

**Report on
Situation of Domestic Workers in Thailand in 2012**

**By
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Introduction

Defining Domestic Work¹

According to the ILO's International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), domestic work falls under Classification 5 covering *housekeeping* which includes housekeepers and related workers and cooks and *personal care and related workers*, including childcare workers and home-based personal care workers.

Childcare workers are defined as “those who take care of the employer's children and oversee their daily activities”.² The tasks of childcare worker include:

- (a) assisting children to bathe, dress and feed themselves;
- (b) taking children to and from school or outdoors for recreation;
- (c) playing games with children, or entertaining children by reading or storytelling;
- (d) maintaining order in children's bedrooms and playrooms;
- (e) taking care of schoolchildren at lunch or other school breaks;
- (f) taking care of schoolchildren on excursions, museum visits and similar outings;
- (g) performing related tasks;
- (h) supervising other workers.

Home-based personal care workers are the ones who “attend to various personal needs and in general provide personal care for persons in need of such care at their own homes because of physical or mental illness or disability or because of impairment due to old age”.³ Their tasks include:

- (a) assisting persons in getting into and out of bed and making the appropriate change in dress;
- (b) changing bed linen and helping persons with their bath and toilet;
- (c) serving food – prepared by them or others – and feeding persons needing help;
- (d) giving or ensuring that persons take the necessary medicaments;
- (e) watching for any sign of deterioration in the person's health and informing the relevant medical doctor or social services;
- (f) performing related tasks;
- (g) supervising other workers.

Recently the first international legal definition of domestic work was established under the ILO Convention No. 189 as “**work performed in or for a household or households**”.

¹ Boontinand, V. (. 2010, January. Domestic workers in Thailand: their situation, challenges and the way forward. *A situational review for the ILO Subregional Office for East Asia*.

² International Labour Office (2010), International Labour Conference, 99th Session, 2010; *Decent Work for Domestic Workers*, p 30.

³ International Labour Office (2010), International Labour Conference, 99th Session, 2010; *Decent Work for Domestic Workers*, p 30.

According to the ILO, domestic worker is defined as “**any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship**”.⁴ Domestic workers work like any other, and work like no other. Work in the households and homes is as old as time, vital for the well-being of families, communities and societies at large. Often considered as a typical women’s occupation, domestic work is often not perceived as “employment.” There are those who argue that women’s contribution to the home and general social good is immeasurable – it is valuable and precious and any effort to put a price tag on its value only demeans the contribution. This gender-based argument has resulted in the effective and systematic marginalization and undervaluing of domestic work. Paid domestic work remains virtually invisible as a form of employment in many countries and thus many domestic workers endure very poor working conditions.⁵

Domestic work is one of the most critical labour issues due to the nature of work, which is not perceived as employment but rather as unpaid activity. In addition, although men are also found working as domestic workers, women, children and migrant workers comprise the overwhelming majority of domestic workers. These groups of workers are vulnerable to labour exploitation. Since their work takes place in private households, and most workers reside in employers’ houses, it is difficult to demarcate the line between personal and work life as most domestic workers have to be on-call. Domestic workers are also facing unregulated working conditions. As a result, generally they work nearly around the clock, without days off, earn only little or below the minimum wages stipulated by the national law and have no access to social security or government insurance.

Likewise, in Thailand, domestic work is partially regulated. According to the Labour Protection Act BE 2541 (1998) of Thailand, which is the main Act providing protection to *all* workers, domestic work, which normally takes place in household, is seen as informal work in which workers are only partially guaranteed some protection measures under the law. In addition, whereas the sector is unregulated and informal, workers not only find more difficulty in accessing assistance and protection but they are also excluded from the country’s social protection scheme.

2. Situation of Domestic Workers in Thailand

2.1 Thai Domestic Workers

Since domestic work is not clearly defined in the national context, data on the number of domestic workers in Thailand is not systematically recorded. According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), domestic work is classified as informal economy work. The recent survey conducted by NSO in 2012 shows that in the category of private household, 287,200 Thai workers are employed in the private household across country, of which 94,000 (Thai) workers are employed in Bangkok.⁶ Fifty per cent of those employed in Bangkok are internal migrants from other provinces. The demographic data show that the majority of domestic workers are those whose ages are between 40-49 years old.⁷

Regarding the working conditions and employment, the Foundation for Child Development reported in 2010 that domestic work is subject neither to a working time statute

⁴ From http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/genericdocument/wcms_208561.pdf.

⁵ ILO (2006), Decent Work for Domestic Worker. *Information Leaflet*.

⁶ National Statistics Office (2012), *Labour Force Survey 2012*, Quarter 1.

⁷ Employment Department, Ministry of Labour (2009), *Yearbook of Employment Statistics 2008*.

nor to regulation on the maximum number of working hours. Therefore, working hours vary between 7-15 hours per day with no clear work schedule. Regarding wages, a recent study by Wannarat (2008)⁸ found live-in domestic workers receive higher benefits compared to other work opportunities in the informal economy. The benefits include free lodging and food in addition to a monthly salary. Some also receive an annual bonus and clothes. An employer would offer these benefits to enhance the loyalty and morale of the domestic workers who work closely within their households.⁹

2.2 Migrant Domestic Workers

The trend of Thai women being employed as domestic workers seems to have declined. Young Thai women seem to prefer working in the industrial sector because of the better status, higher salaries and more freedom. However, since demand for domestic workers has remained high due to the economic expansion and the growing middle class in Thailand over the past two decades, migrant workers have filled the gap. Conflict and economic hardship in the countries neighbouring Thailand— particularly in Myanmar—has pushed a large number of migrant workers to migrate to Thailand since the late 1980s, due to no clear policy regarding labour migration of low/unskilled labour from neighbouring countries. The majority of migrant workers migrate to Thailand irregularly. Since 1996, the Thai Government has allowed irregular migrant workers from its three neighbouring countries— Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR—to enter Thailand’s regularization scheme through agreements between the countries.

According to official figures from the Ministry of Labour, in mid-2011, 83,066 migrant domestic workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar registered with the Thai authorities. However, many more domestic workers do not have documents authorizing their residence or employment in Thailand. Nonetheless, it is believed that, at present, the majority of domestic workers in Thailand are documented or undocumented migrants from neighbouring countries.

According to research carried out by the Institute for Population and Social Research (IPRS) at Mahidol University in collaboration with the Shan Women’s Action Network and the Karen Women’s Organization, it is reported that female migrant domestic workers fleeing Myanmar are from various ethnic groups, and some have been trafficked into Thailand. The research, entitled “Migrant Domestic Workers: From Burma to Thailand”, reveals that due to political conflict and economic hardship, women were forced to migrate to Thailand where they hoped to find employment. Once in Thailand, migrant domestic workers faced poor working conditions. The majority of respondents worked over 14 hours a day and did not have any day off (IPRS 2004). In addition, according to the ILO report, child domestic workers and undocumented migrant workers were more likely to work longer hours and had no regular day off.¹⁰ It is interesting to note here that the ILO’s study on employer’s attitudes and knowledge of migrant rights indicated that the majority of employers interviewed (82.3 per cent) felt that migrant domestic workers should have a regular day off. About 65 per cent of the employers even understood that migrant domestic workers are actually entitled to a regular day off under Thai law. However, less than half of migrant domestic workers are in fact allowed to take any day off.

⁸ Tawan Wannarat (2008), *Informal Labour Protection*. Paper prepared for the Conference “Society in Research: Research in the Society”, 25 September 2008, Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University.

⁹ Foundation for Child Development (2010, December), “Domestic Workers in Thailand: Their situation, challenges and the role of civil society,” Bangkok.

¹⁰ Sureeporn Punpuing et al and Elaine Pearson (2006), *The Mekong Challenge, Underpaid, Overworked and Overlooked: The Reality of Young Migrant Workers in Thailand* (Vol.2), (ILO), p. 81.

The ILO report further noted that most of the younger migrant domestic workers (below 18 years of age) receive between 400-1,000 Baht per month. It was also found that some migrant domestic workers did not receive their salary for many months (Sureporn Punpuing et al. and Elaine Pearson 2006).

Due to their irregular status, undocumented or even registered migrant workers also face restrictions in terms of movement. The current regularization policy allowing irregular migrant workers to work temporarily in Thailand prohibits registered but illegal (im)migrants from traveling outside the province in which they are registered. This policy is subject to the immigration law of Thailand. Not only is the right to freedom of movement not given to irregular migrant workers, but migrants are not guaranteed a number of rights under the Thai labour law. In fact, the right to freedom of association to establish and register a migrant trade union is clearly restricted in Thai law. Section 88 of the Labour Relations Act of 1975 (LRA 1975) limits the right to establish a trade union to those having Thai nationality only. As a result, migrant workers may be regular members of a trade union, but the union must be founded and led by Thais. This Section is not in line with the ILO labour standard of the Convention No. 87 (Freedom of Association) which Thailand has not yet ratified.

3. Labour Protection & Social Security for Domestic Workers

Domestic work is neither clearly mentioned nor explicitly excluded in the Thai labour law. The Labour Protection Act of 1998 can be interpreted as applicable to domestic workers as a category of employees; hence their entitlement to labour protection is stipulated under this Act. However, a Ministerial Regulation was issued in the same year to exclude the application of certain protection clauses of the Labour Protection Act to workers engaging in household work without commercial or business activities. This Regulation has resulted in a lower level of labour protection extended to domestic workers. In 2011, the ILO adopted ILO Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201. Following this, the Thai Government adopted the new Ministerial Regulation on protection of domestic workers on October 30th, 2012; this came into force on November 9th, 2012. The new Ministerial Regulation repeals the former one which has been in effect for nearly 15 years (1998– 2012). This legal development has positive implications for all domestic workers in Thailand, including the large proportion of domestic workers who are also migrants. What follows here deals with labour protection guaranteed to domestic workers under the LPA as well as the new Ministerial Regulation to protect workers engaging in household work without commercial or business activities

3.1 Labour Protection Act 1998 (LPA)

According to the LPA, domestic workers are generally guaranteed labour rights stipulated under the main act as equal to other types of workers. However, some exceptions stipulated in the Ministerial Regulation, which is secondary to the LPA, shall apply to domestic workers. With these reasons, in 2009 the civil society and the Network of Domestic Workers in Thailand continued to advocate for rights protection of domestic workers in Thailand. In October 30th, 2012, the Ministry of Labour issued the new Ministerial Regulation No. 14 under the Labour Protection Act 1998. The Regulation concerns workers who perform domestic work without any involvement in business activities. It aligns several aspects of the legislation with the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and

Recommendation (No. 201). The new Ministerial Regulation came into force in November 9th, 2011.

According to the new Ministerial Regulation, domestic workers shall be covered under a number of rights in the following relevant Chapters of the main Act:

Chapter 1: General provisions (Section 7 – Section 20, except Section 12 dealing with sub-contractor issue)

Under general provisions, main issues are to be examined regarding statutory rights relating to contract and labour law and equal treatment protection. Domestic workers shall be provided with statutory rights under a labour contract whether or not it is in a written form. An employer will be responsible to a domestic worker as an employee who will be treated properly in accordance with rights and duties prescribed under the Civil and Commercial Code concerning a contract, unless otherwise prescribed in the LPA. In this case, an employer shall be held responsible to an employee in accordance with terms and conditions of agreement between both parties.

In addition, both female and male workers shall be treated equally in the same employment. Female workers and child workers shall be protected against sexual harassment. In case of rape or other serious crime, the violator (supervisor and/or employers), will be subject to relevant criminal sanctions under criminal law.

Chapter 2: Employment of labour (Section 28 – 30)

Domestic workers shall be entitled to the following days off. They shall be guaranteed a weekly day off of not less than one day a week. In addition, they are entitled to traditional holidays of not less than 13 days including May Day and annual holidays of not less than 6 days per year for an employee who has completed working for a one year period. The arrangement can be made in advance or as agreeable between the employer and the employee. Holiday leave may be accumulated to be used in subsequent years. However, if a worker is expected to work on holidays, an employer shall arrange holidays paid to the worker. A fine of 20,000 baht maximum is also imposed in case of a violation of this law.

Regarding paid sick leave, a domestic worker can obtain paid sick leave in the case of illness, with pay at the same rate as wages during the sick leave period, but not exceeding 30 days per year. However, the Ministerial Regulation fails to extend maternity rights to domestic workers, the majority of whom are females of childbearing age, and to ensure that termination of employment due to pregnancy is prohibited by law.

Chapter 4: Employment of young workers.

It is prohibited that an employer employs underage domestic workers. According to the Thai law, an underage worker is a person whose age is under 15 years.

Chapter 5: Wages, Overtime Pay, Holiday Pay and Holiday Overtime Pay

The Labour Protection Act stipulates the following practices in relation to payment:

Equal treatment shall be applicable in relation to wages determination to female and male worker in the same employment. The wages shall be paid in Thai currency and at the workplace unless consent for other arrangements is obtained. More importantly, the law stipulates that an employee shall make payment according to

the time agreed, which will be at least once a month but can be on a more frequent timeline agreed to in the best interest of a worker. Violation is subject to fine maximum of 100,000 baht or six months imprisonment. However, with regard to a domestic worker, a worker will neither benefit from minimum wage as stipulated under the LPA nor the Regulation that extends the universal minimum wage to domestic workers. This leaves domestic workers vulnerable to wage abuses and undermines some of the positive aspects of the Regulation. It is noted that the Ministerial Regulation also fails to extend protection for the maximum number of working hours per day as in regular work. In addition, domestic workers shall not be entitled to all types of overtime pay as stipulated in the LPA.

Chapter 12: lodgment and consideration of complaint

Employees can lodge a complaint to local Labour Officers if the employer violates the Labour Protection Law with regard to salary payment.

Chapter 13: Labour Inspector

Apart from rights extended to domestic workers, concerned officials, labour inspectors, shall have duties to ensure that an employer and employee comply with provisions stipulated under the Ministerial Regulation. A labour inspector plays a critical role in inspecting and entering a workplace to examine working conditions and issuing orders to an employer/employee to comply with the Act.

Finally, any violation of provisions stipulated under the LPA reflecting in the Ministerial Regulation shall be subject to penalties of fine and imprisonment depending on the seriousness of the offence committed.

The Regulation addresses a number of new developments such as holiday pay, sick leave and minimum age for admission to domestic work, and in passing the Regulation, the Ministry noted the provisions were brought into line with ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. However, the Regulation only lifts some restrictions rather than creating positive rights. It has left out some important issues. These are, for instance, issues relating to occupational health and safety protection, length of work time, arrangement of basic welfare services, minimum wages and prohibition of wage deduction and compensation in the case of termination of employment.

3.2 Social Security Protection

There seems to be an understanding among some officers in the Department of Labour Protection that domestic workers are entitled to be registered for the social security scheme since the new social security regulation allows places of business with one employee to also register their worker under this scheme. However, the Social Security Act of 1990 (as amended in 1999) defined an “employee” who would be entitled to coverage under the Act as “a person agreeing to work for an employer in return for wages irrespective of designation but excluding an employee who is employed for domestic work which does not involve in business”.¹¹ Therefore, domestic workers are currently not eligible to be registered for the social security coverage, which entitles insured persons to a number of benefits including:

- Compensation in case of non-work related accidents or illness

¹¹ Section 5, Social Security Act 1990;
<http://www.sso.go.th/sites/default/files/Social%20%20security%20act.pdf>.

- Maternity benefit
- Compensation for non-work related disabilities
- Compensation for non-work related death
- Child care benefit
- Old age benefit
- Unemployment benefit

3.3 Protection for Migrant Domestic Workers

Thai Labour Protection Act 1998 and amendment 2007 stipulates an equal treatment of all employees, including migrant workers irrespective of their legal status. However, as seen in the earlier discussion, only limited protections under the Thai Labour Protection Act are extended to domestic workers. Furthermore, the minimal labour protections which are applicable to domestic workers are neither practiced nor enforced. In terms of healthcare, migrant workers who are registered for employment in Thailand have to pay a health insurance fee of 1,300 baht which entitled them to receive basic medical care at a designated public hospital, whereas those domestic workers who come through the MOU shall not be guaranteed health insurance nor social security. However, since a large number of migrants are undocumented, they are not covered under the health insurance scheme.

With regard to cases of labour exploitation or human rights violations of migrant domestic workers, there seems to be limited protection and assistance. The Ministry of Labour is permitted to investigate only alleged factories, excluding migrant labour exploitation in private homes. Furthermore, although migrant domestic workers who are trafficked or exploited could also be protected under the Trafficking Act 1997 (amended in 2008), or the Child Protection Act 2003 in cases involving minors, the attitude and actual practice of law enforcement authorities is not always positive toward ensuring protection for migrants. According to the report by Foundation for Women, legal remedy for most cases of exploitation and human right violation of migrant domestic workers are often reduced to wage claim lawsuits through which workers will be compensated according to the number of working days. The migrant domestic workers are often asked to withdraw other charges of human rights violation inflicted by the employer if the case can be settled through wage compensation.

To ensure a greater protection for migrant domestic workers, it was suggested in the report by the Foundation for Women that the new domestic violence act that came into force in 2007 may be used to help migrant domestic workers whose rights have been violated. The act authorizes the official who comes across domestic violence to enter the private household to restrain the suspect and investigate the case. The act also stipulates that individuals who encounter the domestic violence case have the duty to notify relevant authorities. It is expected that this mechanism can also enable migrant domestic workers who suffer from violence and exploitation in the homes to have access to assistance from police and service providers.

4. The Network of Domestic Workers in Thailand

In October 2009, the Trade Union/CSO working group on decent work for domestic workers was set up, the working group composed of the following organizations: State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC), Labour Congress of Thailand (LCT), Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC), Federation of Trade Unions- Burma (FTUB), Migrant Karen Labour Union (MKLU), Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion – HomeNet Thailand, Foundation for the Health and Knowledge of Ethnic Labour (MAP),

Foundation for Child Development (FCD) and the Foundation for Women (FFW). With support from the ILO'S Sub-regional Office for East-Asia, Bangkok, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Committee for Asian Women (CAW), the working committee could continuously provide training on organizing and leadership for potential leaders of Thai domestic workers as well as delivering knowledge on decent work for domestic workers. This group of leaders tried to organize other domestic workers and at the same time launched the campaign on decent work for domestic workers. In particular, they advocated for social protection of domestic workers through issuance of new ministerial regulation for domestic workers in Thailand. The results of organizing activities of the core leaders have been positive, they formed a network and about 150 Thai domestic workers joined the network. In addition, some migrant domestic workers joined the network. From October 8-9, 2011, the first National Conference of Domestic Workers in Thailand was organized. A total of 120 domestic workers, both Thais and migrants, and 30 representatives of trade unions and civil society organizations participated in the Conference. The Conference adopted a Declaration of the Rights of Domestic Workers in Thailand which called for the ratification of ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, adopted by the ILC in June 2011. It agreed that the Network's official name would be (loosely translated from Thai) "Do It! - Network of Domestic Workers in Thailand". A Plan of Action was discussed and the Interim Committee of 20 (including representatives of migrant workers in Bangkok and Chiang Mai) was approved by the Conference.

At present, the Interim Committee keeps on working to consolidate and strengthen the network. They aim to expand new network members up to 500 in the year 2013. Likewise, the network is also actively advocating for the enforcement of the new Ministerial Regulation for Domestic Workers in Thailand and calling for the ratification of ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

Appendixes

Appendix 1

Declaration on the Rights of Domestic Workers in Thailand

(Adopted unanimously by the First National Conference of Domestic Workers in Thailand, Bangkok, 8 October 2011)

We, domestic workers in Thailand, work hard to feed our families. Like any other worker, we want to earn a living wage. We want to be included in labour legislation and social protection schemes. We want to work ourselves out of poverty. But our work is hardly valued, and poorly paid. It is generally seen as just something that women, who make up the majority of domestic workers, and too often children, do in the homes of others to ‘help out’. Yet we look after what is most important to other people: their family - their children, their parents, their sisters and brothers. Indeed, our work plays a vital role in the well-being and economic structure of society.

We come from the poorer sections of society. Many are migrants within Thailand; many more have migrated from other countries. We are often viewed as ‘second class citizens’, or ‘expendable migrants’. Domestic work could be ‘decent’ work if the government and employers treated us with fairness and on the same footing as other workers. The work itself is not ‘indecent’. What is indecent is the way that many of us are treated.

The adoption in June 2011 of ILO Convention no. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers and its accompanying Recommendation no. 201* that sets out our labour rights is an important step towards getting governments to recognize us and include us in national employment laws and social protection schemes, and raising society's awareness of our right

to decent work, dignity and respect. This Declaration on the Rights of Domestic Workers in Thailand affirms our human rights and labour rights, recognized under the Constitution of Thailand and international instruments, notably the UN Declaration of Human Rights and ILO Convention no. 189. We urge the Thai government, trade unions and civil society organizations, our employers and their organizations, and the public at large to respect and promote these rights.

*ILO Convention no. 189 and Recommendation no. 201 were adopted, with an overwhelming majority, by the members of the International Labour Conference, the world organization responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards. It is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, workers and employers to jointly shape policies and programmes promoting Decent Work for all.

The Basic Rights of Domestic Workers

- Right to respect and dignity as women and as workers (maternity protection)
- Right to equal treatment at work
 - fundamental labour rights
 - working conditions: paid day-off and holidays; fair wages; appropriate working hours and rest periods; right to privacy; sufficient and appropriate food and drink
 - no discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender, nationality, origin
- No child labour; no forced labour
- Right to organize, to collective bargaining and to representation
- Right to social security and health insurance
- Right to a healthy and safe workplace
- Right to education and skills development training

Commitments

We, domestic workers in Thailand, reiterate the conclusions and recommendations of the National Tripartite Consultation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (September 2009), which identified 4 priorities for action: 1) Legislation and legal framework; 2) Right to and promotion of, organizing and networking of domestic workers, 3) Skills training and upgrading of domestic workers, and 4) Campaigning: advocating to general public and policymakers for the recognition of the value of domestic work, raising awareness of employers and domestic workers about their rights. We call on the:

Government to:

- ensure that domestic workers are covered by labour legislation and social protection schemes and that these are effectively implemented, supervised and monitored
- ratify ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers
- set up a National Tripartite Task Force on Domestic Work (including civil society) to plan, implement and coordinate activities to promote decent work for domestic workers, ensuring that they and their representatives fully participate in the Task Force
- set professional standards for domestic workers
- put in place mechanisms to ensure easy access to basic education and skills training for domestic workers
- set up an effective complaints mechanism, hotlines and shelters
- develop an effective registration system
- campaign to raise public awareness on decent work for domestic workers and their labour rights

Employers' organizations to:

- assist in development of a national skills training programme for domestic workers,

- with proper certification and registration.
- collaborate with key stakeholders in developing appropriate legislation to ensure social protection and decent working conditions for domestic workers.
- undertake awareness-raising campaign amongst employers on decent work for domestic workers and their rights
- develop training material and programmes for employers on decent work for domestic workers and their rights

Trade unions and civil society organizations to:

- intensify their support and advocacy for adoption and effective implementation of national legislation on domestic workers
- actively support and assist in organizing of domestic workers and strengthening their capacity to organise, represent themselves, promote and protect their rights
- assist in the development of substantive training curriculum to include vocational training and skills upgrading of domestic workers
- undertake campaigns to raise public-awareness on the issue of domestic work, focusing on the value of domestic work and the rights of domestic workers

We, domestic workers in Thailand, are convinced that achieving decent work for us depends on our personal commitment and our capacity to organize and act together. We are inspired by the success of our sisters and brothers in the region and in other parts of the world who, despite many obstacles, have built strong and viable organizations and gained long-overdue rights for domestic workers. Like them, we are committed to work in unity and solidarity with all domestic workers, Thais and migrants, in building a strong, independent and democratic movement able to promote and defend our labour and human rights. We count on the continued support and assistance from trade unions, civil society and other stakeholders to achieve our goal of decent work for domestic workers in Thailand.

RESPECT, DIGNITY AND RIGHTS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS NOW!

Appendix 2

Case Studies: Thai Domestic Workers

1) Jitr, 40 years of being a domestic worker

Interview: December 2011

Jitr was born in Yasothon Province where she finished her 3rd grade study. Her parents did not have enough money to support all their 6 children so Jitr and her big brother had to help raising money to send the other four to school. In 1966, Jitr, 10 years old, moved to find a job in Bangkok. Being too young and less educated, she was only qualified to do domestic work. Her first job was in a beauty salon, doing almost everything from doing laundry, cleaning the salon, and assisting the hairdressers. She worked 12 hours a day for 50 baht a month, the sum valuable enough for her in that day. Jitr could not sleep well in a small storeroom under the stairs, always worrying about getting up at 4 o' clock to fill water in a jar for customers' hair washing. If she got up late, she would be scolded. Six months past, Jitr wanted to tell her parents of her tiredness and keenness to change her job but she could not contact them. No matter how hard she tried, her employer considered her too young for this job and needed an older maid instead. So, Jitr was sent to work for a family of the salon's customer.

The new job did not involve business but a service in a house of five members near the Central Post Office. Jitr had to do laundry, clean the house, prepare food and take care of their elderly parents. She was glad to have more 100 baht a month but worried that her parents might not know she had moved because they still had no contact. Four members of this family worked outside and they loved neat dressing, so Jitr had a lot of laundry work. Washing all clothes by hand, Jitr eventually suffered with dry cracked and peeling skin because of strong detergent. If wrinkles were found on the clothes, the boss would call Jitr "stupid" and not let her eat unless she redid the ironing till it met their satisfaction. At least, 'Grandpa' was nice. He kept telling his children not to push Jitr too much because she was just a child. For almost two years, Jitr had to work every day without holidays or a day off. One day, the 13-year-old girl went out for shopping and met her father, who had parked his cycle rickshaw and was waiting for her. He knew from the beauty salon's owner that Jitr had moved to this house. He tried to call her daughter, but the house owner did not let him talk to her. When coming to visit, he was also refused entry into the house. So, he had to park the rickshaw outside waiting to see her someday. Jitr told her father that she was very tired and distressed. She wanted to quit the job. Dad took Jitr to her employer to resign. The employer let her quit but refused to pay Jitr the rest of her 45 days wages.

Jitr was about 15 years old when she got the new job in Sukhumvit area. This family had three members; the mother, a daughter, and a son. Although her wage doubled to 200 baht a month, Jitr had a problem with her employer's son. He tried to touch her discourteously all the time. Sometimes he even grabbed her butt. Jitr told his mother, but nothing improved. Luckily, Jitr slept in his mother's room, so she could sleep safely at night. She had to work here for two years before she got a new job.

Jitr was 17 years old when she moved to work in another house. She got the same salary of 200 baht but she expected a lesser workload. Her duty was to assist the existing domestic worker in cleaning and taking care of the old lady. Unfortunately, it turned out that the existing domestic worker always took advantage on her. Jitr had to work for her more

than for the bosses. After the bosses finished their meal, Jitr had to wait until the other worker finished her meal, then Jitr would eat the rest of the food. At night, she slept in her own room while Jitr had to sleep in a small space beside the restroom. The only good thing about working here was that Jitr could save the whole 200 baht for her parents. She could live with the extra money from the old lady because there was not much cost of living.

Without holidays and personal leave, she had never gone home to visit her parents. Her big brother seldom visited her. After two years of working here, the old lady developed some health problems. The lady needed a practical nurse and sent Jitr to be a domestic worker in her doctor's house in return. The doctor's wife, a dentist, gave Jitr 300 baht a month and trained her to be her assistant. Every day she woke up at 4:00 a.m., cleaned the house and prepared breakfast for the doctors. At 8:00 a.m. she went to the hospital with her mistress, watching and learning what a dental assistant does. The mistress would train Jitr when she had no patients. In the evening she was brought to the dental clinic and worked until 8:00 pm. If there were a lot of customers, the clinic might close at 9-10 p.m. Returning from the clinic, she had to iron all clothes she had washed in the morning and then went to bed. This continued for 3-4 months before the mistress's old assistant, with a salary of 1,500 baht, was laid off and Jitr was replaced with 300 baht a month paid, so her total earnings were 600 baht a month. Jitr was very happy. She got up early to do housework until 2:00 p.m. and went to prepare the clinic for the evening service. When the mistress had a baby, Jitr had to stop working at the clinic and stayed at home, being a nanny. Her 300 baht from clinic work was cut while she had to work harder. During daytime Jitr could work only when the baby slept. At night the baby slept with Jitr because the mistress said she was so tired of working all day that she could not take care of her baby. Thus, Jitr had to be on duty almost 24 hours a day. Receiving a 100 baht extra a month for the nanny job, she got 400 baht a month. Then the second baby came and nanny Jitr's income was supplemented with 100 baht, making a total of 600 baht a month. She could not remember about her salary raise per year but when the masters' eldest child was 7 years old and started going to school, her salary was 1,500 baht a month.

Being a domestic worker in the doctors' house was hard work: without holidays or a leave, no salary increase standard, and no welfare, but Jitr could accept it. She thought they were nicer than her former bosses because they let her go home to visit her parents. When Jitr was 19 years old, she had gone home to join a Pha-pa ceremony. Later, her parents sent a message that a man seeing Jitr at the ceremony wanted to marry her. That man, later known later to be a restaurant captain in Bangkok, had sent his parents to talk with hers and propose a marriage. Jitr did not deny, she would follow the parents' will.

Jitr moved out and rented a house after getting married. She got concerned about the increase in her cost of living. Her salary of 2,500 baht a month seemed insufficient. Jitr wanted to find an extra job but she had no extra time. Early morning she had to prepare breakfast for the doctor's kids. Late morning she had to do the housework, then cleaned the clinic in the afternoon, and assisted her mistress in the evening. Finishing the work at the clinic, Jitr had to get the kids to go to bed at 10 p.m. before going home to have her own time. Jitr worked every day even when she was pregnant. After giving birth to her first child, Jitr brought along her child to the doctors' house, but she had to stop working at the clinic because it was inconvenient. When pregnant with her second child, she learned that her husband was addicted in gambling. She decided to leave him, quit the job at the doctors' house and find a new place to live. With less education and only domestic work experience, the best job she could find was of the same type. She got paid 300 baht a day at an apartment for bare hand washing of hundred pieces of sheets and pillowcases. Sometimes she also had to use bleach. She suffered with a hand rash and back pain. There was no social – or other kinds of – welfare here to help her. After giving birth to the second child, Jitr quit the job and

started a laundry service at her house so she could take care of her baby. Unfortunately, the family income was not enough to cover the rent and food for three people, so Jitr started to be indebted.

When her second child was two years old, Jitr decided to go out for a job. She left her 5-year-old child taking care of his two-year-old sister at home. After changing lots of working places, Jitr finally got a job of room service for Japanese at a condominium in Sukhumvit. She was paid 3,000 baht per room. From one at the beginning, Jitr, at 30 years old, increased her customers to ten rooms. By now she could pay all debts and support her sisters' tuition fee for more than 10,000 baht a month until two of them got a bachelor's degree. However, during an economic crisis causing foreigners to return home, her account was reduced to only one. The revenue was not enough to pay the rent and other expenses, so she started to be indebted again. To earn more money, Jitr had to do a car washing service for the condo residents. Luckily, her Japanese boss added her name in his company's list of employees, so she could borrow from the company 100,000 baht as a welfare loan. This amount was used as a down payment for a piece of land she bought. Though it is far away in Nongjok, she thinks it is worth it rather than paying house rental for the rest of her life.

Over the past 40 years, sometimes Jitr wanted to have a better life than being a domestic worker, but due to her education, and lack of funds for any investment, housework is the best she can do. Now Jitr is 55 years old. All her four sisters and brothers were graduated, the doctors' two kids completed their study abroad and have a great future, but Jitr is still working as a domestic worker. Nowadays, she chooses to work as a freelance domestic worker for single people living in apartments because of a good payment and lessened workload. More importantly, the work gives her more freedom and a fair deal. Jitr loves her job and wants to do it as long as she can. However, after so many years of hard working and carefully spending, she helplessly wonders why she has no savings and still has to pay for a house. When she gets old and cannot work, how she can live on the government's 500 baht monthly cash allowance for the elderly people?

Jitr asked everyone to find ways to improve the living and working conditions of domestic workers. She said, "If the work is too miserable, no one wants to be a domestic worker, and then the employers themselves will get in big trouble."

2) Maeo

Interview: December 2011

Maeo, a domestic worker, was born in Bangkok. Her parents migrated from Srisakhet (a province from northeast). Her father passed away when she was studying in 2nd year of vocational certificate. Consequently, her mother, a maid in a garment factory, had to shoulder all living expenses for her 3 children herself. Maeo had to help her mother earn for living by trimming thread remnants off garments daily after school until 9 p.m. She earned 60 baht per day—only enough to cover her carfare to school. After her mother remarried, Maeo didn't want to stay with her mother anymore. Maeo left school then and went to work in bookstore in another province. She lived in the store, received 1,000 baht per month. Maeo was taken to shop owner's house in Bangkok 3-4 days a month to clean the house and do laundry for owner's children. She has no private room, had to sleep on the ground in front of the owner's bed while she had only pillow and blanket as her bedding. She endured this work for one year, then she wanted to quit from her job but the shop owner did not let her go, so she decided to quit without her final month salary.

Then, she got job as souvenir seller in a tourist attraction, earning 100 baht per day. But before long, the shop owner changed the pay to be a percentage of sales; consequently,

her income declined sometime not even enough to pay for house rental. Maeo cohabited with a security guard when she was 20. After five years of living together her husband passed away from electric shock, leaving Maeo alone with her three year old child. She received no compensation from her husband's employer since she had no marriage certificate. Maeo had been out of work. She then took her child back to her hometown, and had to work a lot for her child. She worked as a general employee, waking up at 3 a.m. to make soybean milk or grow vegetables to sell in market; she worked as a conductor for a minibus, but still did not earn enough to cover living expenses.

Finally, Maeo decided to find a job in Bangkok when she was 30. She got job in confectionary house for a Korean employer who had 4-5 other workers. She received 4,500 baht a month plus free lunch. But the sweets were not selling well, so soon she and her friends saw their payment lowered to 3,500 baht with no lunch. Her friends gradually left, consequently adding more work to the remaining workers. Maeo had to clean the employer's house since fewer sweets meant more household work. Finally it was unavoidable that she become a fulltime domestic worker while also still making the sweets.

Although Maeo fully worked, she never got fully and timely paid. She received a little sum of payment, sometime 300, 500, but never more than 1,500 baht a month. Sometimes her employers went back to Korea for a month; she had to wait until they returned to Thailand to receive her wage, which never more than 1,000 baht. The employer claimed that she had to work less when they were away, only caring for the house without having to cook or launder for them. She wondered why she received a lower pay, since although she did fewer household jobs she still had to be all the time in her employer's house, contributing the same length of time. When she did both jobs or worked overtime, she never received additional pay. Maeo even talked to her employer but that had no effect. She had to work seven days a week even if she was far gone in pregnancy, had no rights for overtime or any day off payment. She wanted to change jobs but concern about her four children and her mother stopped her. She knew she must carefully think about quitting the job. Maeo seeks comfort by spending time as a voluntary caregiver for disabled people nearby. She wants to help people in need as much as she can.

Currently, Maeo is 34 years old. She changed from domestic worker to office maid with 6,000 baht salary. She has to work seven days a week, no day off or leave. She will be deducted 193 baht for each day of absence. Since her contract states that she has to open-close all four office gates, clean all five rest rooms, a meeting room, 11 working rooms, and prepare water glasses for guess, water the plants, record performance and "other job assigned by employer," including provide lunch meal, clean dishes, answering telephones, photocopying, etc. Although Maeo is a paper contractor, the contract must be renewed quarterly. She never feels job security, her employer always uses the contract to press her while she never gets any benefits from it.

She plans to go back to her hometown if she is not renewed with this contract. She wants to enroll in non-formal education, acquiring more knowledge in order to help other domestic workers to achieve fair practices. Her pride is found in helping others.

3) Mai

Interview: December 2011

Mai is the eldest daughter of a farmer family in Roi-Et province. She only finished grade 6 of primary school like most farmers' daughters. In 1987, when she was about 17 years old, she decided to come to Bangkok as a wage-worker then send money to her await parents and three siblings.

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Mai started her wage-worker's life in a garment factory; earning 5 baht per piece, then moved to a plastic factory, earning 40 baht a day which went up to 50 baht. The low wage was slightly improved by the factory's lodges and social security. After two years of work, Mai developed some sickness for reasons unknown; unappetizing, fatigue; weight loss. She treated herself with the local herbal medicine until the year 1997, when the doctor found a tumor in her uterus. She needed a hysterectomy. After the operation, Mai looked for a more suitable job, taking subcontracted sewing work at home. Although she earned only 25 baht per dozen, it was likely healthier than working in factory. But irregular work is a major problem, so she has to do extra jobs fixing cloth, and sometimes helps her friend with a household job.

In 2003, Mai was getting comfortable with household work. It was a good earning opportunity with steady work and no capital invests; only labour. Mai started her full time live-out domestic work with 5,000 baht salary, working from 8 a.m. until she finished the dinner table at 8 p.m. Although she loved the job, she always had problems communicating with her foreign employer. She often made mistakes and was blamed. Mai finally changed to other jobs, including minimart cashier, and other 2-3 household jobs with 7,000-8,000 baht monthly income. Most of the time she worked from dawn to dusk with no overtime payment, and no benefits.

In 2007, Mai shifted her way of employment to part-time domestic worker with many employers. This, she believed, would give her freedom, more personal time, and some security; even if she was laid off from an employer, she still had others. Mai started with only one house and gradually increased that to seven houses, earning up to 12,000 baht per month. Everything seem to be good until there was an incident with granny.

Granny was the mother of an employer where Mai worked twice a week (Tuesday and Friday) earning 300 baht per day. She had to clean the house, do laundry, and care for granny until her employer back sometime until 9 p.m. Mai never complained since she loved and respected granny as her senior relative.

The date of incident, as usual Mai took granny for a shower and then granny prepared for her afternoon nap. Mai sprayed disinfectant product on bathroom floor and waited for its activation, as she always did. While Mai was out of the room washing a hand towel, she heard granny call for help. Granny had fallen in the bathroom and was lying on the floor. She doesn't know why granny went back to the bathroom since she knew that Mai usually cleaned the bathroom after granny's shower. Mai urgently call her employer, who came back home and granny was admitted to hospital. Even though there were no fractures, granny had many sprains and had to stay a few days in hospital. All family members blamed Mai and no one forgave her even though she prostrated on hands for forgiveness; consequently Mai was laid off without overdue payment of 2,400 baht.

Mai was very sad, but she thought that she was still lucky to have other jobs in other houses. But she was wrong. Soon she was affected by the power of words from granny's children. Mai was defamed; they said she never apologized and that she purposely caused granny's accident. They said since Mai was angry with granny's blame, she might try to get revenge on her other employers. Mai tried to be patient but time never changed a thing; granny's children always threaten her and made claims for granny's medical expenses. They even threatened to ambush Mai. Mai realized that they did not really want to claim for medical expense since granny was covered by insurance, they only wanted to hurt her. Still Mai would like to compensate them if she had the money but she really does not. Mai always kept only a little sum of her salary for herself and sent the rest to her family in upcountry. Mai intended to work to pay the debt but she never got a chance. She is going to lose jobs in this village, where she devoted herself as a domestic worker for many years. Mai has to look

for new jobs, but realizes that may take time to reach the same situation. She will be patient hopefully so that she will have a chance to vindicate herself.

Appendix 3

Case Studies: Migrant Domestic Workers

1) Burmese Domestic worker: Bow

Interview: June 7 2011.

Bow (assumed name), a Pa-Oh (an ethnic group in Myanmar) is 28 years old. Her hometown is in Payan of Myanmar. She completed the 6th-grade education but could not find a job. There was only teaching jobs available. In Burma, only rich people with connections can get a good job. She came to Thailand in 2002 as a tourist in Mae Sod but actually a job hunter and finally got one as a seller in the market with 50 baht a day payment. After working at the market for a while, she moved to work as a nanny in the house of a VDO shop's owner in Nakhon Sawan Province, where she worked for two years. She went back home to Myanmar for some period. Her friend who took leave from house working in Bangkok told her that a friend of her employer was looking for a domestic worker. Bow thus took a bus from Mae Sod to Bangkok. She said during that time, in 2004, the police were less strict about the illegal immigration than they are today.

Bow got that job in a house on Pracha Uthit Road in Radburana District. Her salary was 4,000 baht a month and rose to 8,000 baht because Bow is diligent and hardly takes leave. Her employer once owned a pebble jewelry business but now owns a fertilizer factory which is built separately from the house. There are four workers, including Bow. She has to clean the house, do cooking, clean the toilet, and feed five dogs. Bow starts working at 6:00 a.m. and waits until the employer goes to bed at 8:00-9:00 p.m. to finish her daily job. She has no weekly or traditional holidays. Asking for leave on traditional holidays, she might be allowed only a day. For a home visit or personal leave, she has to tell the employer how many days she will be absent and then come back to work on time. If she cannot make it, she will be scolded, but her pay will not be cut.

Bow said that the very hard work is taking care of the dogs. She has to bathe them often because they keep making a mess. The employer loves his dogs; he always makes sure they get the best food and takes them to the vet when they are sick. On the other hand, he has never taken Bow or her friends to the doctor when they get sick. He does not give her money when she is in need. She has to buy the medicine for herself. She goes to see a doctor only in a serious case. Since the employer does not provide gloves for the cleaning job or bathing the dogs, Bow often gets hand fungus.

She does not change her job because the employer applies the work permit for her at her own payment. She finds it convenient with accommodation and food (though not as good as the employer's). Moreover she is allowed to go home without pay cut. One of the weak points here is the unfixed time of working. If working in a factory, with fixed working time, she can manage her own way of living and go home when time off. Moreover, she had to get the house work done completely. If the employer does not go to bed, she still is concerned about her job and stands by all the time. However, Bow does not want to work in a factory,

worrying that she cannot take sick leave or visit home. Besides, she does not like to work in a large group of workers.

2) Case study of a domestic worker: Bua

Interview: August 14, 2011

Miss Bua (assumed name), 27 is the Shan, an ethnic nationality in Myanmar. Her hometown is in the Shan State where her family earns a living by rice farming. During the 3-4 months when they are waiting for the yields, all farmers have no income. Bua needed some money for her sister's study, but it is hard to find a job in her country. In 2000, at the age of 16, Bua decided to come to Thailand with her aunt who paid some money (she did not know the sum because her aunt had paid for her) to a person who helped bringing them to Thailand. They walked through the fields, crossing the border into Thailand, then took a motorbike taxi to the bus station. Bua had to hide in the luggage storage room of a bus. Aunt brought her to Samut Sakhon Province where she got her first job as a domestic worker, earning 1,500 baht a month. She worked there for two months, and then the employer sent her to work at her mother's noodle shop in Phrae Province. Bua's salary increased to 2,000 baht a month. She worked there for eight months.

In 2001, her mother's younger sister persuaded Bua to go for work in Chiang Mai. Her new employer worked for a company and paid her 3,500 baht a month. She had to mow the lawn, feed the dog, cook, and clean everything. In 2002 she quit the job with a new destination to Bangkok. She got a job in a restaurant at Big C superstore, Ladprao, receiving 6,000 baht a month and living in the employer's house. Later her employer had a financial problem and did not pay her on time. Bua had to wait two months for one-month's wages. She could not save money for sending to her family so she quit the job.

In 2003, Bua worked as a cook and lived in her employer's place in Panya Village on Ramintra Road. She got the job from an employment agent. Her salary was 7,000 baht a month except the first month, which was cut 3,500 baht to pay the agent. Bua's responsibility was cooking food for the workers. The hard work left no time for rest; she resigned after working there for five months. She then got a new job as a domestic worker of a business family in Nava Thanee Village, Tumbon Klong 1, Amphoe Klong Luang, Pathumthanee Province. Her working hours were 5:00 a.m. -11:00 p.m. She had to take care of three kids and "Ama" (Chinese word to call an old lady). Mostly she spent time in the kitchen to cook food for the family and lose some more time in preparing vegetarian food for Ama. The children eat gruel or fried rice, plus soymilk or fruit juice. When the employers finished their meals at 10:30 a.m., Bua had to clean the table and wash all dishes before having her own meal. Soon after, she would prepare the lunch. After the employers finished their lunch she did all cleaning work and prepared dinner. Additionally, she had to bath the kids, feed them, and wait until they went to bed—ending her daily job. Bua had a chance to rest only when sitting down to eat and going to bed at night. Only two day leaving in a month was permitted. In case of no leave, she would get extra money of 300 baht a day. However working all day made her get nail fungus and she had to pay for the treatment herself. Therefore, she looked for a new job.

In June 2010, while going to apply a job at Thanyarak employment agent, she met an acquaintance named Nid (false name) who suggested a job as a domestic worker in Pravet area. She, as Nid said, could contact this employer directly with no need to pay the employment agency. Her employer owned a packaging company and the mistress was a bank manager. They paid her 8,000 baht a month. Bua had one day weekly holiday. If she did not

take a leave, the employers would pay her extra money of 500 baht a week. Bua's working time began from 5:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. She had to take care of two kids, cook food, wash their clothes, and take them to bed. She quit the job after working there for six months and was refused the last month payment. They said that Nid, who brought Bua to this house, had taken all her first month salary since the first day she worked here. The employers had never told her about this. Bua tried to contact Nid to get the money back. Once in several calls, Nid confirmed he would return the money but then could not be reached again. Therefore, Bua went back home in Myanmar in late 2010.

In April 2011, Bua returned to Thailand and got a job as a domestic worker. The mistress and her foreigner husband live in Ladprao Village Project 1 soi 1. This time Bua gets paid 8,000 baht a month, working from 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. She has to take care of the kids in eating, toileting, going to bed, taking the school bus and getting from school. For the housework, Bua has to do the laundry, clean the whole inside house and the outside swimming pool edge using a brush and bare hands. Moreover, Bua has to sweep leaves in the lawn and scrub the fence wall without labour-saving appliances. She spends most of her time working and had a chance to rest during eating and sitting down for ironing clothes. She spends her life with the employers. When they bring some fresh food home, she had to keep aside some for cooking her own meals. She cannot depend on the leftover food from the boss' meals. If they eat out, she will have nothing to eat. Bua has one weekly holiday, but she has to go out, otherwise the boss will call her on duty all day. Bua is worn out with such daily hard work, but she has owed her employers so much. She once had a bill of 20,000 baht for cyst surgery, but her employers help her with 8,000 baht. Also they pay 6,000 baht for her immigrant worker ID card. She gets bored with the domestic work. But working in a factory, she will have the expense of house rental and food and no money will be left for her mom and sister in Myanmar. Bua said she has changed her working place for over seven times because she always wants a better job. All places are the same, so she is looking for the best treatment.

3) Domestic Worker: Dao

Interview: July 8, 2011

Dao (assumed name) is the Pa-Oh Myanmar. She was born in Pago Province (Hongsawati) near Yangon in Myanmar. When she was 9 years old, she moved to Karen State adjacent to Mae Sod in the northern of Thailand. In 2008, when she was 20 years old, she was persuaded by an agent to work in Thailand. To hide from the police, she had to walk in the night. Her mother prepared some dried food for her to eat on the way. There were seven people on that trip and everyone had to pay the agent 8,000 baht. They walked for seven days from Mae Sod to the city of Tak Province. Then, they took a bus to Bangkok. They stayed in Bangkok for one night. The agent told Dao to contact her relatives then he would bring her to the relatives' place at night. Her first workplace was a construction site in Rama II area. Dao got paid 170 baht a day for cleaning the rubbish in the site. Due to the hard work, she quit the job after working for three months. Dao got a new one in a flower farm in Nakhon Phathom Province. She had to cut flowers; such as crown flower, jasmine, and rose. The wage was 30 baht per hour. The more time she spent in working, the more money she obtained. Her new employer allowed her to plant some vegetables, so she had to buy only the rice. At first, she could hardly speak Thai, but she tried to understand from the employer's gesture.

Around 2003, her elder sister persuaded her to work in a restaurant at Ramkhamhaeng. When coming to apply for the job, she was rejected because of her draker skin tone and not pretty figure. However, her sister asked the chef to talk to the employer. She finally got the job with the salary of 3,500 baht a month. Unsatisfied with the wage, she told her sister that she would go back to the flower farm in Nakhon Phathom. Again, the Thai cook talked to the employer for her. Finally, he gave her 4,500 baht a month, but she had to do the housework. The house of her new Muslim employer has two storeys with three rooms on the upper that she had to clean. Dao also had to clear garbage bins, clean all 11 restrooms of the restaurant, prepare paper, and collect prayer clothes and almost 50 pairs of prayer shoes. Sometimes she had to go shopping with the cook. The working time was 8:00 a.m. - 11 p.m. The restaurant weekly holiday was Thursday. Anyone taking leave on Friday - Saturday - Sunday would be cut 166 baht a day. The employer applied for the work permit for her by deducting 1,000 baht from her salary every month. When the permit was expired he applied for a passport book for her but she had to pay 17,000-baht for the fee by herself. However, the employer kept these documents with him, and Dao had only a copy of her own ID document.

Every 2-3 months, the restaurant would hold a party for orphans (a donation box was placed in front of the restaurant.) There would be more than 1,000 kids joining the party. Dao had to wake up at 4:00 a.m., help cook, clean the house, and wash dishes. After every kid went home, it was time to clean the place, wash and iron clothes before going to bed at 1:00 am. Dao got extra 100-200 baht paid at the end of the month together with her salary. She was very tired but could not deny the extra job. She suffered from a peptic ulcer because she did not eat on time. When getting sick, she bought the medicine for herself. Some of her friends took a sick leave and their wage was cut, meaning they had no money to buy food. The employer had never brought his workers to the doctor. All workers could eat restaurant food on their working days, but had to buy it on their leave days. All workers lived with the employer by paying 350 baht a month each for a room of 3-4 people. If their friends or relatives came to visit, they had to wait until the restaurant closed and set a meeting outside the house. During her pregnancy, Dao had to work even with morning sickness. Dao asked to quit, but the employer denied, citing that she still had the passport fee to pay back. Therefore, Dao, her husband and other three workers ran away at the beginning of this year. She now works as a painter in construction sites. She cannot apply for a new work permit because she did not take the old document with her when she ran away. Moreover, her former employer has not submitted her employment termination to the Department of Employment.