

INFORM

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A Ministry of Manpower (MOM) publication specially for foreign domestic workers in Singapore



Going All the Way for Rochana

Rochana, a 32 year old Indonesian FDW, was not paid her salary by her employer for the work done from 2006 to 2009. She was owed over S\$5,000 (about 41 million rupiah). She approached the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) for help. Through MOM's intervention, the employer was ordered by the court to back pay Rochana her salary and the employer was also fined \$14,000 for failure to pay salary. However, Rochana returned to Indonesia while her case was underway and became uncontactable.

MOM tried various means to contact Rochana, to return the hard-earned salary to her, but to no avail. Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training (FAST) was informed of the case and together with an Employment Agency (EA) (Homekeeper), they tried various ways to locate her. With the help of the EA's staff stationed in Jakarta, the search party travelled over 1,000 miles over two days to a few villages before they managed to locate Rochana's house. However, her parents informed that she was working in a different town.

The EA's staff continued their search until Rochana was finally located. In Singapore, MOM and FAST, together with the EA, arranged a chat with Rochana via Skype, and made arrangements for her to receive her well-earned money.

Rochana did not expect to get her money back, and was very grateful for all the effort taken to locate her and return the money. She said, "I was very sad when I thought I couldn't get my salary. I could only pray every day. I am very lucky to finally get my money back. I will use the money to settle my mother's debts and pay for my father's operation, and save up the remaining money."



Rochana (far right) with her family

ADVISORY BY MOM

- Your employer is required by law to pay you your salary latest by the 7th day after the last salary due date. You should request for your salary if your employer delays payment for more than 7 days.
- You are encouraged to open an account with a bank so that you can receive your salary directly.
- Your employer has to keep a record of when and how much he/she pays you. You should sign on the record to acknowledge receiving your salary only after you are paid by your employer.
- If you have not been paid and are unable to settle outstanding salaries after speaking to your employer or your employment agency, please call MOM at 1800 339 5505 to seek help immediately. MOM will investigate and take action.



RASH MOVE LEFT FDW WITH FRACTURED LEGS

On 15 July 2013, Ah May, a foreign domestic worker (FDW) from Myanmar, jumped down from her employer's home on the second floor. She fractured both her legs. The INFORM team met up with Ah May to find out why she did this dangerous act.

Below is an excerpt from the chat we had with Ah May where she shared with us what drove her to jump down from her employer's home, as well as the advice she has for other FDWs who might be facing similar problems at work.

Q. Tell us about yourself.

A. I am 24 years old. I am married but have no children. This is my first time working in Singapore. I started working for Sir in June 2013.

Q. You jumped out of your employer's window one month into your job. Why?

A. I felt stressed because I did not have a good command of English and could not understand when Sir and Ah Ma spoke to me. I did not understand their instructions. Sir and Ah Ma could not understand what I was trying to say too. They became impatient with me and often scolded me.

That morning, I was upset after being scolded by Ah Ma. I decided to run away from the house. At that time, I wasn't thinking straight. I just jumped out of the window. I wanted to escape to seek help.

Q. How do you feel now?

A. I regret my actions. I should not have done that. If my parents should see me now in my current state, they would be heartbroken.

Q. What advice would you give to other FDWs who might be facing similar problems at work?

A. I came here without any work experience and spoke very limited English. My advice to fellow FDWs is to undergo training before coming to Singapore to work, and to try to learn English from your employers. Regardless of what happens, don't put your life in danger. Think of your own safety. Think of your family back home.



If you need help, call or approach MOM. Details are at page 4. Do not do anything that would cause harm to yourself.



FAST FDW HELPLINE

FAST has recently launched an FDW Helpline and Befriending service to provide advice to FDWs on their employment issues, offer emotional and befriending support to those who are experiencing difficulties in adapting to work in Singapore.



If you need help, call
1800-339-4357
(24-hours).

Are YOU a Money Mule?

(ADVISORY BY THE SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE)

FDWs are often tricked into being money mules, someone who receives and transfers money obtained illegally on behalf of third parties (criminals). For example, this money may have been stolen, or withdrawn from someone else's bank account illegally. The money transferred may be used to commit more crimes.

How is the crime carried out?

A criminal may befriend you online, sometimes posing as a lonely individual seeking companionship and love. Once they have gained your trust, they may ask you to open a new bank account or use an existing bank account to receive monies obtained illegally. Once the money is in, they may ask you to transfer it to other people or companies, usually overseas. Often, they may offer you a small amount of money as reward for your help.



If you fail to report such suspicious activities and proceed to assist these criminals knowingly, you may be investigated and prosecuted.

REMEMBER:

- Do not give your particulars or bank account details to strangers, such as those you know over the Internet.
- Ignore or refuse any fund transfer requests from strangers.
- If you have received money in your bank account under such circumstances, **do not** deal with it. Alert Criminal Affairs Department (CAD) at **1800 325 0000** and your bank immediately.

A Little Learning Makes All the Difference

“When I was younger, I wanted to have an education but my family didn’t have money,” says Jocelyn Mompal, a mother of three from Iloilo City in the Philippines, now a domestic helper in Singapore. For many FDWs like Jocelyn, being able to have a proper education in their home countries is often a dream for them. Now, with not-for-profit organisations like AIDHA, gaining the necessary work and life skills is no longer a problem for them.

Jocelyn started attending school at AIDHA in 2007. She has since signed up for classes in computer skills, leadership and basic business studies, and has become an active volunteer. Now, Jocelyn looks after her employer’s household accounts and keeps track of monthly household expenditure. “I keep all the receipts! If ma’am wants to look at them, they are all there,” she says. “I will also share with ma’am which months we are spending more or less.”

To facilitate the learning journey of FDWs, support from their employers is also essential. Ma’am Ong actively supports Jocelyn’s personal growth and development.



Ma’am Ong points out that the biggest change in Jocelyn following her training at AIDHA is her newfound confidence. Jocelyn says, “I want the house to look nice and clean as well, so I just do what I can do. I don’t need to be told or asked!”

Communication skills make up a large part of AIDHA’s curriculum. “Sometimes, it is hard to explain yourself,” says Jocelyn. She recounts tales of fellow domestic worker friends who are unable to speak properly or express their problems to their employers. Thankfully for Jocelyn, she is

able to communicate well with her employer after her training in AIDHA. Ma’am Ong too, feels that it has definitely made a difference for Jocelyn. “If she’s happy in the home and at work, only positive things can happen,” says Ma’am Ong.

AIDHA offers a two-year management programme for FDWs covering different aspects of financial education and entrepreneurship, with classes held on alternate Sundays. For more information on their courses for FDWs, call +65 6884 9938 / 9789 4041 or visit www.AIDHA.org.

THE FOLLOWING COURSES ARE OFFERED BY FAST AND GRACE MANAGEMENT & CONSULTANCY SERVICES (GMC).



Elderly Daily Care

- How to prevent falls
- Personal hygiene
- Medication safety
- Medical care



Dementia Care

- Understanding Alzheimer’s disease and symptoms of dementia
- Communication (verbal & non-verbal)
- Bathing
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Eating and nutrition



Stroke Caregiver

- Understanding the role of stroke caregiver
- Communications
- Caregiving
- Transferring skills
- Incontinence management
- Skin care
- Simple wound management

WHEN:

SATURDAY OR SUNDAY

DURATION:

4 HOURS

FEES:

\$8 PER PERSON

WHERE:

GMC 10 RAEBURN PARK,
BLOCK C, #02-00,
SINGAPORE 088702

YOU CAN ATTEND THE COURSES ON YOUR REST DAY OR ASK YOUR EMPLOYER FOR PERMISSION TO ATTEND.

FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKERS' DAY!



A FUN AND AN EXCITING DAY AWAITS YOU!

You'll enjoy:

- ★ Cultural performances
- ★ Booths exhibiting handicrafts by fellow FDWs
- ★ Games with prizes
- ★ Photo booth to take pictures with your friends

Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training (FAST) will celebrate the 4th FDW Day on Sunday, 1 December 2013. The event will take place from 11 am to 5 pm.

Mr Hawazi Daipi, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education & Manpower will be the Guest-of-Honour.

Winners of the FDW of the Year and FDW Employer of the Year will be announced at the Awards Presentation 2013, organised in collaboration with AEAS (Association of Employment Agencies (Singapore)).

With overwhelming responses for past celebrations, we expect 2,000 invitees to attend the event this year. It will be a great opportunity for you to mingle and get to know other FDWs. However, you will need a ticket to attend the event.

So hurry, book your tickets by calling FAST's Helpline **1800 339 4357** by 30 October 2013. Tickets are available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Once your tickets are booked, you can pick them up at 231 Mountbatten Road, Blk A, Level 3.

USEFUL CONTACTS

KEEP THE NUMBERS BELOW FOR HELP OR EMERGENCIES



MOM Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) Helpline
1800 339 5505

This hotline is for FDWs seeking assistance and advice on well-being, salary and other employment-related matters

OTHER EMERGENCIES

Ambulance/Fire 995 **Police** 999

OTHER HELPLINES

ACMI Hotline
6280 5424

Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)
1800 221 4444 (24 hours)

Association of Employment Agencies (Singapore)
6836 2618

Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training (FAST) Toll-Free Hotline
1800 339 4357 (24 hours)

EMBASSIES AND HIGH COMMISSIONS

	Bangladesh	6255 0075
	India	6737 6777
	Indonesia	6737 7422 / 9295 3964
	Myanmar	6735 1672
	Philippines	6737 3977
	Sri Lanka	6254 4595
	Thailand	6737 2475 / 8421 0105

The INFORM articles are really enlightening and educational. They inspire me and help me gain more knowledge and confidence. I am also excited to meet new friends from different parts of the world at the upcoming 4th Foreign Domestic Workers' (FDW) Day. - **Mary (India)**

INFORM Team – Thank you Mary. Do not forget to book your tickets!

Madam Yew is like my mother who always teaches me how to do things I don't know how to. She patiently guides me if I make a mistake. I regard Madam Yew and her family as my own, and carry out my duties for them as I would for my loved ones. - **Htay Htay Win (Myanmar)**

INFORM Team – Dear Htay Htay Win, we are happy to hear that you share such a good relationship with your employer! Keep it up!

I just want to say thank you INFORM. The articles and tips are very useful in helping me do my work safely and properly. I have learnt a lot through this newsletter. I feel happy working for my employer. - **Kyi Pyar Myint (Myanmar)**

INFORM Team – Thank you Kyi Pyar Myint. We are glad that you found the articles useful. Keep reading our newsletter and continue to work safely.

Thank you INFORM for this free newsletter. All the articles are very useful and inspiring for FDWs in Singapore. As a first-time FDW, I sometimes feel sad and alone. But reading the articles helps me cope with these feelings. - **Cheryl Poticar Cerbo (Philippines)**

INFORM Team – Hi Cheryl. The team is happy that you found the articles inspiring. We hope you get used to working in Singapore soon!

SPEAK UP

We welcome you to continue writing in to us to share your experience or what you wish to see featured in future issues of INFORM. Send your letters to Media, Promotions & Education Branch, Foreign Manpower Management Division, Ministry of Manpower Services Centre, 1500 Bendemeer Road, #02-01, Singapore 339946.

The INFORM Team will select the 10 best contributors to win an exclusive gift pack!

