



GENERATION EQUALITY **IMPACT STORY**



EMPOWERING MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THAILAND TO FIGHT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Photo: UN Women/Kith&Kin

ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE is the focus of one of the six Generation Equality Action Coalitions, the innovative, multi-stakeholder initiative convened by UN Women that is mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector to deliver tangible impact on gender equality and women and girls' human rights by 2026. Ahead of the Generation Equality Forum in Paris (30 June - 2 July 2021), when the Action Coalitions' plans will be officially launched, this special edition of the [Impact Stories series](#) will include six briefs focused on each of the Action Coalitions' themes.

"I believe that all women migrant domestic workers should be able to exercise their rights," said Nan Zar Ni Myint. "Unfortunately, not everyone knows their rights."

Myint, a 37-year-old woman from Myanmar, has been working as a domestic worker in Bangkok, Thailand for 19 years. She has mobilized her network of domestic workers to support others working in the same sector.

Four years ago, while taking an English course on Sundays, her only day off work, she met a group of domestic workers from her home country.

"The peer network and language skills I gained enabled me to access more information," said Myint. "I started to learn about the rights of migrant domestic workers."

Photo above: Nan Zar Ni Myint, pictured at far right, meets with fellow migrant domestic workers to share experiences.



The **Generation Equality Forum** is a milestone global event to advance action and investment for gender equality convened by UN Women and co-chaired by the governments of France and Mexico in partnership with civil society and youth.

The Forum kicked off in [Mexico City from 29 to 31 March 2021](#), and will culminate in [Paris from 30 June to 2 July 2021](#), when heads of State and Government, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and youth organizations will gather to launch the **Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality**. Structured around **six Action Coalitions**, the plan will include concrete commitments and intergenerational, multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance gender equality over the next five years.

PARIS 2021

Register for the Paris Forum at:

<https://forumgenerationegaleite.fr>

Learn more about the **Action Coalitions** and its leaders at: <https://forum.generationequality.org/>

#ActForEqual! for **#GenerationEquality**

As she interacted more with the group, she learned that the rights of many migrant domestic workers were violated, and some of her peers experienced abuse and violence.

“Many domestic workers were working long hours, seven days a week,” recounted Myint. “Some had their travel and personal identification documents withheld by their employers. And now, with the COVID-19 pandemic, some even experienced gender-based violence during lockdowns.”

This prompted Myint to start organizing informal meetings and discussions to provide information about labour laws in Thailand, violence against women in all its forms and where to seek help in case of violence, abuse and exploitation.

Myint now volunteers with HomeNet Thailand, an organization that supports home-based workers, to help other migrant domestic workers from Myanmar learn about their rights and the services available to them when their rights are violated. Her network, which is often the first point of contact for migrant domestic workers experiencing violence, provides critical services such as peer-support counselling, referral to medical and legal services, including mental health, as well as economic support and language interpretation.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns made meeting in person difficult, Myint has continued volunteering on behalf of migrant domestic workers’ rights. “Now, most activities are conducted online and we keep in touch through social media. It’s hard but I’m not giving up.

In Thailand, like other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, domestic workers have long been an important part of many families. Thailand is the main destination for migrant domestic workers from Myanmar. However, full protection under the country’s labour laws, such as minimum wage, maternity leave and social security benefits, do not apply to domestic workers. Moreover, there are no national or local protocols that respond to violence and abuse.

Lack of social protections has had deep repercussions for domestic workers across the region during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they often lost jobs and had no safety nets

PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

Nan Zar Ni Myint, her network and **HomeNet Thailand** are supported by the **Safe and Fair Programme**, jointly implemented by **UN Women** and **ILO**, in collaboration with **UNODC**, as part of the **EU-UN Spotlight Initiative**.

The programme supports migrant domestic workers across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations through peer networks. From 2018 to 2020, the programme:

- Trained **84,600** migrant women on providing support services to migrant domestic workers.
- Enhanced the capacities of **21,000** persons on women migrant workers’ rights and skills
- Provided technical and/or financial support to **105** civil society partners.
- Made recommendations to **48** legal and policy instruments in the region in line with gender-responsive and survivor-centred approaches.

to fall back on. “The pandemic has revealed gaps in how national systems respond to violence, with women and migrant domestic workers facing a higher risk of violence, exploitation and abuse,” said Mohammad Naciri, UN Women Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. “The Safe and Fair Programme’s work on capacity-building for women’s networking is key to supporting women and rights movements so that they can understand their rights and be able to claim support and access to services.”

As a member of HomeNet Thailand, Myint also advocates for a revision of the regulations to provide better protection for migrant domestic workers. Her message to the authorities is clear: “ensure that labour laws apply fully to migrant domestic workers, invite the employers to respect their rights and establish a standard contract that complies with the law.”

As **Action Coalitions leaders**, Iceland, Kenya, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, the European Commission, UN Women, WHO, the Ford Foundation, ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality, Breakthrough, European Women’s Lobby, Global Coalition on Inclusive and Safe Spaces and Cities for Women and Girls, OutRight Action International, Las Niñas Lideran, Yes Trust, Accor and Kering will **commit to address gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity**.