

Safe and Fair:

Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region

Regional Programme Results

Total Budget	EU Contribution	UN Agency Contributions	Duration
USD 30,000,000	USD 29,370,529	USD 629,471	2018-2023



Provided technical support to **131** laws, policies & strategies; **79** adopted



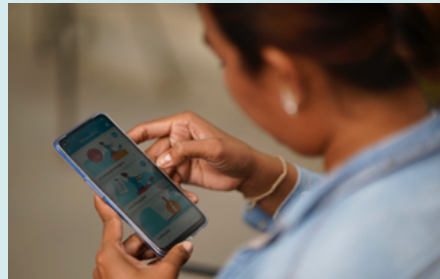
Services and info to over **427,337** WMWs, certified vocational trainings to **1,285** WMWs



Organized **9,246** women migrant workers **137,906** peer network-community engagement



Enhanced capacity of **21,953** key stakeholders



25 info systems, **15** joint task forces, **17** referral mechanisms established



Partnered with **256** organisations



Reached **35,424,936** people through campaigns and aware-raising events



Developed **180** knowledge products, **70** translations



128 notable media and high-visibility events

Context

With the support of the European Union, the regional programme Safe and Fair "Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (SAF)" was implemented in the Southeast Asian region. The programme's overriding objective was to ensure that labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region. The gains and benefits of migration (to both individuals and communities) can be immense. Yet, women migrant workers are likely to face more challenges and barriers than men when engaged in migration. These vulnerabilities arise on account of multiple intersections of discrimination and violence based on race, ethnicity, nationality, age, migration status or other sex- or gender-associated characteristics. Lack of access to complete and transparent information about legal migration channels, terms and conditions of work, recruitment costs and procedures make them more vulnerable to human trafficking and puts them at greater risks of exploitation, physical, emotional and sexual violence throughout the migration cycle. Due to discrimination on immigration status, or fear of blame from service providers, language barriers, or limited knowledge about their rights and protections under the law, women migrant workers are likely to face more challenges in accessing support services such as health care, justice and social services. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed (and further exacerbated) these inequalities. Through policy reform and field programming, SAF's made efforts to ensure that labour migration, EVAW and anti-trafficking frameworks and services are responsive to the needs of women migrant workers.



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Spotlight Initiative's Response

The SAF programme mainstreamed three cross-cutting approaches: 1) women's voices and agency; 2) rights-based approaches; and 3) in the spirit of UN Reform, broad engagement of stakeholders, delivering jointly on programme initiatives. The provision of information and services (including referral mechanisms) to women migrant workers and their families, done in coordination with trade unions, CSOs, frontline service providers and migrant worker resource centres (MRCs), played a crucial role in improving women migrant workers' knowledge and access to safe and fair migration channels; on responding to violence, harassment and exploitation; and access to opportunities for decent work. In addition, SAF programme strengthened partnerships with women's peer networks, women migrant workers' associations and workers' organisations at the grassroots levels, ensuring that they are consulted in national-level policy discussions and design. SAF has also been enhancing the institutional capacity of its implementing partners in outreach, advocacy, case management, organising, and gender-responsive service provision and coordination. SAF supported the long-term sustainability of its interventions through skills' and knowledge transfers, institutionalizing service provision with allocation of resources and strengthening institutional support for community-level initiatives. SAF also engaged in policy advocacy and legal reforms as ASEAN countries engaged in legislative changes – from improving gender-responsive labour migration and anti-trafficking laws to ensuring quality coordinated ending violence against women (EVAW) service provision for women migrant workers.

Key Results

- **New and revised laws and policies highlighting women migrant workers' needs (Pillar 1: Policies and Legislation):** SAF provided technical support to 131 legal and policy instruments supporting ASEAN countries in fulfilling their commitments to gender equality, eliminating VAW and ensuring gender responsive labour migration and decent work. Of this, 79 were adopted. This included support for the successful ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention (C190) by the Philippines, and support for ASEAN to adopt a Regional Plan of Action to end violence against women and girls.
- **Building Institutional capacity to provide data driven quality services to women migrant workers and their families (Pillar 2: Institutions, Pillar 3: Prevention, Pillar 4: Services and Pillar 5: Data):** 25 information systems and 17 referral mechanisms were established and strengthened with SAF's support to enhance coordinated quality service provision to women migrant workers who have survived violence. Information, outreach, skills' training and service provision were also carried out through 36 migrant worker resource centres in 9 ASEAN countries. Overall, 427,337 women migrant workers were provided with information and support services, including psychosocial, health, social and/or legal services; knowledge of available services related to violence and safe migration; 1,285 women developed certified vocational skills. Over 21,670 stakeholders, including frontline service providers, developed their understanding of women migrant workers' rights and needs and improved their capacity for gender-responsive and survivor-centric service provision, including remote service provision. 276 government officials built their capacity to collect VAW administrative data and ASEAN countries increased their submissions of sex-disaggregated datasets to the international labour migration statistics database to 55%.
- **Networking, and organising women migrant workers to respond to VAW amongst their peers (Pillar 6: Women's Movements and Civil Society):** Peer networks are informal groups that provide safe spaces for women migrant workers to share information on safe and fair migration, including the risks of violence and the essential services available. 137,906 users were engaged online around issues of violence against women migrant workers, trafficking and safe migration. Additionally, SAF has strengthened the partnerships and capacity of trade unions, migrant worker associations, as well as community and women's networks in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam to organize and network women migrant workers and to provide referral services. As a result of these efforts 9,246 women migrant workers were organized into trade unions, workers' associations and groups during the reporting period. Trade unions, workers organisations are critical for women's empowerment and for them to benefit from collectivism.



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Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls



International
Labour
Organization



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

One Story of Impact: Peer Networks help women migrant workers gain information, build solidarity, and protect their rights

SAF supported women migrant workers to create community-based peer networks which provide safe spaces for them and others to seek information and share their experiences about gender-based violence, and safe migration. Through capacity-building on gender-equality, prevention and response to gender-based violence, rights of migrant workers, and ways to access information and quality support services in both the countries of origin and destination, the network members have improved their leadership skills becoming more confident in sharing their experiences with others who plan to migrate abroad, including risks of violence that might happen throughout their migration journey. Such networks were created in six countries with support from SAF partners. The members frequently connect with each other in person, and through the online communities they have created. They use creative and innovative methods to learn and share information through specialized apps, photography, and other available media. These networks have reached 322,270 women with information on safe migration, different forms of violence against women and services available for women migrant workers subject to violence or abuse, including referral. These networks have become powerful mechanisms to disseminate information and increase awareness of violence against women migrant workers and safe migration and build women's agency and leadership skills.

In their own words...

Ms. Long Leap is a Peer Leader in Cambodia. She was a migrant worker in Thailand. She says when she first went to work as a migrant worker, she did not have any information and was not connected to any networks. She started to participate in the network in her community and learned about the My Journey Mobile App. She says "for me as a former migrant worker the My Journey Mobile App is easy to use because even if you can't read, you can listen to it. The Help section is important. There are Helplines that migrant workers can use when they face problems. Before we had to write these numbers down. Now they are on our phone. I will never stop sharing the App."



Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

Organising and collective bargaining are powerful tools for women migrant workers in domestic and care work to empower themselves and negotiate for better conditions. SAF supported Philippine domestic and care workers to establish Pinay Careworkers Transnational (PINAY) which is the first-ever transnational union of Filipino domestic and care workers unions and associations across both countries of origin and destination. PINAY, which is registered in the Philippines, marks a landmark strategy in unionizing/organizing domestic workers and care workers, as it leverages on their presence in six destination countries, and overcomes administrative/procedural restrictions (for example, migrant domestic workers not being recognized or able to register as unions/associations in countries of destination). In Malaysia, SAF supported Indonesian migrant domestic workers to conduct outreach and organizing activities. As the group grew, these migrant domestic workers made the decision to establish PERTIMIG, a workers' organization for Indonesian migrant domestic workers. SAF supported the building of PERTIMIG's organizational capacity, leadership skills, outreach and advocacy abilities and also supported the registration and setting up of PERTIMIG's secretariat. PERTIMIG was recognized as a good practice at the UN's International Migration Review Forum 2022.