

Title: Overseas search for Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) to return \$5,000 worth of salary owed

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Summary: Employment agency Homekeeper and the Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Skills Training (FAST) were recently approached by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) to help locate a former FDW who had gone back to Indonesia, and give her the money owed to her by her former employer. Four years ago, the employer was found to have owed the FDW a total of \$5,332 in salary between 2006 and 2009. The employer was charged and pleaded guilty on May 3 last year, and was fined and ordered to pay the wages owed. However, MOM was unable to contact the FDW, who had left in 2011. MOM approached FAST and Homekeeper, which found the FDW's address this month. The manager of the employment agency's office in Cilacap in Central Java set off with her husband on April 13, heading for a village 13 hours' drive from Cilacap. The manager said the road was very bad and they had to keep asking for directions, and because they could only travel at 5 km/h, the car got stuck in the mud twice. They finally reached the FDW's house, where her parents were happy to hear that the manager was there to return the money owed. They contacted the FDW, who went to the Homekeeper employment agency in Cilacap yesterday to have her identity verified by an MOM officer via video conferencing, and the money was transferred to her by yesterday afternoon. The FDW said she never imagined she would get the money back, and explained that she could not get in touch with the officers in charge of her case because she had no money. Adding that she would use the money to pay off her mother's loans and her father's surgery fees, the FDW said she was very grateful for the help rendered by Singapore. Homekeeper executive director Carene Chin, who volunteered her help in the case, said, "\$5,000 may be a small sum to us, but to these poor people living in rural areas, it is an astronomical amount. If we just forget it because it is a small sum of money or because it is troublesome, then we will not be able to help these people solve their livelihood problems." FAST president Seah Seng Choon also said that without the help of MOM, non-governmental organisations and the employment agency, the mission would not have been accomplished.

千里寻落难女佣 归还五千余元欠薪

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他们像投石问路的寻路者，在地图无所标记的荒郊僻壤中搜索一个名叫“罗佳娜”的女子，只为把正义交到受害者手里。

安娜(43岁)是本地家安女佣中心在印度尼西亚中爪哇省芝拉扎(Cilacap)小镇的经理。

小镇距离雅加达约400公里。

家安女佣中心及外籍女佣援助与技能培训协会(Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Skills Training, 简称FAST)日前受人力部委托,协助寻找被雇主拖欠工资的女佣罗佳娜(32岁),以便将这笔钱交还给她。

事件得追溯到四年前,罗佳娜当时的雇主瑟琳娜(35岁)被发现于2006年至2009年之间,拖欠她5332元工资。

瑟琳娜去年5月3日被控后认罪,被判必须归还所欠工资及罚款。加上堂费,瑟琳娜须缴付1万4000元。

结案后人力部联系不上早在2011年离开新加坡的罗佳娜,后来才辗转向FAST与家安女佣求助,终于在本月找到罗佳娜的地址。

得到地址后,安娜与丈夫本月13日驱车前往离芝拉扎镇中心13小时车程远的乡村,开始寻找罗佳娜之踪。

安娜说:“路况很差,我们不断问路,只能以每小时5公里的速度缓慢前进,结果车子两次在路上

陷入泥沼,差点就要露宿荒野。”

车子第二次陷入泥沼时情况很糟。她说,丈夫浑身被雨水、泥水弄湿,没办法把车子“救出”,等了两个多小时,终于有一个村民经过,没想到那人竟是罗佳娜所在村子的村长。

那人建议让他载我到村里找人,丈夫则留在原地想办法把车弄出来,但听到要把我交给给初次见面的陌生男人,我的丈夫简直快疯了。结果那人答应先到村里帮忙打探,两个小时后才把我们带到罗佳娜的住处。

“不可能的任务”困难重重,好不容易找到破落的木屋,罗佳娜却不在家中,只有两老。安娜说明来意,两老非常高兴,才联络已到另一个小镇工作的罗佳娜。

兜兜转转直到昨天,罗佳娜幸运地在当地发生水患前抵达芝拉扎的家安女佣中心,通过网络视讯与人力部官员核对身份。

女佣:钱用来替家人还债

人力部官员确认罗佳娜身份后,昨午便成功汇款,这笔拖欠四年的5332元(约4100万印尼盾)终于回到罗佳娜手里。

“从没想到能拿回这笔钱,接到通知时简直不敢相信。”

罗佳娜解释,因为没钱,她一直没能联络负责案件的官员,以致与新加坡方面断绝音讯。

2011年,罗佳娜因离家太久思念家人,在案件未审结前便回国。回国后到一所宗教学校半工半读。



早报制图



她说:“没办法拿到工资,我很难过,只有不断祈祷,把它当作上苍对我的考验。如今幸运通过了考验,我将用这笔钱替母亲偿还贷款,也为父亲偿还手术费,其余的会好好存起来。”

罗佳娜很感谢新加坡方面的协

家安女佣中心及外籍女佣援助与技能培训协会日前受人力部委托,协助寻找被雇主拖欠5332元工资的印尼女佣罗佳娜。不过,罗佳娜在印尼的住址偏远,负责人与丈夫几经辛苦才找到她的住处,可是她却已到另一个小镇工作……



▲FAST会长谢成春昨通过网络视讯向在印尼小镇的罗佳娜展示汇款单据,希望她在获得被拖欠多年的工资后,可以善加利用。(陈渊庄摄)

◀本月13日,安娜经过13小时车程后抵达罗佳娜在乡下的住所,她的父母得知罗佳娜获款回被拖欠的工资后十分欣慰,在木屋前取出资料与安娜核对身份。(家安女佣提供)

助,由于现在潜心于宗教学习,她表示不会再到新加坡工作。“雇主也不会接受我在这身打扮了”

又务伸出援手的家安女佣执行董事陈美蓉说:“5000元对我们来说可能是小数目,但对这些住在乡下的穷人而言是笔天文数字。如果

因为数目小,碰上一二困难就算了吧,没办法帮助他们解决生活上的难题。”

FAST会长谢成春也说,这次寻人任务如果没有人力部、非政府组织、女佣中介等多方支援,将无法顺利完成。

FAST扩大职能 援助落难女佣

外籍女佣援助与技能培训协会前天正式更名,之前的名称为外籍女佣技能培训协会。今后,协会除了为女佣提供培训课程,也肩负起援助落难女佣的社会责任。

协会会长谢成春说,该协会上个星期通过年度大会,决议扩大协会职能,将触手伸向面对困难的女佣,协助她们渡过难关。

他说,这些援助包括与有关当局沟通,协助解决拖欠薪金的问题,以及为落难女佣提供暂时的庇护所。

此外,协会未来也将推出求助热线以及辅导服务等。

协会前天获得社团注册局批准,改名为“外籍女佣援助与技能培训协会”(Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Skills Training),但简称依然为“FAST”。

罗佳娜是首个援助案例

谢成春说,罗佳娜的案例是该协会第一次尝试援助有需要的女佣,辗转许久终于解决,协会成功踏出第一步,大大鼓舞了协会未来的社会援助事业。

“我们希望能够用一种宏观的视角,为大部分的女佣群体提供服务。除了援助落难者,我们也准备活动让女佣善用每周的休假,同时致力拉近雇主与女佣之间的关系,协助她们适应与融入当地的工作与生活。”