law to provide housing for the foreign employees until repatriation, we step in only under extraordinary circumstances (e.g. serious injury or major surgery that makes it difficult for workers to use employer accommodation).

2021 saw two major shifts with Roof's operations. Following up on the advice by external auditors to avoid handling and disbursing large sums of cash, TWC2 moved to a cashless system whereby Roof funds were disbursed by bank transfers. Only a handful of workers who do not have bank accounts continue to receive cash handouts.

The other shift involved the kind of workers who were helped. With MOM strictly enforcing stays in the dormitories, fewer migrant workers (even those with injury and facing difficulty of movement) were allowed to stay in external accommodation.

Instead, Roof was receiving an increasing number of applications from workers involved in criminal cases. They would either be pending investigation or sentencing and are required by the authorities to remain in Singapore. Due to their circumstances, these individuals are no longer supported by their employers and typically have no means to take on temporary work, even if permission were granted.

The fact that these migrant workers receive no assistance from the state whatsoever deserves mention and organisations that provide temporary housing for destitute only accept Singaporeans. Therefore, they truly have no one else to turn to.

## **2.5 Outreach**

Outreach is aimed at informing the wider migrant-worker community of our mission.

2021 was a busy year with activities happening through to International Migrants Day in December.

A slight relaxation of the rules meant that workers could now visit the nearby Recreation Centres (RCs), even though visits to the community were still not allowed. Several outreach events were therefore held at the RCs, which enabled us to resume such physical engagement.

A few large-scale events were held, necessitating a large amount of manpower and resources. We are grateful to have had the participation and support of volunteers, affiliate groups, donors, and partners.

The first in February involved pitching a tent on the event grounds at Penjuru RC. Marketed as a “carnival”, workers could play games to win prizes, watch the Migrant Band perform via video from a remote studio (as live performances were still banned), and pre-order biryani from a restaurant in Little India. A second event was held at Cochrane RC in August, whereby goodie bags and free haircuts were given out. And in December, TWC2 was invited by MOM to help commemorate International Migrants Day. A massive effort was put in by TWC2, whereby arcade machines were rented to help entertain the workers who have had a tough two years being stuck in the dormitories. Our case work team was present at each of these events to distribute outreach materials and speak with those who wished to do a quick on-site consult of their problems.

Separately, our TWC2 migrant worker ambassadors have also been busy distributing supplies of daily necessities (soap, toothpaste, detergent etc) sponsored throughout the year by several corporations and organisations. These go out in goodie bags to workers at construction sites and dormitories across the country, each with a flyer/card containing a QR code linking to our hotline and information in multiple languages.

In the online space, Project AWESOME (Amplified Workers Engagement through Social Media) forged ahead with the hire of a full time communications staff.

The top post of the year was a video explaining how employers were supposed to pay even for non-workplace injury medical treatments, using the compulsory \$15,000 medical insurance cover. It related the story of TWC2 having helped a Burmese client receive cancer treatment when her employer initially refused to pay for it. This post had a reach of over 65,000 on the Facebook page dedicated to Bangladeshi workers.

The ultimate goal of both physical and online outreach is to feed our case work team with an intake of new clients. In that respect, we have been successful in ensuring that the omni-channel communications platform used by the team was sufficiently busy with fresh enquiries and new cases in 2021.

## **2.6 TWC2 Carefund**

TWC2 provided medical assistance to more than 50 clients in 2021, with an expenditure of over \$30,000. For most individuals, the assistance consisted of only one visit to a clinic, hospital, or dental clinic, at a cost of about \$100. The worker was usually accompanied by a TWC2 volunteer. Medical expenses for nine of these men exceeded \$1,000, most requiring numerous appointments to hospitals assisted by volunteers. (Foreign workers are treated at an unsubsidized rate, so even consultations or simple procedures are expensive relative to residents.) Although some of the medical issues presented by migrant workers could be treated in the workers’ home country at lower cost, TWC2 is aware that given their finances, workers usually put the immediate needs of family members are often prioritised over treatment



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for non-urgent conditions. Furthermore, our Carefund for medical expenses cannot be used for overseas treatment.

Brief description of three men who benefitted from TWC2's Carefund:

Aziz presented with a nephrotic kidney. Although the employer was initially willing to assist with payments to hospital, when the seriousness of the problem became known, they pulled out. Doctors advised removal of the nephrotic kidney, tests were conducted, and surgery was scheduled. Unfortunately, neither the MOM nor the employer would agree to extending his pass to enable him to remain in Singapore for the operation. He was repatriated shortly before the surgery was scheduled to take place. We spent over \$1,000 on the various procedures and test leading to surgery, but sadly we were unable to make use of additional funds for the planned surgery to take place.

Total expenses for Min exceeded \$5,000. Min presented with an anal fistula, a medical issue that is inherently difficult to resolve and which in Min's case healed more slowly than expected. Min's unrealistic expectations of the outcome and low threshold of pain made him a challenging patient. His situation was exacerbated by his need to continue working while undergoing treatment (he would have been repatriated if his employer had known about the condition), lack of access to acceptable food options and restricted movement in the community due to covid restrictions. TWC2 provided Min with volunteer support and funding throughout the treatment and until his repatriation.

Karim came to TWC2 for help with a salary claim. He later complained of pain and discomfort in one eye, which was diagnosed as pterygium. As the condition was expected to worsen over time and impact his vision, TWC2 agreed to fund the operation at over \$3,000. There was concern about his claim ending before the operation could take place, but fortunately he was able to remain in Singapore for the surgery and for full recovery of the eye. He hopes to come again to work in Singapore as his family relies on his remittances to survive.

## **2.7 Filipino Family Network (FFN), Indonesian Family Network (IFN) and Overseas Foreign Workers in Singapore (OFWS)**

FFN, IFN and OFWS are independent support groups of Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers as well as male workers from the CMP (Construction, Marine and Process sectors) 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 referrals.

With the limitations in gatherings and group sizes still largely in force in 2021, all three affiliates had to pivot a large portion of their activities online.

Both IFN and FFN resumed their usual enrichment classes and workshops for members - at first virtually and then in-person when circumstances permitted. These



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ranged from English classes to dressmaking and learning to play the guitar and Ukulele. IFN and OFWS were both very active on Facebook, with regular Facebook Live engagement sessions.

For IFN, the year's highlights include:

- Distribution of donated clothing, books and NTUC vouchers to members
- Fundraising for an orphanage and for victims of natural disasters in Indonesia
- Volunteer day at Willing Hearts
- Preparing care packs for fellow domestic workers in need
- Participation in migrant advocacy workshop
- Participation in focus group discussions with MOM on moonlighting and the use of social media

FFN busied themselves in 2021 with:

- Fun walk and bonding exercise at Coney Island
- IMD/Christmas gift-giving to members at Sembawang Park
- Participation in personal development workshop

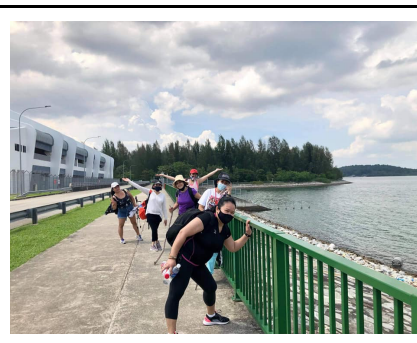
OFWS' had an eventful year:

- Assisting TWC2 with two large outreach events at Penjuru Recreation Centre in February and December
- Mask distribution to workers across 9 companies / worksites
- Gift and care pack distribution to workers across 35 dormitories
- Coordinating recipients of festive goodies from TWC2 for Hari Raya and Deepavali
- Recognising safety-conscious migrant workers with award of certificate
- In addition, their online activities include raffle draws to attract more page followers, video contests and a year-end Christmas lucky draw.

All three groups also participated in TWC2's hybrid International Migrants Day (IMD) event. In 2021, with migrant workers having had their freedoms curtailed for close to two years, the idea was to help take small groups of workers to local places of attraction which they have not had the opportunity to enjoy for some time. Members of IFN, FFN and OFWS joined us on outings to the Bird Park, Zoo and Sentosa. This then culminated in an online event during IMD in December, whereby video highlights of the excursions were broadcast.



IFN's virtual Ukulele lesson



FFN fun walking @ Coney island

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OFWS ambassadors with TWC2 volunteers and staff at Penjuru RC, IMD2021



## **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**

In response to a growing need to improve our communications strategy – reaching out to clients via multiple channels as well as raising the quantum and quality of content - TWC2 hired a Communications Specialist: Eliza Thomas who joined us in January 2021. Supervised by General Manager Ethan Guo, one of her immediate duties was to tend to TWC2 Facebook pages in Bengali and Tamil. In this she is assisted by two full time translators based in Bangladesh – Nobi and Moinul.

In its 2021 recommendations, the Audit Committee highlighted the precarity of having just one person familiar with the accounts and asked that “an individual within the organisation (be) trained to be a backup to Christina”. Christina Chng is TWC2’s Accounts Officer and for quite some time TWC2 Exco also knew that she was overworked and needed help. As a result, TWC2 hired Annie Ong as an Accounts Assistant beginning in June 2021. Annie brings with her many years of doing accounts for SMEs and was a natural fit for the position. Christina supervises her. Both work a three-day week. A staggered roster for Christina and Annie enables TWC2 to have an accounts person on duty throughout the 5 working days of a week.

By the end of 2021, TWC2’s staff strength was five full time staff and two part-timers (3 days/week). One of them Mohamed Alfiyan received his 5-years long service award in 2021. Coming up in 2022, more long service awards will be handed out: two (10-years), one (5-years) and 1 (3-years). TWC2 hopes that such human resource stability will endure.

The Work From Home arrangement continues throughout 2021. Each staff member needs to be in the office for one day of the week. Their attendance is distributed to ensure that somebody will always be manning the office throughout an entire work week.

The pandemic situation also affected the numbers of candidates applying for internship. Like 2020, there was only one intern in 2021.

### **3.2 Heartbeat - Volunteer Recruitment**

Having a small staff, TWC2 continues to rely on teams of volunteers, and Heartbeat is our main volunteer recruitment point.

The pandemic situation affected TWC2’s capacity to absorb and deploy volunteers making it necessary to reduce the monthly Heartbeat volunteer orientation programme. In 2021, we held six – January to May and November - Heartbeats. A total of 267 new volunteers signed up for these sessions. The problem of finding enough activity to absorb volunteers continues into 2022 as the prevailing working mode for TWC2 has migrated online and does not need a physical presence.

Throughout the year, the numbers coming to The Cuff Road Project free meals programme continued to drop.

### **3.3 Fundraising**

Total donations for 2021: \$939,749.86. Significantly less than the \$4 million plus received in 2020, this is expected as public sympathy for the plight of the foreign worker waned into the second year of the pandemic. Still the sum for the year was close to a million and about what TWC2 was raising in the pre-pandemic years. Bear in mind that during the pre-pandemic years, half of the total would have come from a gigantic injection of \$500,000 from major funder Lee Foundation. For 2021, TWC2 only asked Lee Foundation for a mere \$50,000. These numbers point to a successful diversification of funding sources that is a healthy sign of an NGO's growth.

For this the credit should go not so much to fundraising efforts but to the hard work put in by others that has burnished TWC2's reputation as a reliable organisation with a good service record.

### **3.4 IT Support**

Our essential IT systems worked well through 2021. These include the Camans case management system, the Bahamas volunteer management system, our website and domain name, our business account with Facebook and the Trengo multi-channel messaging platform. Their smooth running enabled TWC2 to maintain our internal and external communication at the desired level, contributing to efficient case handling and public engagement.

In 2019, we embarked on a project to build a newer and better version of Camans. We needed more functionalities and features to keep up with evolving case handling requirements. Progress was mostly suspended in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but the hoped-for rapid resumption in 2021 did not materialise because the IT vendor's internal management turned out to be unstable. Nonetheless, after the vendor's staff situation stabilised in the second quarter of 2021, we began to make progress and reached the first major goal -- that of finalising the technical specifications. Unfortunately, the internal staff instability of the vendor returned in the fourth quarter of 2021 and development work stalled again.

In the first quarter of 2022, we decided to terminate our relationship with the vendor due to their failure to keep to the agreed timeline and we set up alternative arrangements to finally develop Camans v2. The new completion date for this project is end-2022.

In 2021, we made three enhancements to our accounting software. In June, we added a server link so that our accounts personnel can access the accounting system remotely and work from home. In August, as part of the maintenance package we have with the software vendor, we had a free upgrade of the MYOB accounting system. Then in September, we upgraded our Ka-ching donation handling system so



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that it now integrates the sending out of receipts and allows for multi-user login (in tandem with the addition of a new accounts staff).

## **3.5 Executive Committee**

The TWC2 Executive Committee (See listing on page 1) meet every alternate month during the year.

In 2021, the 2021-2023 Exco held 4 meetings. All our meetings were well-attended especially since they were all online.

### **Contributors**

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