

### IDWF Practicum Project Report

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Reporting to	<b>IDWF</b>
Project	<b>Fair employment contracts for domestic workers</b>
Project Duration	<b>October 2016 - January 2017</b>
Project Location	<b>Bangkok, Thailand</b>
Expenses	Covered by NDWT
Support Team members	5 Network leaders who have successfully negotiated fair contracts with their employers: Malee Soblerk, Samorn Pasomboon , Khantharose Pinthong , Kanyarat Panya and Nirumol Srisem

**Background:** The Practicum plan was prepared by Malee Soblerk, following her participation at the IDWF-ILO training of trainers’ workshop on Planning for empowerment and change (Jakarta, 31 July-3 August 2016). This plan, discussed with the core members of the NDWT, is within the framework of the IDWF “My Fair Home” campaign which was the theme of the national workshop held to celebrate International Domestic Workers’ Day (Bangkok, 19 June 2016).

**Aim:** To use the fair employment contract as a tool to achieve better protection for domestic workers. This is in pursuit of the Mission of the NDWT, as stated in its Statutes: “to advocate for laws and policies regarding labour rights and protection of domestic workers”.

**Objective:** By end of November 2016, 10 Thai members of the NDWT will have successfully negotiated fair written contracts with their employers and lessons will have been learned and shared within the organization from the experience.

## Report

Activities	Date	Outcomes	Comments
1. <u>Preparations</u> : explanation by Malee to NDWT leaders on practicum project and importance of written contract; identification of 5 members of Support Team (ST); division of tasks; setting timetable.	September-October 2016	Support Team members appointed; objectives and procedures discussed and understood; timetable agreed.	-Done through monthly leadership meeting; small meetings and telephone -ST members initially apprehensive about short time for implementation.
2. <u>Special session for NDWT members</u> on importance of contracts; introduction by ST members; distribution of model contract to 30 DWs who expressed interest		ST members explained the project in detail and responded to questions posed. The 145 NDWT who came for the meeting gained knowledge about the ‘Fair Home’ campaign and importance of fair contracts with employers. ST members were able to evaluate the	-Organized during monthly meeting of NDWT Savings Group

		readiness of 30 members to participate in the project.	
3. <u>Implementation phase</u> : pre-paring 12 Members to negotiate with their employers: mentoring (contents of contract, laws, negotiation skills, role play); meeting with Practicum mentor and ST to assess progress, identify problems, and discuss possible solutions (first week of December).	November 2016- January 2017	<p>Of the 30 DW, 12 DW Committed to the project (11 Thais and 1 migrant member from Myanmar). They were assigned to be mentored by the ST members (according to proximity, schedules). Where necessary, mentors accompanied them to meet with their employers. Regular meetings between mentors and mentees were held.</p> <p>ST members also were in regular contact for feedback, sharing, comparing notes and to help each other thresh out problems.</p>	<p>Because of the difficulty in finding time for meetings and mentoring, it was decided in November by the ST and members involved, with the approval of the NDWT leadership that the implementation period would be extended to end January 2017.</p> <p>Despite the difficulties, individual mentoring was found to be beneficial, if time-consuming. The mentees were able to ask and discuss their specific problems and issues with their ST mentors, by phone and one-to-one or small group meetings.</p>
4. <u>Results</u>		<p>12 contracts were negotiated successfully, three of which were drafted by the employers. The employers are foreigners (a second domestic worker of one employer also benefitted from the Practicum project by having a contract} <i>See photos attached</i></p>	<p>The ST found that mentoring and building the sisters' confidence in themselves took a lot of their time from their regular work and family responsibilities. One big problem was the poor communication between the employers (who have little or no Thai and the domestic workers whose command of English is limited). This was overcome by</p>

			having the model contract in the two languages and an NDWT member who's English is good to accompany the member and the ST mentor.
<p>5. Assessment and lessons learned: ST and 12 DWs share lessons learned with Network leadership and members; overall assessment of practicum project.</p>		<p>The 12 members and the Support Team increased their knowledge about the rights of domestic workers, the laws (in particular the Ministerial Decree), and acquired/improved their negotiation skills.</p> <p>The ST members found the mentoring experience extremely valuable and satisfying.</p> <p>All, especially the 12 members, increased their confidence in their ability to solve problems, and discuss and negotiate with employers and acquired important skills: assertiveness, putting one's case across effectively; listening with an open mind to the other side; self-assessment.</p> <p>Key lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Importance of team work and mutual support</li> <li>- Need to overcome fear and anxiety regarding employers; in most cases, they are open to discussion and negotiations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Follow-up:</b></p> <p>Based on the positive outcomes of this Practicum Project and lessons learned, the NDWT is highlighting the 'Fair Home' campaign in its current plan of action.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-awareness and confidence building must be a priority in the NDWT training programme, especially for new members.</li> <li>- Training in effective negotiation skills must form part of the regular training programme</li> <li>- Publicize success of the Practicum project via the NDWT Facebook; this will encourage others to negotiate contracts with their employers.</li> </ul>	
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**Further notes from the assessment session:**

1. The reason for no contract sign came from 2 parties. From employer point of view, the standard contracts contained long contents and a lot of details. In addition, the foreign employers did not understand existing Thai regulations. This led to concern whether the contracts had been followed the regulation or not, particularly on page 4-5 of the contracts that was addressed about the working environment and social protection.
2. For the workers:
  - They thought that it was the commitment to work and it was impossible to leave the job as needed.
  - They were satisfied with their current employment. Thus, they could not recognize the importance of having contracts.
  - Currently, one worker works with several employers. Therefore, this standard contract could not be applied.
  - They had no experience to negotiate with the employers. They had lack of confidence and was afraid to lose their jobs.
  - Communication in English was concerning the workers to misunderstanding and have problems later.
3. The selected standard contracts were long and contained a lot of details which were difficult and require time to explain. In addition, it could not gain the confidence from the employers. As a result, some of them required to write the contract themselves. It was suggested to adjust the contracts to be more concise which would make the signing process easier.

4. The workers are able to encourage their employers to sign the contract, if they have well preparation. At the same time, most of employers are willing to follow the regulation, if they have enough information.
5. It was found that there are numbers of domestic workers who already have contracts. Nevertheless, they are the contracts that were written by the employers without workers involve and negotiation. In addition, the workers could not be able to understand the context of the contract due to they are in English.
6. The domestic workers have hard works and no certain holidays. As a result, working with domestic workers requires more time and flexibility.
7. Working in this kind of campaign highly requires effective teamwork. Furthermore, it should be the network plan to work continuously to reach the achievement.