



▶ Protecting the Rights of Migrant Workers through Empowerment and Advocacy

January/2023

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▶ At a glance



Partners

Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR)
Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC)
Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF)
Civil society organizations (CSOs)
Migrant associations



Donor

US Department of Labour



Duration

February 2016 – December 2026



Target beneficiaries

Women and men migrant workers with regular and irregular status.



Geographical focus

Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak



Budget

US\$4,335,957

▶ Project objectives

The Migrant Workers Empowerment and Advocacy (MWEA) project aims to ensure that the rights of women and men migrant workers are protected in Malaysia. In its first phase 2016-22, the project took a multi-pronged approach, focusing on the empowerment of Malaysian trade unions and civil society to better support migrant workers in the realization of their rights; empowering women and men migrant workers to realize their rights; and inspiring the Malaysian general public to demonstrate increased support for the rights and welfare of migrant workers. In order to achieve these objectives, the project strengthened the capacity of select trade unions, civil society organizations and migrant associations to deliver services to migrant workers; increased the knowledge of migrant workers regarding their rights; and implemented awareness raising and advocacy activities targeting the Malaysian public.

The extension of MWEA project to 2026 will add a focus on wage protection, with the overall purpose of protecting the rights of women and men migrant workers to better support migrant workers in calculating and claiming their wages, including cross border claims. The geographical scope for organizing and delivery of support service to migrant workers will be extended to Sabah and Sarawak.

In addition, the project will strengthen Malaysia's policy frameworks and mechanisms on wage protection for migrant workers; and to support the implementation of these policies through engagement with employers in the plantation and electronics sectors and those manufacturing rubber gloves. The project also strengthens and extends on-going actions to take forward the fair recruitment and decent work agenda.

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► Project outcomes

- Long-term objective 1: Malaysian civil society is empowered to better support migrant workers in the realization of their labour rights.
- Long-term objective 2: Women and men migrant workers are empowered to realize their labour rights.
- Long-term objective 3. Malaysian youth demonstrate increased support for the rights and welfare of migrant workers (*discontinued 2023-26*).
- Long-term objectives 4: Policy framework and mechanisms on migrant workers' rights are strengthened and implemented (*new 2023-26*).

► Main activities (2023-26)

- Capacity building for trade unions, civil society organizations, migrant leaders, and embassy staff on the calculation of working time and wages (including equal pay), social security, organizing and relevant international labour standards, as well as on filing wage and social security claims.

- Training and mentorship programme for trade unions, civil society, and migrant leaders on handling cross-border claims.
- Legal support and counselling in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak to migrant workers suffering labour violations, with a focus on wage violations and social security.
- Organizing, awareness raising, and training activities among migrant workers in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak on how to calculate working time and due wages.
- Promotion of SaverAsia app, especially its overtime calculator function, among migrant communities, with attention to women's equal access to knowledge as well as mobile phones.
- Translation of SaverAsia app into Bengali and Nepali and extension of the app functions to cover the Malaysia-Bangladesh and Malaysia-Nepal remittance corridors.
- An empirical survey on wages, social security, and wage violations (including wage discrimination) experienced by women and men migrant workers in various industries.
- A feasibility study on establishing a wage guarantee mechanism.
- Policy consultations to discuss research findings and recommendations including, in cooperation with the MFA in the context of the "Justice for Wage Theft" campaign.
- A study visit for a tripartite delegation to study wage guarantee mechanisms.
- Technical support to the development and implementation of gender-responsive wage protection systems.
- Training programme and technical assistance for employers in the plantation and electronics sectors and those involved in the manufacturing of rubber gloves to implement standards and best practices on wage protection (including equal pay) and fair recruitment.






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► Contact details:

ILO Kuala Lumpur Project Office
Suite 12.04, Level 12, Menara E&C
No 2, Lorong Dungun Kiri, 50490 Kuala Lumpur
T: + 603 2733 3018
W: ilo.org/asia

Catherine Laws
Project Manager
E: laws@ilo.org

Florida Sandanasamy
National Project Coordinator
E: sandanasamy@ilo.org

 ILO.ORG
 ILOAsiaPacific
 ILOTV
 ILOAsiaPacific
 iloinfo