

BH Narrative Report 2014

I. Summary of Developments

In 2014, Bethune House provided a safe place, with free food and simple amenities to more than 600 Asian women migrant workers who also found sisterhood, temporary family, and a community in the shelter.

We worked closely with the Mission for Migrant Workers and other service providers, migrant organizations, and unions who frequently refer women migrants to Bethune House. Even the different government agencies recognized the work that we do by referring victims of rape and physical assaults.



The management team of the shelters located in two different areas made it possible to maintain and balance the number of women that we served. It facilitated rescue operations in the middle of the night, something that were more frequent in 2014. Prison and hospital visits were also done to check the needs and situations of migrants in jail and those confined in the hospitals.

Bethune House with its limited staff was able to cope in the delivery of its programs and services because of the presence of long term and short term interns and volunteers. Their numbers increased in 2014. They were our case work support. They also contributed to the life skills development of the residents. The residents also played their part by accompanying other residents to court hearings, Labor and Immigration Departments. Other residents who were keen in art work helped in handicraft making. The house teams ensured that the daily tasks from marketing, cooking and cleaning were smoothly implemented.

The three year commitment from Operation Santa Claus made it possible for Bethune House to plan ahead and gave us a breathing space so we could improve further our programs while raising the additional budgetary needs for 2014.

We thank all the donors and supporters from the local community and overseas for our continued existence in HK. We thank the women migrant workers for their patience and perseverance in improving their conditions for the betterment of the HK community.

II. Program Reports

A. Pastoral Care and Social Welfare

1. Temporary Shelter, Admittance, Counseling and Para Legal Assistance

Most of the women were survivors from the trauma of ill-treatment and various forms of abuses they experienced inside their workplace.

Bethune House did not only become a place for refuge for many of these women. It also became a place for their learning and empowerment. They empowered themselves through their own case and from the cases of their fellow shelter residents.



Resident helps in statement taking

Bethune House also became a place for them to regain their dignity and the realization that care and hope can be found in Hong Kong. Bethune House is a place of solidarity where they understand each other's culture, discovery of commonalities and strength.

a. Client intake for the months from January to December 2014

Nationality	Indonesians	Filipino	Other Nationalities	TOTAL Client intake
	290	302	10	602

b. Nature of cases

Nature of Cases	Total Case Handled
Labor	362
Police (Physical Assault, sexual harassment, theft, fraud)	92
Immigration	4
Employees Compensation	7
Agency/Illegal collection of placement fees	7
Health –related (tumor, hepatitis, thyroid, hypertension, cancer patients, tuberculosis, shoulder pain, flu)	19
Shelter	158
TOTAL CASES	649

c. Highlights of the case work

c.1 **Hepatitis case:** For more than two years, Analiza, a Filipina was only fed noodles at lunch and dinner during the entire duration of her employment. As a

result, she was hospitalized for several days because of stomach pain, vomiting and headache. Doctor diagnosed her with hepatitis due to malnutrition. After her discharge from the hospital, her employer refused to take her back while she was on sick leave for two weeks. Bethune House accommodated her so she could regain her strength, sleep well and be provided with healthy food. After two weeks of recovery, her employer took her back.

c.2 Sexual harassment: A 70 year old employer sexually harassed her Sri Lankan domestic worker. He touched her breast, caressed her back and touched parts of her body. After more than 6 months, the Sri Lankan lady ran away from her employer's flat. Bethune House assisted with the police case until the resolution of her case.

c.3 Physical Assault: The employers were elderly who hit, slapped, pushed and pulled the hairs of their domestic workers. Evidences were not strong to merit a court case. Except for Erwiana, Anis and Rowena, who sustained wounds and bruises, their employers, are much younger - in their early 40's. Erwiana won her case. Unfortunately, Anis, whose ring finger was chopped and Rowena who sustained 4cm by 7cm bruise on her left arm lost their police case due to insufficient evidence.

c.4 Fraud cases: A placement agency lured Indonesian domestic workers whose contract were terminated to apply for loan using fake documents. The police charged the victims with fraud which could lead to imprisonment. We assisted by going with them to court hearings and communicating with Duty lawyers.

c.5 Unsuitable accommodation: Some were forced to sleep in the kitchen, toilet, makeshift bed in the laundry area, hallway, storage room with only a very thin mat, under the television table in the living room.

c.6 Agency related problems: Confiscation of passports and employment contracts were still a problem especially among Indonesians; while illegal collection of placement fees among the Filipinos remained a problem; the fees collected were much lower as a result of the campaign of the different migrant organizations and advocacy work of the MFMW.

d. A total of HKD 1,035,572.57 was recovered from their monetary claims against their employers.

In the beginning, the clients hesitated to file their claims. They were made to believe by recruitment agencies that it would affect their future employment in HK. They were afraid to face their employers again. They did not know how it was like to be in court, to be questioned about their complaints, how to defend themselves. Basically, they were not aware of their rights.

While in Bethune House, we assisted them in documenting their cases. By narrating their stories of abuse, they were able to understand why they have the right to lodge their complaints. Along the way, we guide them, we educate them, and we encourage them to attend court hearings to witness the proceedings to prepare them when it was their turn to be in court. We had regular Know Your Rights and peer counseling. We believed that once a victim is empowered, they would survive

their ordeals. Hence, the amount of claims recovered signified their efforts to get justice and to affect change in their lives.

However, there were issues we noted why there were less than 100% of recovered monetary claims:

- Signed termination letters appearing they terminated the contract without one month notice or the termination was mutually agreed upon;
- Signed Acknowledgment of contractual entitlements, including e-tickets; and or signed Salary slips or lists of salaries showing all of them were paid monthly.
- Intimidations, harassment and threat, and deceptions were used forcing the FDWs to sign the documents.
- These documents then were used as material evidence to refute the legitimate labour claims of the FDW and evade from paying the entitlements they owe the FDWs.
- Some of them withdrew their pursuit of justice due to pressure from their family members; others opted to find new good-hearted employers.

“I am going back to my country with stronger spirit and with high hopes despite the fact that I may not have won my total labour claims and the HK police discontinued their investigation against my former employer who is a well-known university figure. I am thankful that Bethune House accepted me, provided me safe place and food for almost a year. In the shelter, I gained confidence to pursue my case. I learned a lesson from my case to set aside fear; that acts of physical abuses must be reported immediately when it happened”.



d. Emergency, Medical and Material Assistance

There were 19 cases with health related problems from lumps in the breast, thyroid problem, malnutrition hepatitis, tumor, cancer patients, back and shoulder pains, swelling of the foot, tuberculosis and stomach pains. There were residents who got sick with colds and flu while in the shelter. Because of their status, the residents did not have access to public hospitals. We had to avail of the services of private doctors and our Chinese medicine doctor.

Visa Fees, LT and MECAB registration fees, Bail money and Duty Lawyers’ registration fees were also shouldered by Bethune House.

Our emergency, medical and material assistance is funded partly by the Operation Santa Claus Charity Fund and Dela Salle Alumni Association in HK.

B. Volunteer and Internship Programs

For the year 2014, we accommodated more interns and volunteers from the universities and secondary schools in Hong Kong and overseas, as well as from our church partners:

University of Hong Kong (HKU)
Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIE)

University of Toronto (Canada)
University of Sussex (U.K.)

Lingnan University's Service
Learning program
Hong Kong University of Science and
Technology (HKUST)
Nagasaki University (Japan)

New School (USA)
Diakonia (Finland)
King George V School

There were summer interns with the Mission for Migrant Workers (MFMW) who also did case support for Bethune House while others came in the last quarter of the year. There were interns who did direct placement with us through the office of service learning project of the Lingnan University and the HKUST.

The interns and volunteers were undergraduate students of/or taking masters of Social Work, Education, BBA/LLB/Law under the HKU's Social Justice Internship Program, Migration Studies, and Anthropology. One of them is a secondary student who helped with the hand-made greeting cards. She's the daughter of the former resident/client of Bethune House.



Lingnan Service Learning

We also have long term intern from 12 months to 20 months from the Global Mission Fellows of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) and the Episcopal Church.

They did case work support by helping the residents write their chronology in English, fill out case forms, calculations of claims, accompanied the residents when they lodged their claims or complaints and/or attended meetings and hearings at the relevant government agencies and Consulates. They even helped rescue FDWs and/or helped collect their personal belongings from the employer's flat and/or placement agencies. They helped write in English the chronology of the case of the residents. They also accompanied residents in hospitals for follow-up treatment and/or requesting copies of their medical records.

Some of our trainings on life skills were facilitated by these interns. The residents were taught making Origami Christmas wreaths and Christmas trees. They demonstrated how to prepare easy dishes and delicacies like: orio chocolate cookies, Chinese traditional delicacies, Mexican tacos and burittos. They also taught them simple basic Chinese calligraphy where the residents learn how to write their names and acquainting the residents with the correct pronunciation of MTR stations in Cantonese language. They also taught DOs and DON'Ts during interviews



Origami Making

when job hunting. They taught language lessons in Cantonese and English, as well as basic self-defense.

C. Psycho-social Activities, Education and Life Skills development

Some of the activities were conducted in collaboration with the interns' projects and our program services.

c.1 These are the regular education, life skills developments and training organized by Bethune House in coordination with the MFMW, interns and volunteers. These were from basic Know Your Rights to migrants' orientation and important issues and campaigns of the general migrant workers' community in Hong Kong or relevant concerns from their home countries that impacts them. This is done once a week among Indonesian and Filipino residents.

c.2 Saturday seminars sponsored by the MFMW's PSCW with topics on the Chinese culture, on disability discrimination ordinance, on human rights and peace, and women's orientation, and caring for the elderly. We invited resource speakers from the local NGOs and other groups.

c.3 In the first quarter of 2014, we also hosted the 2nd Open Kitchen project of one of the interns from HKU's social work department.

c.5. Psycho-social activities were carried out like – birthday celebrations held monthly or when there are birthday celebrants of the month, beach outing and barbeque, picnic, visit to Hundred Buddhas, to the HK Museum and harvesting strawberries at the strawberry farm in Fan Ling as well as Christmas and New Year's Party celebration.

c.6 We also have computer lessons from basic typing to making power point presentations, stress management, Cooking lessons and Handicraft making.



Cooking lesson

Handicraft

Self –Defense

Tour 100 Buddha

D. Advocacy and Support Network

d.1 One major achievement under support network was the Shelter Consultation organized by the *Coalition of Service Providers for Ethnic Minorities (CSPM- HK)*. It was attended by the 6 shelters under the Coalition including



Bethune House. The purpose of the Consultation is to share information resources and how we can improve our delivery of service.

d.2 Three of the residents' stories as a migrant worker and their aspirations were shared in a class at the University of Hong Kong. The sharing and invitation was facilitated by Doris Lee, an active board member of the shelter and a founding member of the group of open-minded employers called Open Door.

d.3 We watched a series of film showing sponsored by Kowloon Union Church and the Mandela Movie sponsored by Amnesty International.

d.4 Bethune House helped in the 2014 Matilda Sedan Chair Race & Bazaar. Residents prepared 500 samosas for the charity fair.

d.5 We were invited during the group presentation of students' interns from Lingnan University's Office of Service Learning on what they learned during their placement in Bethune House.

d.6 We attended a fund-raising event organized by the HK International Christian School. Bethune House distributed promotional materials

d.7 Invitation to participate in the Lantern Legend 2014 (Lingnan University) where we showcased our handicraft products. We also attended the Lingnan Spring Dinner and got invited to the Bradbury School PYP Exhibition where year 6 students presented a video and KYR book on who we are and the



World Aids Day

rights of FDW in HK. The residents and staff joined a Her Fund event, "Charity Walk for Her". The residents performed during the World Aids Day sponsored by the HIV Education Center.



Bradbury PYP Exhibition

d.8 Speaker at the Chinese University School of Public Health and Primary Care on Gender and Age-related Health Care.

d.9 Mission Moments in Kowloon Union Church; Invited to speak among the students of Lutheran Theological Seminary facilitated by Reverend Maggie Mathieson on "How my spirituality help me with my work".

d.10 Media and TV Interviews: Asian Wall Street Journal, China Daily, TVB News, Apple Daily, ATV, Karen Emmons, RTHK Back Chat, Red Door News, Reuters, RTHK News room, CNN, Coconut Thailand, El Pais - a Spanish newspaper.

No good choices: A Maid's fight for justice" by Wall Street Journal (WSJ). One of the stories presented in its documentary is of a former resident/client in Bethune House & MFMW who was sexually abused by the employer's brother in her 3 months employment in HK. The article quoted relevant data from MFMW's 2013 research

live-in arrangement imposed on migrant domestic workers. This was exhibited for days in October at the Conrad Hotel. Read full story via this link – <http://online.wsj.com/.../maid-in-hong-kong-fights-for-justice>

d.11 Sharing and visit: HKU SJSI, HKU Student Union Social Service Group, Students from HK IE, Bradbury School Year 6 students, HK Justice and Peace Commission, Hong Kong University Masters of Criminology, Arts and Yoga, Sol Wellness

d.12 Participated in the Equal Opportunities Commission Review Consultation

d.13 Invited by the Renaissance College HK during the CAS Event to introduce Bethune House and volunteer opportunities.

d.14. Attended the Just Giving briefing session

d.15 The residents and staff of Bethune House helped during the St. Stephen's Christmas Fete.

d.16 Presented a submission during the Legco Panel on Manpower

E. General Management and Fund-Raising

The management team was able to cope with the demand of the service delivery, the management of interns and volunteers, raising funds to meet the budgetary needs for 2014, invitations and representations as well as media interviews.

This is the final year for the Church of Sweden's financial support to Bethune House. Church of Sweden is one of our longest partners since 1989. We appreciate our continued partnership with them and we hope to continue this partnership in other ways.



Bethune's 28 Anniversary

There were new funding partners, the Operation Santa Claus who is supporting Bethune House from 2014-2016. The Dela Salle Alumni Association- HK, also adopted Bethune House as one of their beneficiaries.

There were charity events organized by Arts N Yoga and Sol Wellness - both Yoga schools; the Mad Hatter's Charity Event initiated by Ms. Anna Pendry; and a Photo-Exhibit organized by Kent Daniel Foran in support of our programs and services.

We still have our long term partners from overseas and locally: the Old Catholic Church, United Methodist Women, Global Fund for Women, St. Stephen's Chapel Stanley, Methodist International Church, Kowloon Union Church, CLARES- St John's Cathedral, HK and Fareast Masonic Benevolent Trust Fund, Sedan Chair Charities Fund. Their donations mainly supported our institutional needs and some specific program expenses.

Feeding Hong Kong, a food bank in HK has been for several years donating food, including the day's surplus bread, salad and yogurt from Pret A Manger and bread from Baker A. They also arranged bread collection from Le' Rose twice a week. Once a year, Curves Fitness Center in Central and Sai Kung collected food and toiletries from their members and donate them to Bethune House as part of their anniversary celebration.

Even migrant organizations from the Philippines and Indonesia shared whatever they have to bring food and other needs of the residents. There were also numerous individuals and migrant organizations who joined the yearly Coins for Bethune.

EC Harris HK Ltd through Dela Salle Alumni Association –HK donated 5 used lap tops for our casework documentation.



Used Lap top Donation



Food Drive



Love Gift for Bethune

III. VISITORS

Among the visitors include people from Consulates of sending countries like The Overseas Workers Welfare Assistance of the Philippine Consulate General, the Department of Social Welfare- Assistance to National, Labor Communication Office of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Department of Labor and Employment.

There were also visitors from many churches like Methodist International Church-Filipino Fellowship, Philippine Independent Church, Catholic priest and church workers from Taiwan, SVD Fathers, Sister Felicitas Nisperos of the Catholic Center.

Donors' representatives from the General Board of the Global Ministries- United Methodist Church- USA, Sedan Chair Charities Fund, Sweden Women Education Association, Feeding HK, American Women Association, Mr. Richard Beattie and Ken Beattie of TCC Global, Dr. Tammy Cheung.

Media people from The Sun Newspaper, Reuters, Asian Wall Street Journal, China Daily, TVB News, Apple Daily, ATV, Karen Emmons, Red Door News, Reuters, RTHK News room, CNN, Coconut Thailand, El Pais - a Spanish newspaper. There were also free-lance photographers like Xyza Cruz Bacani, Steve Porte and Jonathan van Smith.

Other individuals from Hands On Volunteers, HK Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs and the Justice and Peace Commission, Section Juan, Amnesty International

staff and UK Secretary General, researchers, other local individuals, migrant workers organizations, unions, alliances and numerous individuals.

They may have different purpose during their visits, but one thing in common is they wanted to know the situation of the women residents in Bethune House and how they could be of assistance.

Pictures



Martin Krieg of GBGM



Swedish women with the
Consul of Consulate of Sweden



Bible Study



Women's Group with the Global Fund for Women



Amnesty International
General Secretary-UK



American Women Association
Charity Bazaar



Philippine Consulate Gen
Assistance to National

