

annual
review
2016

Rights of Migrants in Action

MAP Foundation: Expanding safety networks for migrant domestic workers

Project timeframe: February 2016 – July 2017

Key features

MAP Foundation's project aims to enhance the ability of migrant domestic workers to protect their rights and improve their working conditions through expanded social networks.

One of the project features is the outreach activities for domestic migrant workers that take place in Chiang Mai, Bangkok and Mae Sot. During these interactive activities in their languages, with an emphasis on Shan and Burmese, migrants receive information on their rights, labor rights and updates on migration policies.

Furthermore, the project organizes capacity building training sessions for workers in the form of "workers' exchange." The focus is to encourage migrant workers to collaborate with each other, exchange ideas and experiences about workers' mobilization, and negotiations.

These streams of work are supported by the MAP Radio stations that are operative at Chiang Mai and Mae Sot – both of which are online as well. MAP Radio is crucially important for reaching domestic workers and other hard to reach migrants.



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of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
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This project is funded by
the European Union

With regard to networking and advocacy, in 2016 in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, MAP Foundation organized the Northern Labour Network, with a membership of 16 local organizations including both Thai and migrant labour organizations. In the network, domestic workers' issues have been raised and put squarely as part of the regular agenda, giving weight to their demands. Three advocacy seminars were organized with the Northern Labour Network: May Day (International Labour Day) on May 1st, on International Domestic Workers Day on June 16th, and International Migrants Day on December 18th. Besides bringing around 100 migrants together to attend each of these events, advocacy letters were handed to the Provincial Governor's office by this large group in front of the Provincial Office.

In mid-2016 the Thai government started an initiative to open "Migrant Workers Assistance Centers" in ten provinces, including Chiang Mai. As part of the Center's advisory committee, MAP Foundation has been invited as one of the civil society representatives along with other organizations from the Northern Labour Network since the opening of the center in September 2016.

"Before I came to the exchange sessions I never got any news, good or bad. I didn't know anything about rights; I didn't know anything about migrant worker policy. But after I joined the group and listened to the radio, I learned important information that taught me how to negotiate with my employer for a day off, for an increase in my wages and I dared to assert to my employer that I do not work in off hours."

- Migrant domestic worker

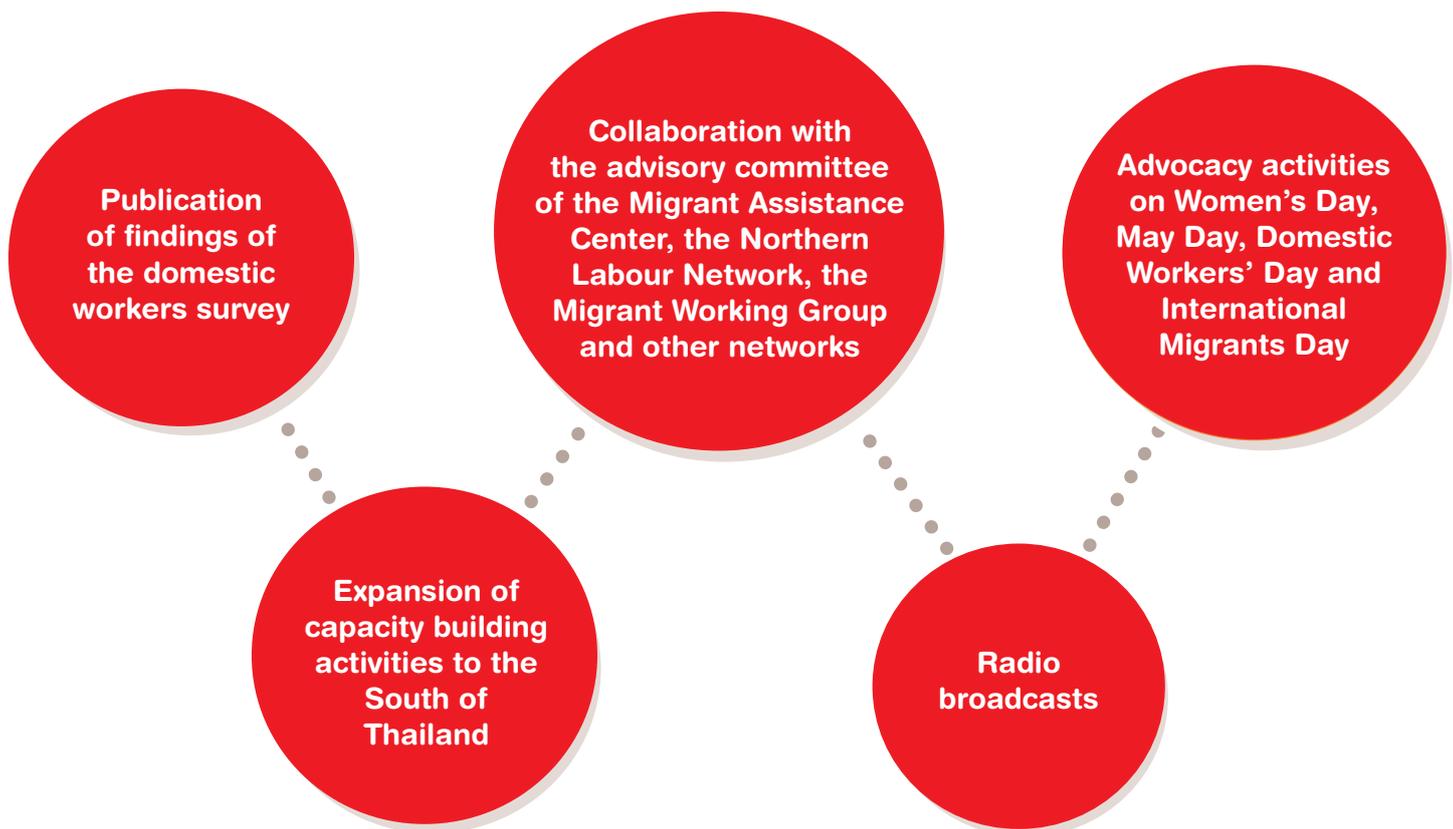


Number of people reached in 2016

Activity	Male	Female	Indirect recipients
Outreach activities	232	562	794
Network meeting			16 organizations
Peer leader training	15	31	
Advocacy conferences	127	190	794
Radio show	193	193	1930
Total	547	976	3184



Looking ahead to 2017



“Information about registration, what kind of work migrants are allowed to do and labour rights is only available in Thai. We don’t know how to find that information. When we meet in a group like this and exchange information in our own language we can access this important information.”

- Migrant domestic worker



Migrants Mobilize for their Rights on International Migrants Day

Every December MAP Foundation celebrates International Migrants Day – the day that the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was adopted.

On 18 December 2016 MAP Foundation and the Northern Labour Network, a network comprised of 16 civil society organizations which promote migrants’ rights, as well as academics and migrant workers representatives, participated in a two day seminar for International Migrants Day. This was a follow-up seminar to May Day and International Domestic Workers’ Day – two similar events organized by MAP and the network. In attendance were over 150 migrant workers from a variety of occupations, including domestic workers.

The seminar included breakout sessions where migrants reviewed a number of issues affecting them and gave inputs on what changes were needed. Issues identified included the following:

lack of access to labour protections remained a major problem resulting in exploitation, namely not receiving minimum wages, long working hours, no paid days-off or holidays, no paid overtime, and working over weekends; inability to access proper safety equipment at the workplace; being unable to benefit from social security due to their employers not enrolling them and due to a lack of clear mechanisms for making claims from the fund; and limitations on mobility which commonly resulted in extortion by local police.

On the second day, participants prepared banners and held a news conference before moving onto the Provincial Government house. There they showed their solidarity in a silent protest (in part because of the military government’s rules on public gatherings, and also out of respect for the mourning of the King of Thailand) and presented a letter of recommendations to the Provincial Governor addressed to the Provincial Government, the Thai Royal Government, and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.



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