



2021

Annual Report



MAP
Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

CONTEXT OF 2021

Once again, 2021 was dominated by COVID. While migrants were languishing under periodic restrictions limiting movement and economic activity, they sought out any work that was available. Many had lost their jobs or were on hiatus until their workplace reopened. Work was disrupted by periodic outbreaks, which would result in individuals, families and communities, being quarantined. Chiang Mai had hospital camps, and Mae Sot's hospital was constantly full. Outbreaks hit Chiang Mai and Mae Sot at different times. Generally, there was a lull in the first half of the year, followed by new waves around the middle of the year, with a peak in infections of the Delta variant, around August 2021. Migrants accounted for around 9% of all COVID cases in Thailand, with migrants from Myanmar suffering disproportionately high rates among the migrant population.

The “Bubble and Seal” policy was used when cases were found, basically isolating migrants in their camps, factories or residence. In Chiang Mai, construction camps were affected in June, with clusters popping up in various locations, mostly linked to workers fleeing “Bubble and Seal” affected workplaces in Bangkok area looking for work in Chiang Mai. In August, there was a major outbreak traced to Chiang Mai's main wet market which received fresh foods from all over the country. Migrants who worked in the market were isolated, but many lived in residence outside the market, resulting in numerous clusters. Factories in Mae Sot self-imposed preventative measures by preventing migrants from freely moving outside of factory compounds. Many factories required all workers to move inside the compound walls. This resulted in a loss of control of personal agency for many, and usually signaled a precursor to labor rights violations.

Vaccination wasn't available to migrants in the North until September 2021. Cumulative total of migrants from Myanmar in the country who been reportedly infected with COVID-19 reached 108,755 in September 2021. The number of Myanmar migrants who had been vaccinated by the first week of October 2021 was 503,610, which was the equivalent of less than 1% of the total number of doses administered in total nationally, and less than 30% of migrants registered at the time. (IOM, Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants in Thailand, Situation Report, Sept 2021) Obstacles included confusing policies which only allowed those registered with Social Security to get inoculated for free, leaving out domestic workers, among others. Also, some provinces announced that they would vaccinate migrants only after all Thais had already received their second dose. Many migrants reportedly had their employers coordinate the vaccination, but usually only Sinopharm, Sinovac or AstraZeneca grade. Some migrants may have had to pay for their shots, even though the employer was supposed to.

Adding to the woes of COVID, on February 1st, 2021, the Myanmar military sprang a coup d'état and deposed the rightfully, democratically elected government of the NLD, arresting all the leaders, including the beloved Aung San Suu Kyi. Resistance was immediate. Civil officials left their jobs en masse and there was civil disobedience which was accompanied by peaceful resistance and protests. Soon violence flared, initiated by the military. There were arrests and deaths. Some young people started to resort to violence in response. Eventually, many choose to join the ethnic rebels on the border. The economy, which had already suffered from COVID shutdowns, was now more precarious with devaluation of the Kyat and people trying to pull their money from the banks.

The border had remained closed all through the year due to the COVID situation. So, migrants who had initially returned to ride out the COVID pandemic in early 2020, found themselves stuck in Myanmar under these deteriorating political and economic conditions. Some became desperate early on. In December of 2020 there were COVID clusters in factories in Samut Sakhorn, found to be linked to migrants who had been smuggled in. There were periodic stories of migrants getting caught trying to cross the border throughout the year 2021. Costs identified by migrants ranged from 14,000 – 30,000 THB per person depending on the destination. Close

to the end of the year though, around December, there was a more noticeable increase in attempted crossings, and the number of related traffic accidents in pursuit of vehicles smuggling migrants also started to increase. Violence escalated at the border on the Myanmar side, including an incident involving some INGO workers, and IDPs amassing and crossing the border briefly. The border, however, remained closed.

The Thai economy started opening, and immediately, there was a call for more migrant workers to fill jobs in service, factory and food processing. But the migrant policy continued to vacillate, providing opportunities for only migrants who were once registered, but had lost their job and changed employers, or had initiated the registration policy and fallen out, which amounted to between 300,000-400,000. In other words, there was no amnesty for newly arrived migrants or those who wanted to return, not even through the MOU. The year started off with registration for work permits until 13 February. The registration process emphasized COVID testing (an extra cost borne by the worker), health insurance and a health exam (also all borne by the worker). All this only provided two years stay at most and proved prohibitive.

There were too many expenses, including the PCR testing, resulting in the fees costing around 8,600 THB, with the inclusion of agents fees costing up to 10-12,000 THB for some. In light of the loss of income and spent savings, few migrants could afford the registration fees, and the number of fully registered migrants was low. Around 1.5 million migrants were registered at the end of the year, but of those, 594,408 were registered under the MOU, while 920,784 were on the name list, which was only the temporary, initial step for those whose status was uncertain. Passports were starting to expire without any clear indication from the Myanmar Embassy and consulate on what to do. Migrants were left unsettled, uncertain and insecure.

ABOUT MAP FOUNDATION

Our vision is that Migrant workers will have full access to information during the whole migration process and will be able to access services and exercise their rights fully without discrimination. In addition, MAP works towards the goal that people from Burma (Myanmar) will be able to make informed, free choices about staying or migrating.

Our goals are to empower migrant workers from Burma (Myanmar) and their communities to take action to claim their rights, in part by ensuring that migrants have full access to up to date information on rights, policies and laws in their own language; and to eliminate discrimination against migrant workers, especially women and families, so that they can receive their full labour rights, are healthy, their children go to school, and they are able to integrate into Thai society.

MAP Foundation approaches migrants lives in a holistic way and has four programmes that respond to different aspects of a person's life while working and living in Thailand. These programmes work to improve the lives of migrant workers from Burma in Thailand by focusing on labour rights, women's rights, access to education and health promotion.

MAP Foundation reaches out to migrant workers from Myanmar (Burma), and their communities with a special focus on women migrants. Migrants work in all occupations, with a special focus on domestic workers, construction, garment factories and agriculture.

Our primary working areas include Chiang Mai and Mae Sot, and secondary areas include other parts of the Thai-Burma border, central area and the Southern region of Thailand, and border areas and source communities in Shan State, Myanmar when possible.

2021 - MAP'S PROGRAMMING

LABOUR RIGHTS: REDUCE EXPLOITATION

Migrant workers' understanding of labour rights increased as well as their skills and willingness to collectively bargain with their employers for proper labour rights, wages and social protections / benefits, and pursue legal channels, if necessary, with the confidence that they can win.

In Mae Sot, eight new volunteers (50% women) from factories involved in labour rights cases joined the already existing Second Home group of paralegals. A total of 1,903 migrants (60% women), including nine factories, received Labour rights counselling through various channels by MAP in Mae Sot.

Some workers mobilized and entered the legal process for remediation. Workers at Shuang Shu & Plastic Factory in Mae Sot formed a group with the intention to file a claim in 2022; while 136 workers (55% women) at the VK garment factory were laid off and filed a case with the labour inspector, who ordered the employer to pay 5.2 million Baht. Other workers who had already mobilized reaped the fruit of their struggle. Twenty-six workers at LALA Books who filed for compensation of 1.7 million Baht, were awarded by the courts, and workers received the first instalment of 60,000 Baht in the last quarter of 2021. Another 458 workers from SD Fashion factory negotiated with the employer to receive proper wages, including 384 who were dismissed and received unpaid wages for six months, and another seventy-four active workers who received their back wages.

In Chiang Mai, a leader of a group of hotel cleaners, led her colleagues to negotiate with the employer for improved work benefits, and won a small concession of the employer issuing social security contributions without deducting the employee's wages, and giving one paid day-off per week. Another two cases were assisted by MAP to access benefits through Social Security, including one case who received 21,840 Baht in workers compensation for a work-related accident.

Twenty-one construction workers (47% women) received the full 120,000 Baht owed to the group in backpay by the employer. A husband and wife working in construction filed a case with the labour inspector in Chiang Mai, and the employer paid the full amount owed of 20,450 Baht. Six domestic workers (mostly women) filed a case against company that hired them for work done at a local university, and received 32,000 Baht in unpaid wages.

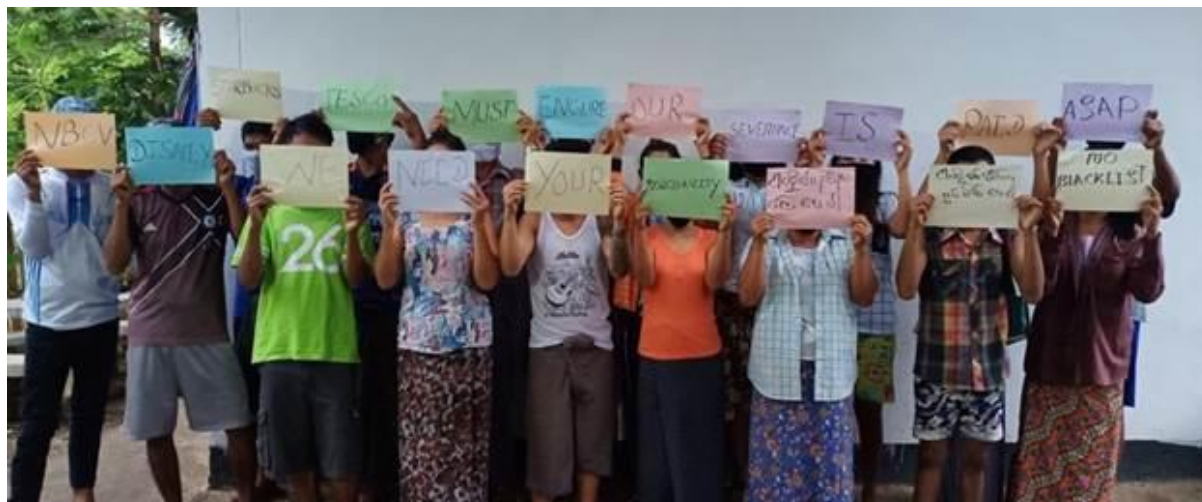
The ability of migrants to successfully collectively bargain and access redress mechanisms, increasingly sets legal precedents in favour of migrant workers. This makes it more difficult for employers to exploit workers in garment factories in Mae Sot, especially when they know their rights and are in contact with MAP or partner CBO / NGOs. It has also resulted in migrants in Chiang Mai of various occupations, but especially construction and domestic workers, to form worker groups.

In 2021, a domestic workers' group in Chiang Mai, with a total of sixty-three members (70% women), met and discussed their operations and strategy as well increased knowledge of members on Labour rights, social protections and Occupational Safety and Health. Also in Chiang Mai, ten Labour Rights leaders (8 women) provided counselling on labour rights to workers and collected information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in their area. One leader processed her own migrant registration, saving money on broker fees, and explained to friends how to do the same.

STORY:

AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE: BRANDS STEP UP AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

The landmark Kanlayanee case was finalized in early April 2021, with NBC Universal paying the remaining 489,850 Baht, and completing the compensation of 3,464,550 THB paid to twenty-six workers (46% women) starting in 2020.



The Kanlayanee Case was a rare success. Although the case started almost by coincidence, the Mae Sot border area is an area known as a “black hole” for labor rights, and finding a factory that exploits its workers in this area is not difficult. However, the Kanlayanee factory was not on MAP’s radar. The reason this case was found is in part because of MAP’s long-standing presence and interventions in the area.

In August 2019, MAP had invited a Reuters reporter to Mae Sot to look at the issue of underpayment of wages to migrant workers in factories in the area, especially in the garment industry. After a couple of days looking around, we found workers from the Kanlayanee factory. Actually, they found us. A peer leader MAP had previously trained from another factory, called Sanuk Garment, who had moved to work at the Kanlayanee factory, approached us. The Kanlayanee factory was a small-medium sized factory with fifty workers in total. Reportedly, the factory was producing aprons for Starbucks and was underpaying its workers. We also met workers who previously passed our paralegal training who were working at another factory called Cortina Eiger (workers called it A One), producing for the sports company Bauer. These were both factories in Mae Sot which were under-paying their migrant workers to produce wares for US companies. The Reuters reporter released a story about this.

Media impact

The story was of interest internationally because US companies were involved. ([link](#)) The story also immediately caught the attention of the Office of the International Thai Police, which is the section of the police responsible for anti-trafficking efforts. They saw this as a potential black-eye for Thailand. So, they sent a police force from TATIP (Thai Anti-Trafficking in Persons Task Force) to the two factories. This also made big news. In early September 2019, TATIP made a snap inspection in the two factories. ([news / link](#)) They found migrant workers had their labor rights violated, but were not in conditions considered as trafficking. For this reason, the case was passed onto the Labor Rights Protection Office, Mae Sot branch, Tak Province.

Soon after, in late September 2019, the Kanlayanee factory closed without prior notice, supposedly because Starbucks withdrew its orders. At that point, it was not yet known about the other brands being produced by the factory.

Workers take action

Out of the fifty workers, twenty-six decided they wanted to take the case for redress and approached MAP. This group had passed through para-legal training activities by MAP on labor rights and collective bargaining while previously working in different factories, so they were familiar with what this entailed. The other group of workers stayed with Kanlayanee and worked at a smaller, home factory under similar conditions.

In cases like this, where there is an abrupt closure of a factory, as the law allows, it is common to demand claims for two years of retroactive unpaid back wages or improperly paid back wages below the minimum wage, as well as unpaid OT, including working on days off and holidays, in addition to compensation for lack of forewarning of closure / severance pay. According to these rules, the Labour Protection Office (LPO) officers made a ruling against the Kanlayanee factory, calling for payment of approximately 3.46 million Thai Baht or just around \$110,000 US to the workers. The employer (Kanlayanee Ruengrit) appealed the order, but it was refused and the order was enforced.

(In the Cortina Eiger case the workers were awarded 46 million originally, which was then reduced to 18 million Baht...Reportedly, the owner paid the 600 plus workers and the case was closed – see business-humanrights.org)

Approaching the brands

In January 2020, MAP consulted with the international organization Workers Rights Consortium (WRC) about poor auditing practices by brands. We also asked them to approach Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), an international network of which MAP is already a member, for advice. CCC recommended that the workers should write a letter to the brand - Starbucks. We also started an investigation, which is when we realized there were other brands involved. However, the workers needed coaching on how to identify the brands. From this process we found that, besides Starbucks, there were also the brands Disney, Tesco (F & F), and NBC Universal sourcing from the Kanlayanee factory.

The workers sent a letter to all of the brands in April 2020. Tesco, Disney and Universal responded, recognizing the workers, but did not take any action. Starbucks did not acknowledge the workers. The workers sent another round of letters to the brands in early May and included CCC, MAP and WRC. We coordinated with CCC's Urgent Appeals section. They helped contact Reuters to follow up the story.

MAP, CCC and WRC worked together along with our community partner CBO "Arakan Workers Organization" (AWO) to maintain contact between the workers and the brands. CCC helped by following up and pressuring the brands; WRC gave advice and technical support, while AWO helped to organize the workers. MAP played a coordinating role. Funding for advocacy, networking, coordination and case support came from CCC and other donors (such as Freedom Fund and Diakonia). Legal assistance was provided by Labour Law Clinic under the Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF) with support from ADRA.

Negotiations begin

Around the same time in April 2020, Ms. Kanlayanee wanted to negotiate with the workers, but started at 500,000 Baht in total. There were a couple of rounds of negotiation, but they were unsatisfactory. At the same time, CCC helped us contact Tesco UK, who was positive about finding a solution, and NBC Universal, who denied responsibility. Starbucks and Disney (through Big C), did not respond at first.

A couple of the workers went back to Burma during a lull in COVID restrictions – one person's husband was sick, the other went to deliver her child. Almost all of the workers who stayed found it difficult to find regular work. Many are older and find it hard to compete in the workforce, but many have also been blacklisted and can only find daily work which lacks any long-term security. The situation was exacerbated by COVID restrictions and the

related impact on the economy. In fact, most of these workers were impecunious and had to survive off of foraged vegetables, rice and chili paste for long stretches.



On 31 August 2020, HRDF and MAP Foundation officially filed a case against the employer, Kanlayanee Ruengrit, with the local regional Labor Court. COVID restrictions slowed the process.

While waiting for the courts, CCC and MAP were in direct negotiations with the brands. NBC Universal, insisted that the fault was with the bad personal behavior of the licensee (intermediary buyer), who they felt was corrupt and should pay. As the court date came closer, CCC also helped to produce advocacy media that went viral to pressure the brands. The workers helped deliver messages through videos and images showing the difficulty of their lives as part of the media strategy.

On 4 November 2020, the court-initiated mediation. Ms. Kanlayanee insisted she was bankrupt and the most she could pay was a little over 1 million Baht. The workers insisted on receiving the full amount. Our team encouraged the workers to assess the situation about the likelihood of getting paid fully and consider a strategy accordingly, which included the possibility of some or all of the brands contributing.

After much discussion, workers agreed to accept the amount offered from the employer, partly because they saw the reality of not getting the full amount ordered by the Labour Protection Office from her, and the courts were pressuring the workers to accept less. So, finally in November, the court ordered Kanlayanee to pay 30% of the total, or around 1.1 million Thai Baht, and the workers accepted. The amount was paid then and there. This buoyed the workers.



The workers gain momentum

Then, with assistance from CCC and the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre ([Business-humanrights.org](https://www.business-humanrights.org/)), we asked the brands to pay a portion of the remainder divided between the four of them, or not even 600,000 Baht or around \$20,000 USD each company. Tesco was the first company to take responsibility, and paid outright at the end of November plus some extra for MAP to use in labour protection activities. In mid- December, while MAP was making a video to pressure the other three brands, Disney and Starbucks also paid. So, we changed the video to thank them and continued to pressure NBC Universal. ([Video link](#)) Meanwhile, Reuters was covering the situation and giving updates on who was paying and who was not.

That left NBC Universal. So, we targeted our media to NBC Universal and the “minions” characters from “Despicable Me” – which is the products that the workers made. There were videos and photos of workers dressed as minions foraging for vegetables to survive - same as the workers. At the International Migrants Day event in Mae Sot, the workers dressed as minions and danced as part of the “Pay Up” campaign calling out to the brands “to be paid.” CCC had their own “minions” campaign including spoof cartoons, a letter on move-on.org, and videos by a representative of the actors’ guild...



Victory for the workers

In late February, NBC Universal suddenly approached MAP and CCC saying they would pay. They sent the remainder plus a little extra, which was put in a fund to help workers expedite labor cases just like this one. The migrants were paid the final amount at the beginning of April 2021. The workers have been made “whole.” This is the first time migrant workers in Mae Sot have received the full amount that they petitioned for. [link](#)

The workers paid off debts and remitted money to their families. They also jointly decided to use the funds to help improve a Workers’ Center (by Arakan Workers’ Organization) to help receive similar complaints from other workers, and put together funds to purchase dried foods to assist other workers who are out of work due to COVID.



Triumphant Kanlayanee workers

STORY 2:

A SMALL, BUT SIGNIFICANT VICTORY

Bua (not real name) is a young Shan woman who travelled to Thailand for work hoping to have a better life. She started working on an orange farm, then as a waitress in a restaurant, and finally as a domestic worker. In her work experiences, each and every time, the employer exploited migrant workers in various ways, such as very low wages, work without days off and having to work all day until she finished her work even after if it was already dark. When she first came to Thailand, she didn't know anything about rights. She had to be patient when she faced problems being exploited. She did not know what to do or who to consult. Wherever she turned, she met the same problem. When she could not stand it any longer, she found a new job and changed employers to find a better pay. This happened a couple of times until she came to a turning point, when she met her friend who had come to work in Thailand before her.

Bua said, "My friend works as a domestic worker at another place. She came to visit me and explained that she had been to a meeting to exchange knowledge with a group of domestic workers organized by MAP Foundation. There they gain knowledge on various issues that can be applied in our daily life, including workers' rights, legal documents, and Social Security." When the next meeting was organized, Bua was invited to attend the meeting. This was her experience attending the meeting, "The first time I decided to come to the meeting, I was scared. Before making a decision, I asked permission from the employer for one day leave. I went to the first meeting and only listened. I didn't dare to talk about anything. Even introducing myself made me tremble. I couldn't explain. I felt both glad to come out to meet Shan people who attended the meeting and also excited. I gained knowledge as my friend said, and it was very helpful. After that, I tried to participate in various activities organized by the domestic workers group but I couldn't join them all because it did not match my holidays."

Bua also changed work and started as a cleaner at a hotel in Chiang Mai city. At this workplace, there are six migrant workers and three Thai workers. The migrant workers took care of the cleaning and the laundry, made beds and cleaned toilets, while three Thai people worked as receptionists. After working there for almost two years, Bua never received a wage increase. All workers are paid 9,000 baht per month with two days off per month and six vacation days per year. Everyone got the same benefits, but did not receive full rights under the labor protection law, and for Social Security, the employer deducted 500 baht per month from the workers. Bua

decided to talk to her friends to find a solution. Bua, who, by that time, had enough understanding of labor rights and collective bargaining, provided information to her colleagues until they understood and decided to band together to talk to the employer into increasing their salary and clarifying the deductions for the contribution to social security. Bua said “If we don't negotiate with the employer and wait for the employer to increase the wages, it will probably never happen. Every year will be the same. If the employer refuses and demands we leave, we are ready to leave.”

When Bua and her colleagues decided to negotiate together with the employer on the issue of wages and social security contributions, the employer said that the wages could not be increased due to the current situation with COVID, which left them without many customers, but would not deduct the social security contributions and the employer would pay the contribution in full. In addition, one day off per week was added without deducting wages, but staff needed to alternate among them. The annual leave of six days per year remained the same. Bua and her colleagues were satisfied with the results of the negotiations. Bua said, “At least it's better than before. The amount 500 baht that the employer does not deduct is very valuable for us because it covers the cost of milk for our children, water and electricity fees, fuel and other food costs. As for other rights that we do not currently receive, we could try to negotiate with the employer in the future when the situation improves.”



On the experience of achieving success after having negotiated with the employer, Bua said: “If we don't give ourself the opportunity to learn or do not attend trainings on rights that relate to us, we will not have information and will not be brave enough to negotiate with the employers on such issues. I would like to pass this on to my friends who are experiencing problems at work, or have their rights violated - don't be discouraged and don't solve the problems by running away because the problems are everywhere. If we do not solve our problems, no one else will come to solve it for us. The key to solving problems is knowledge and the courage to make a change.”

WOMEN'S RIGHTS: RESPONDING TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Women migrants had increased capacity to respond to domestic violence and could ensure the safety of women in their community who were facing violence from their partners.

Women Exchange (WE) meetings were led by migrant women leaders in nineteen locations approximately three times a year around the country, providing on-going information and support to migrant women on various topics, including women's empowerment, reproductive health, gender and stereotypes, domestic violence, self-care and wellbeing, new regulations on document registration, social security, and COVID-19 prevention. In 2021, three Training of Trainers were conducted with new and old women leaders on Labour Protection Law, Social Security, and Domestic Violence. Seventeen new women leaders emerged from these trainings. All women leaders were able to provide information to their peers about the new registration process for obtaining documents for legal status, and on centers where migrants could access COVID-19 vaccination. There was also

a workshop with 25 WE leaders to review the Automatic Response Mechanism (ARM) to support migrant women who experience GBV, enabling victims of sexual or domestic violence to access the legal system. Another workshop was organized in Mae Sot, by MAP, to empower women by developing their capacity to use smart phones to empower migrant women to tell their story through the use of video and social media.

With a lull in the pandemic and by using proper prevention measures, MAP organized the 20th anniversary Women Exchange Get Together with the theme “Dare to Challenge, Dare to Change,” along with the concomitant International Women’s Day (IWD) event at Tha Phae Gate. The 112 women participants in the WE Get Together also participated in the IWD public event, which included a quiet protest against the coup in Myanmar. The following day, a contingent of thirty women presented of a letter of recommendations to the Provincial Vice Governor from the Women Network of Chiang Mai on women’s needs for rights protections.



Women leaders in various locations also provided victims of sexual or domestic violence with assistance including access to the legal system as necessary. Thirty-six cases were assisted, of which thirty were domestic violence, and the remainder were rape or sexual harassment cases.

With the support of UN Women on a project to address migrant women’s needs to access services when facing gender-based violence, duty bearers, NGOs, and CBOs met three times in order to develop a local set of SOPs (standard operating procedures), to be used as a standard referral mechanism in the Chiang Mai area for women migrant workers who face any type of violence, to access services from duty bearers. Afterwards, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on "Guidelines for Coordinating Assistance and Protection in Cases of Violence Against Women Migrant Workers" by a network of eleven partners (four government and seven civil society organizations). This MOU aims to ensure migrant women who experience gender-based violence of any sort in the Chiang Mai area receive proper services and are recorded properly in the national database.

Stop VAW events were also organized in Bangkok, Mae Sot, Chonburi and Ranong with a total of 463 people participating (104 m / 359 w). MAP media also produced and disseminated information on Stopping Violence Against Women via the internet with topics like: seven words that are warning signs; Lets stop violence against women and children; Risk of violence against women in the age of COVID-19; five things you should do to prevent violence against women; What is domestic violence at Home; What are the signs of domestic violence?



STORY:

STANDING UP

Ma Win Po, a thirty-two years old Rubber Plantation worker and mother of two children lives in Lomanee, Surat Thani Province.

“I arrived in Thailand since I was twenty-two and have worked in rubber plantation the whole time, including getting married. I was so lonely in rubber plantation. I didn’t have friends or neighbors. I also had no knowledge on domestic violence, women’s rights and labor rights. I was afraid to go outside because of lack of legal documents. Yet, I have experienced domestic violence from my husband many times.”

“In 2018, I had a chance to join Women Exchange in Lomanee, when the women leader come on an outreach visit to my plantation and invited me to join the meeting. The woman leader and I asked permission from my husband to join the women exchange. I was so satisfied the first time I attended the women exchange. I learnt about domestic violence issues, family planning, women’s rights and labour rights. Again, the woman leader invited me to attend WE Get Together in Chiang Mai in 2019. My husband didn’t allow me to join. The employer also kept my legal documents, so I couldn’t join the WE get together activity in 2019.”

“In 2020, I went against my husband and took my legal documents from my employer to attend the WE Get Together in Chiang Mai. I was able to meet women representatives from different WE group areas and gained more knowledge from skill building sessions. After that, I discussed with my husband and we came to an understanding. He drinks alcohol less, helps with domestic chores, and there is significantly less abuse.”

“In 2021, I attended the WE Get Together again as I was able to negotiate with my husband, and my employer also gave me permission to take leave. Through attending women exchange and WE Get Together, my skills have improved. I am able to assist the Women Exchange leader in organizing activities. I am very thankful to MAP Foundation to create opportunity for migrant workers and the woman leader who encouraged me to be here.”

CHILDREN AND YOUTH RIGHTS: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Children, parents and school administrators in Mae Sot area agreed to work to promote migrant children to receive their highest level of education.

Our overall objective is, “Children complete desired education level and access improved job opportunities.” In 2021, we were able to advance this goal, but to a more limited degree than hoped due to the precautions related to the pandemic. Nevertheless, MAP endeavored to put parts of our project into place which will contribute to improvements once the COVID pandemic restrictions have passed and conditions are more conducive. We also provided assistance to some of the families in need as a result of the economic impact of COVID. Meanwhile, the numbers of migrant students who are attending secondary school, who are receiving support from MAP, have increased as children have advanced from lower school to the next level of educational attainment – a clear indication of positive results.

We initiated our project in the target communities by collecting data, the results of which will act as the foundation of our 5-year plan. As part of the participatory data gathering, 135 students (48% girls) in three communities in Mae Sot took part in the Youth Dream Drawing Activity, which was a participatory evaluation and self-reflection activity; and another 350 students were surveyed for our baseline. Parents (53 women and 5 men) participated in a Family Income Management workshop, which resulted in a local initiative to raise and save money. We also met with headmasters and teachers at Hua Fai, Tah Art and Huay Ka Loke schools, with the aim to continue our partnership by developing monitoring tools and by signing an MOU to work on the student support project together.



Local youth leaders and lead members of the community in Mae Sot built their capacity to provide SRHR information and increase access to related services through counselling.

Under the Migrant Youth Empowerment program, outreach was done to a limited degree (limits on size of groups) and only periodically during periods of low COVID transmission, but still reached 222 youth (82m / 140w), of whom at least 60% were under the age of 18. Topics covered included HIV and AIDS, gender, adolescent health, puberty, and GBV. A main aim was to provide youth a better understanding of how their bodies change, and how to cope with sexuality safely.

Fifty-seven youth (72% girls) in Mae Sot area received counselling on sexual and reproductive health, such as family planning, and two were referred for STI treatment.

Trainings were given by MAP and Together Our Hands (TOH) - the CBO developed by MAP - with parents to change their attitudes positively towards supporting children's SRHR. These activities reached 137 parents (75% women); and, youth leaders were able to develop a curriculum and lead activities on their own, reaching 104 youth (71 % girls).

A group of youth volunteers has also been established, meeting at least every month, sometimes on-line, depending on the situation. The core group of volunteers includes 12 young men and 14 young women. There is also a pool of youth volunteers who broadcast a SRHR program on MAP Radio for one hour every week.



HEALTH RIGHTS: TB, HIV AND STI PREVENTION

Interventions to prevent HIV and TB were maintained regardless of COVID restrictions, and undocumented migrants were able to access related services and support.

HIV counselling and testing was provided through mobile clinics to the areas in Chiang Mai Province where migrants in construction and factories live and work, and referral was given to test at hospitals, STI center and MAP's Drop In Center (DIC). In all, 258 migrants tested for HIV (52% women), of which twenty-eight tested at our DIC; six were HIV Positive and revealed their results to us (80% women). All but one started ART. As part of HIV testing, STIs are also screened and then referred to testing and treatment. MAP's DIC provides testing for HIV, Syphilis, Hep B and C at the same time. Twenty-seven migrants tested for STI (59% women) with nine testing at the DIC; seven cases were found and treated.

Outreach activities on HIV and TB were conducted, but only periodically during lulls in COVID transmission using proper prevention guidelines in groups with limited numbers. We reached 756 migrants (342m/414w) with information on HIV and TB and distributed around 21,200 condoms.

Three MAP Foundation staff under the STAR project attended the 2nd CBO practical training in Bangkok to develop civil society organization volunteers' skills in giving HIV and STIs Counselling. There was a test administered and two of MAP's staff who attended the training passed the test and were issued a certificate allowing them to give counselling.

Some HIV cases MAP assisted this past year included: one case was a HIV+ woman who was pregnant and gave birth but had been kicked out of her quarters. She was provided shelter at a couple of different locations with her new born while awaiting test results on the baby's HIV status. Another HIV+ man, referred by the hospital to MAP, was undocumented, had vision and other health problems, so could not work. MAP helped negotiate his treatment, but he had to pay out of pocket because he had no insurance. Another HIV+ undocumented man had started ART, then stopped, and returned to us with severe health conditions, wishing to start treatment again. We assisted him to reenter the treatment system through referral.

Migrant health volunteers, including DOTs volunteers, helped maintain the TB response, and were able to transition to assisting with COVID interventions.

Teams of MAP field officers coordinate with volunteers in the community to identify communities with potential conditions that can contribute to the spread of TB, and follow-up communities where cases are reported to the local hospital, using "contact tracing." Besides construction, agriculture and general laborers, we started reaching orange orchards in Fang this year. Nineteen migrants were referred to TB testing (52% women), and fourteen migrants (42% women) were found with active TB and started treatment. Another four "house contacts" were given prophylaxis, including one paediatric case. MAP assisted at least two cases to access treatment because they were undocumented. The MAP team also followed up at least seven patients on treatment. Over the year, ten TB cases were completely cured (40% women) but one patient died due to the advanced state of the disease's condition.



COVID-19: ENSURING THAT MIGRANTS ARE NOT LEFT OUT OF THE RESPONSE

MAP contributed to combatting the spread of COVID among the migrant community, and helped ensure that those affected by the economic impact were not relegated to malnutrition as well.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks and hand gel, were distributed to a total of 29,790 migrants (63% women) to help prevent COVID. Through referral assistance and translation, MAP also helped refer 200 undocumented migrants to access vaccination as soon as it was available.

In April, MAP organized a training for Public Health Volunteers in Chiang Mai. A total of 18 migrants attended the training, (5 men , 13 women). They went on to disseminate COVID information in their communities reaching 1,830 people (793 men , 1,037 women) in 97 communities. In November, MAP held a training by public health officials on COVID knowledge and the use of ATK testing kits - to explain how to use the test kit correctly and self-read ATK test results. Provincial Public Health requested assistance with ATK testing of migrants at mass testing sights, and MAP provided four staff who rotated through giving translation to migrants who were concerned about their COVID status. MAP teams then also assisted migrants who were in community isolation to determine if they were infected.

MAP also gave direct food relief assistance to a number of migrants and their families who were affected by COVID closures or lockdowns. In Chiang Mai, many people were out of work and without money to pay for food.

MAP helped support numerous families / households with temporary supplies of dry and canned foods, including women in vulnerable circumstances, and families with children, many of who were out of school. MAP teams assisted around 1,000 households / families with survival bags in the Chiang Mai area. In Mae Sot area, many communities and factories were locked down due to the spread of COVID-19. As a result, people here were also out of work and without money to pay for food. MAP helped support many families with temporary supplies of dry and canned foods, including some fleeing conflict in Myanmar. COVID assistance was provided to migrants in 16 areas in Mae Sot. Survival food bags were distributed to 1,724 families / households, assisting 6,846 people (2,220 men, 2,290 women, and 2,336 children). MAP also helped feed another 280 people who had fled from conflict in Myanmar at the border. The Women Exchange program also supported survival bags for migrant women and their communities through women exchange leaders in 14 areas across the country, reaching 322 households, providing house rental fee for 30 migrant women leaders in the country and two women leader returnees inside Myanmar.

Through our networking, the Migrant Monitoring Group provided COVID-19 prevention education at the detention center in Myawaddy early in the year, and on January 24, 2021, COVID-19 prevention training was held with the Myanmar public health officials in Myawaddy to improve the capacity of 27 volunteers at the center (7 men and 20 women). A meeting was also organized between the local government, NGOs, CBOs and workers' representatives in Myawaddy with 38 participants (27 men and 11 women). After the Myanmar military staged a coup in February, there were protests on the streets and the Myanmar soldiers used violence in response. All activities run by the center had to be suspended.

Information about COVID on MAP's Facebook pages, reached between 9,512 to 19,702 people, and views ranged between 2,854 and 6,200 views. MAP media team also printed and distributed a total of 5,000 brochures and 5,000 posters in Shan and Burmese language on vaccines (what they are, why important, how to prepare), and on "self-quarantine."





CRISIS SUPPORT: ASSISTING THE INFIRM

Due to the epidemic of COVID 19, in 2021 hospitals did not allow any visitors or relatives to visit or stay with patients. In Thai hospitals, most of the daily care is the responsibility of relatives who accompany the patient, not nurses. Patients who are alone have to do everything themselves. So, this meant that migrant patients, like others, were isolated at the hospital, and that the MAP's Crisis Officer could not assist them as closely as usual.

In 2021, the project helped forty-three people (17men and 26 women). Thirty-four people were hospital patients, and nine people were family members affected by patient's situation. Nine people were under fifteen years old. Most were aged between seventeen and fifty-five years old, and four people were over fifty-five years old. Nine people suffered from pneumonia and COVID 19, two people from tuberculosis, three from HIV and two people were road accident victims. There were five births. The remaining seven cases suffered from cancer, heart disease, and kidney disease. Seven patients died of heart disease, pneumonia, blood infection, and road accident.

Fourteen out of all of these patients did not have any personal identification documents; eighteen were holding a labour passport; six people held a highlander card; four people had birth certificates and one person held a Thai ID card. In other words, only eleven people total were able to claim social security benefits or health insurance. The project followed up with an average of fifteen people per month providing financial support for health treatment, food, transportation, medical equipment, repatriation and funeral costs.

The crisis support project provides counseling and advice to patients and their dependents - by phone, or in person at patient's home or at hospital- on which hospital to go to, how to fill forms at hospital or other government offices, how to use the hospital services, how to register, how to meet the doctor, how to get medicines, or make appointments, how to register a birth, or how to use social benefit patients and their dependents are entitled to. The project also accompanies patients at hospitals, including negotiating for treatment fees to be reduced, assisting patients and health officers with the registration process, translating between patients and doctors, giving advice on self-care, providing transportation to hospitals, especially for disabled patients, seriously ill patients, and mothers with newborns, conducting "home" visits including at shelters, to follow up on patients' treatment and recovery, and the project assists with processing birth registrations, deaths and organizing funerals.

A major issue encountered regularly is that migrant patients who are disabled, elderly, or seriously ill, are not entitled to government health service benefits. Because they cannot work, they do not have a place to live or insurance.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION: BRIDGING THE GAP

MAP Radio and its MIC Facebook pages, in addition to production and distribution of printed materials, continued to provide the migrant community with essential and up to date information to maintain their legal status, receive their rights and protect their health.

MAP Radio FM 99 in Chiang Mai broadcast 55 hours per week, Monday to Friday with 25 programs by 18 broadcasters / DJs (10 men and 8 women): 9 volunteers from the community, 3 from network organizations, and 6 broadcasters MAP staff. MAP Radio FM 102.5 in Mae Sot broadcast between 56 and 62 hours per week, with COVID restrictions impinging on time. There were 25 programs with 27 broadcasters (14 men, 13 women) – with 4 MAP staff DJs, 17 DJs from CBOs, and 6 volunteers from the community. On the Mae Sot station, MAP Radio broadcast Podcasts from Mizzima and an Arakan / Rohingya language broadcaster, and also simulcasts VOA and RFA news programs.

MAP Radio had some fluctuation in listenership, partly because we had periods where the stations were closed or with limited numbers of DJs due to COVID precautions, and broadcasts were pre-recorded. But numbers of listeners increased again once we were broadcasting live, and when there were announcements on new migrant policies. Facebook Live audience for MAP Radio had a monthly average of 39,680 listeners (60% women) and a monthly high of 79,176 in August. The main MAP Radio Facebook page has 50,094 followers. There is also a monthly average of 2,155 listeners via FM radio (average of 431 callers per month, 61% women), and a monthly average of 1,683 listeners via our application. Radio programming provided updated information on announcements from the Thai government about migrant registration, and updates on COVID information, including vaccines, and where to access vaccination even if one does not have any documents. Programming also covered various core rights issues reflecting our programming portfolio, and our programming devoted to COVID reached a cumulative number of over 28K views with 9K engagements and 4K shares.



MAP has also utilized its new MIC (Migrant Information Center) Facebook pages in Shan and Burmese languages to disseminate infographics on topics ranging from migrant policy updates, women's rights and campaigns to End Violence Against Women, introduction to Social Security, workers' compensation and passport renewal, and COVID information. The MIC Shan Facebook page has 7,225 followers, and MIC Burmese has 2,727 followers. Some infographics posted have reached 19,500 views.

The 2021 Migrant Diary focused on information about COVID. Migrant Diaries were handed out directly to migrants through outreach by MAP, volunteers, and partners. In total, 9,000 copies were printed, evenly divided between two languages. Copies of the Migrant Diary were distributed to factory workers, construction workers, agriculture workers, domestic workers, and workers in other sectors in Mae Sot and Chiang Mai. MAP also sent 3,000 copies to partners in Shan State, as was requested. The provision of printed materials helps promote the conservation of Shan language.



MAP is also supporting the Association of SHAN Press (ASP), which organized its annual meeting and had an election to establish the working committee and set annual objectives.

STORY: A RADIO FAN

Ko Win Lwin, fifty-four years old, works as a general labourer. He lives with six family members in Mae Pa, Mae Sot. He is a fan of MAP Radio FM 102.5.

“I started listening to MAP Radio since 2019 when I learned there was a Myanmar language radio station in Mae Sot. Before I listened to MAP Radio, I did not know the situation in Myanmar, I did not know the Thai rules and laws, or where to go for documents to live in Thailand officially, how to get documents, and I also did not know where to go and ask.”

“After listening to MAP Radio FM 102.5, my knowledge about the documents increased and I gained understanding of the updated policies announced by the Thai Government concerning migrants. I can share the information with my neighbors, friends and the people I know. I also get updates on COVID-19, how to prevent it and where to get COVID-19 vaccine.”

“For those migrants who do not yet listen to MAP Radio, I would like to encourage them to listen to increase their knowledge, gain updated information, and for entertainment.”



MAP ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MAP has been working to develop its internal policies to strengthen its ability to prevent and respond to possible ethical issues that could arise. Child protection and safeguarding policy was translated into Thai, English and Burmese. They were then reviewed in a workshop by a MAP policy sub-committee with technical support by partner ECPAT. It was then revised again and translated again. The Code of Conduct policy was reviewed and finalized, and translated into Thai, English and Burmese. Once it is signed by the Board it is enacted. The Financial Safeguarding policy is in an advanced draft stage, and has been translated into Thai and English.

MAP has also initiated a long-term plan of organizational restructuring. The process started this year, but suffered setbacks in the scheduling due to COVID precautions.

