



International cooperation for the fair treatment of migrant workers: SPA's experiences from Taiwan

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Serve the People Association



Brief introduction of Serve the People Association (SPA)

- SPA is a labor organization in Taiwan founded in 2008 by labor activists, workers, union leaders and some lawyers, scholars.
- Its works includes:
- Legal consultation to workers.
- Holding mediation meetings for labor disputes as one of the certified NGO who can to it in Taoyuan City.
- Assisting workers to organize unions, and assisting them to run the union.
- Advocacy on labor policies.
- Coordinate with our sister association DISA on the rights and welfare of foreign spouses.
- The works on migrant workers was started in 2014 when the Service Center and Shelter for Migrant Workers was established.
- SPA helps migrants to file complaints, offering shelter, follow up the cases of migrant workers, and assist them to transfer to another employer.
- SPA also does lots of works on advocacy and campaigns with other organizations and unions in Taiwan and abroad.
- Now SPA has 3 shelters for Indonesian, Vietnamese and Filipino migrant workers respectively.
- To facilitate fair recruitment, SPA applied the certificate of non-profit recruitment agency on 2022. SPA follows the fair recruitment policy and helped to help more than 20 caregivers to transfer to new employers in Taiwan.
- Fair recruitment, eradication of forced labor and human trafficking, and fair treatment for migrant workers is the main goals of SPA's work on migrant workers.

Personal note

- Why did I start to have the motive to look at the issues of migrant workers?
 - I am also from an immigrant family: both of my parents were among the refugees from China after 1949.
 - A news on TV made me aware of how migrant workers were treated in Taiwan, and I felt outraged about it.



Situation of migrant workers in Taiwan

Systematic problems for migrant workers for over 30 years

- Placement fee and the loans from it.
- Illegal deductions from all kinds of reasons.
- Lack of salary.
- Confiscation of IDs and documents.
- Illegal works requested by the employer.
- Physical or verbal violence.
- Gender-based violence.
- Discrimination of reproductive rights.
- Illegal termination and deportation.

All 11 ILO forced labor indicators are common for migrant workers

Name of indicator	Found in the migrant workers in Taiwan?
Abuse of vulnerability	Yes
Deception	Yes
Restriction of movement	Yes
Isolation	Yes
Physical and sexual violence	Yes
Intimidation and threats	Yes
Retention of identity documents	Yes
Withholding of wages	Yes
Debt bondage	Yes
Abusive working and living conditions	Yes
Excessive overtime	Yes

Common violations and abuse migrant workers encountered-1

- Broker's fees and debt bondage resulting from the loans for the fees.
- Monthly service fees charged by the Taiwanese brokers.
- Transfer fees and contract renewal fees when changing employers or renewing employment.
- Deception, threats, intimidation, and coercion by labor brokers and employers.
- Physical violence and sexual violence.
- Restrictions on freedom of movement.
- Restrictions on freedom of communication.
- Confiscation or retention of passports and other identity documents.
- Pregnancy discrimination.
- Assignment to work outside the scope of the approved work permit.
- Illegal termination.
- Employment restricted to fixed-term contracts of only three years.
- Maximum limit on the total years migrant workers are allowed to work in Taiwan



Common violations and abuse migrant workers encountered-2

- For Filipino factory workers, the employment contract and the wage undertaking contain completely contradictory provisions regarding food and accommodation expenses. Taiwanese authorities and employers have openly and systematically violated employment contracts for years. Even when the contract explicitly states that food and accommodation must be fully covered by the employer, migrant workers are still required to pay these costs themselves.
- No pathway to permanent residency or citizenship.
- Age discrimination.
- Employment discrimination against migrant workers who have previously filed labor disputes or have been placed in government shelters.
- Domestic migrant workers and distant-water fishers are excluded from the protection of Taiwan's Labor Standards Act and, in practice, are also excluded from Labor Insurance
- Distant-water fishers are even excluded from Taiwan's National Health Insurance system



A monthly bill from E-Cash or Global Financial Consultant Co.



全球財務顧問有限公司
Global Financial Consultant Co., Ltd.

準時繳款 信用至上 Pay On Time, Your Credit Stand

2015-12-11 15:15 繳款: 00000000000000000000
店號: 22935 店名: 豐洲 中傳一般代辦
代收項目: 649 05120564
第一段條碼 12058000000000000000
第二段條碼 12058000000000000000
第三段條碼 12058000000000000000
實收金額 \$694

從業員: 819
備註: 1 查詢繳款時, 請攜帶此證明單
2 交易完成, 門市部不接受理退還費
3 退費時應索取退費單(000-017888)

姓名 Customer: Mr./Ms

序號 Reference No.:

匯款帳號 Bank Account No.:

Taiwan Service Line : 02-26082528

Fax Number : 02-26082529

Service Staff: Jho (0985-385-072)

Global Financial Consultant Co., Ltd.

繳款單 Payment Stub

機構名稱 Name of institution: Ecash and Paylite Financing, Inc. Manila, Philippines

繳款期數 Installment: 第 2 期

繳款日期 Payment Date: 2015/12/05

繳款金額 Amount: NTS 6945



Ecash小叮嚀: 請務必準時繳款。務必索取便利超商所印製之繳款收據, 並連同此單據, 妥為保管以備查詢

Ecash Reminder: Please pay on time. Must ask for the receipt of your payment from the convenient store, and keep the payment receipt with this barcode slip for future reference.

第二聯 存根聯 Customer's Copy






全行代收專戶

姓名Customer: GERIMIA PESIGAN MEDALLA

銀行Bank Name: 中國信託教南分行
Chinatrust Bank, TunNan Branch

帳號Bank Account No.:

應繳款金額Amount: NTS 6945

便利商店專用條碼區

認證欄

收訖章



0120564



058130026402064



010025000000045

第一聯 收執聯 (本聯由代收行收執)



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Global Financial Consultant Co., Ltd.

準時繳款 信用至上 Pay On Time, Your Credit Stand

2015-12-11 15:15 繳款: 00000000000000000000
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實收金額 \$694

從業員: 819
備註: 1 查詢繳款時, 請攜帶此證明單
2 交易完成, 門市部不接受理退還費
3 退費時應索取退費單(000-017888)



A monthly bill from a lending company “Cash4U”

繳款單 / Payment Stub
CASH4U FINANCING CORP.
Tel No. 0926-242-161

Reference No. [Redacted]







Payable at Convenient Store, 7-Eleven, Family Mart, Hi-Life, OK Mart and Post Office.
Please have receipt attached with this Payment Stub for future re-check.

可至全省郵局、7-11、全家、萊爾富、OK便利商店繳納，繳款收據請保存 6 個月。

Installment

姓 名 Name : [Redacted]

繳款金額 Amount due : [Redacted]

繳款期限 Payment before : 2016/05/25
25 May, 2016

4

※ Receipt must be kept for six months

(請向匯票商索取)

繳款單 (代收行收執聯)		應繳總金額： 6,500
全行代收專戶	輸入帳號： [Redacted]	便利商店專用條碼區
	輸入金額： 6,500	
	郵局、7-11、全家、萊爾富、OK便利商店	
收記章		  
認憑欄		
郵政專用	收款帳戶： [Redacted] 	帳單編號： [Redacted] 
		應繳金額： \$ 6,500 

A fake loan agreement from a Filipino fisherman.

KASUNDUAN NG PAGHIRAPIN TO SIGN 借

KASUNDUAN NG PAGHIRAM
LENDING / BORROWING AGREEMENT

本人 _____ 護照號碼： _____，受聘於 _____
擔任漁工一職，今因個人需用，故向親主借款新台幣 四萬八千元整，本人同意入境後，親主
自本人薪資中，每月提領新台幣 四千元整，12 期分期償還親主，如果我不適合工作，我同
意繼續工作幾個月，以節省錢為我機票回菲律賓等加工費用支付，恐口說無憑，特立此書為
證，若有任何爭議，本人願自負一切法律責任。

AKO SI _____ MAY PASAPORTE No. _____
NAGTATRAHA SA _____ BAPOR BI LANG ISANG
MANGINGISA, NGAYON DAHIL SA PERSONAL NA PANGANGAILANGAN AY HUMIRAM O UMUTANG
AKO SA AKING MAGISING AMO SA TAIWAN NG PAUNANG HALAGA NA NTS 48,000 AT
SUMASANG-AYON AKO PAGKATAPOS NG AKING PAGLAPAG SA TAIWAN, PINAHINTULUTAN KO
ANG AKING AMO NA KALTASAN AKO BAWAT BUWAN SA AKING SWELDO O SAHOD NG HALAGANG
NTS 4,000 NG ARINDAL AWANG (12) BESES PARA SA PAGBABAYAD NG AKING HINIRAM AT
INUTANG NA PERA SA AKING AMO, KUNG SAKALI HINDI AKO NAAANGKOP SA AKING HINIRAM AT
SUMASANG-AYON AKONG IPAGPATULOY MUNA NG ILANG BUWAN ANG AKING PAGTATRAHAJO
UPANG MAKAPON AKO NG AKING PAMBAYAD SA AKING TIKET PABALIK SA PILIPINAS AT ISA
PANG GASTUBIN SA PAGPROSESO NA DAPAT BAYARAN, SINABI KO NA MAY TAKOT, ITONG
ESPESYAL NA KASUNDUAN NA TUMATAYO BI LANG EBIDENSIYA O KATIBAYAN SA BATAS KUNG
MAYROONG ANUMANG HINDI PAGKAKAUNAWAAN O PAGTUTOL, HANDA AKONG HARAPIN AT
AKUIN ANG LAHAT NA MGA LEGAL NA PANANAGUTAN SA BATAS.

I _____ with Passport No. : _____, Employed in
_____ Company as fisherman. Now due for my own personal use,
so to borrow from my Employer NTS 48,000. I agree after my arrival in Taiwan to let my
Employer to deduct from my monthly salary NTS 4,000 for 12 months to repay my Employer.
If I am not fit to work, I agree to continue to work for a few months to save money for my
airplane ticket in going home to Philippines and other processing expenses to pay. I said so
with fear, so specially writing this letter as evidence. If there is any dispute or objection, I
am willing to bear all legal law liabilities and responsibilities.

借取人 HUMIRAM / BORROWER : _____
護照號碼 PASAPORTE / PASSPORT NUMBER : _____
保證人 TAGAPANAGOT / GUARANTOR : _____
簽署日期 PETA / DATE : _____

BOOK NO. _____
SERIES OF 20 _____

20 JAN 2016

ATTY. PEDRO D. GENATO
Notary Public License No. 31, 2017
Notarial Commission 2016-011 Ma.
R.P. 492230, P.O. Box 15, Manila 1017
TEL 492230, FAX 492230
E-MAIL 12068, TWP 123-123
MCLE Compl. No. V-00000000 4-14-19



**A caregiver who was
beaten up by her ward**



Some photos from the dorms of migrant workers





REDMI NOTE 8 PRO
AI QUAD CAMERA



ASE fired two workers illegally for tiktoking

- ASE Chungli branch also announced mobility ban on all the migrant workers there.
- Two migrant workers took a video on their way from the dorm to work separately on tiktok and dubbed with joke words like: “do you know how to get out? Just wear the uniform and wear the badge, the guard won’t stop you”.
- ASE fired both of them and refused to pay any severance pay in the mediation meeting.



The tiktok
screenshots
from the two
workers who
worked for
ASE before



It shows a governmental failure and bias

- After more than 30 years of legal permits for migrant workers in Taiwan, the Taiwanese government never really fixed the issues of placement fees forced labor and human trafficking.
- The relevant policies and legislation favors the employers and deprive the basic human rights, labor rights and dignity of the migrant workers.
- With strong criticisms and protests from the civil society and labor groups, the government only did very minor changes.
- It is a governmental failure and bias of the Taiwanese government: on one had it claims to uphold human rights and labor rights, but it largely discriminates the migrant workers as human beings and workers on the other.

Only strong external pressures can push Taiwan to change

- A good pressure point many NGOs in Taiwan often use in Taiwan: the Taiwanese government takes the pressures from their allies seriously both for the international reputation and both its weak international position.
- The yellow tag on the fishing sector and the Due Diligence Law from EU which will be enforced in 2027, the grading on the Traffic in Person (TIP) Report, the Withheld Release Order (WRO) , the listing on the List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor from US government have all played important roles to influence the policies and regulations on migrant workers in Taiwan.



SPA's works with migrant workers

Filing Complaints and offering shelters for for migrant workers

- We have shelters for migrant workers from Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines with local speakers who can speak the languages in each shelter.
- We help migrants to file their complaints to the government, attend the mediation meetings with them, shelter them, follow up their cases and help with their daily needs.
- If the complaints is not settled in the labor office and the migrants want to sue, we would help them to apply for lawyers in the Legal Aides Foundation for their lawsuits, and accompany with all the process and hearings, even they already left the shelter and found a new job.

Eliminate forced labor and human trafficking by supply chain monitor

- Almost all migrant workers in Taiwan can be seen as victims of forced labor, but forced labor was not a common and popular idea, human trafficking was more commonly used (because of the TIP Report from US).
- We started to work with other groups to tackle the issues of forced labor and human trafficking soon after we started the shelters.
- We gradually understand it is more effective to push the Taiwanese government to move if the EU and US request; it is also more effective to push the employers to move if they are demanded by their buyers, so so try to do both through the context of Due Diligence Law, EU and US government, and the Business and Human Rights.

Demanding fair recruitment and fair treatment for migrant workers

- ILO published the “General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and Definition of recruitment fees and related costs” in 2019.
- We urge the Taiwanese government to follow the guidelines and eliminate all money paid by migrant workers, so the debt bondage can be stopped.
- Without the debt bondage, it will be easier to stop the other forced labor violations.

Empowering migrant workers by unionization

- SPA assisted to organize the following unions of migrant workers:
 - National Domestic Workers Union (NDWU).
 - Askey Labor Union (ALU) and Asus Group Labor Union (AGLU).
 - Taiwan International Factory Workers Union (TIFWU).
 - Taidoc Technology Labor Union (TTLU) and Taidoc Technology Group Union (TTGLU).

Other unions of migrant workers

- Yilan Migrant Fishermen Union (YMFU)
- Keelung Migrant Fishermen Union (KMFU)
- Pingtung Migrant Fishermen Union (PMFU)-union of FOSPI
- Taoyuan City Caregivers' Union (DCU)
- Serikat Buruh Industri Perawatan Taiwan (SBIPT) (Indonesian caregiver's union)
- Serikat Buruh Industri Manufaktur (Indonesian manufacturing workers union)



Migrant workers in HTC protest in Taipei 101, 2018



Migrant workers in HTC protest in Taipei 101



Photos of NDWU and ALU-AGLU



Actions of TTLU

- Protest and press conferences.
- Complain to the labor authorities.
- Complain to CBP.
- Contacts the buyers of Taidoc.
- International campaigns.
- IndustriALL launched the online protest on LabourStart.



Act NOW!

A LabourStart campaign.

Taiwan: Stop union busting at TaiDoc



In partnership with IndustriALL Global Union, The Republic of China Metalworkers' Union (ROCMU) and Taidoc Technology Labor Union (TTLU). IndustriALL Global Union is made up of 550 affiliated unions who represent 50 million workers in 130 countries in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors including metal, electronics and medical equipment industries. The Republic of China Metalworkers' Union (ROCMU) is an IndustriALL affiliate and a national-level union in Taiwan organising workers in metal, ICT, electronics and medical equipment sectors. Taidoc Technology Labor Union (TTLU) is a democratic and independent workers' organisation led by migrant workers at Taidoc Technology Co., Ltd., a major medical device manufacturer in New Taipei City, Taiwan.



Photo credit: Dr. André Beckershoff

Filipino women migrant workers at TaiDoc Technology Corporation, a medical equipment company based in Taiwan, R.O.C., have faced discrimination, forced labour conditions and union busting. In response, they organised a union. The company restricted the workers' movement and forced them to carry out unpaid cleaning work as punishment for returning late to their hostels. Management also repeatedly pressured workers in

Welcome back, 汪英瑾.

English
Tagalog
繁體中文
Norsk
Italiano
עברית
Esperanto
Español
Deutsch
Suomi
Magyar
Bahasa Indonesia

2157 supporters

LabourStart
What is LabourStart?

Spread the word
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Post f

Want to know more?
Click here for more information about this campaign

Latest news about this campaign
Click here

Want to do more?
To participate in our other online campaigns, visit our active campaigns page.

You can have this live listing of online campaigns on your union's website – click here to find out how.

Status
Campaign launched:
21-Jul-2026



Ministry of Labor, Nov 7, 2025



MOL, Feb 16, 2026 (announcing start the strike period)



New Taipei City Hall, Feb 23, 2026



Manila Economic and Cultural Office, March 10, 2026





International works

We work with all the following groups or networks:

- Better Engagement between East and Southeast Asia (BEBESEA).
- Wifi for Fishers Now Campaign (led by Global Labor Justice).
- Asian Network for the Rights Of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV).
- Asian transnational corporations (ATNC) monitoring network.
- EElectronics Watch.
- GoodElectronics.
- Transparentem.
- Solidarity Center.





The connection between Japan and Taiwan on the issues of migrant workers

Taiwan has a formal policy of migrant workers for over 30 years

- The mistakes could be shared and prevented in Japan.

Japan is the biggest market of seafood from Taiwan

Taiwan Seafood (Fisheries) Top 10 Export Markets (2024–2025)

Rank	Country / Region	Export Share (%)
1	Japan	23% – 26%
2	United States	19% – 21%
3	Thailand	13% – 15%
4	China	7% – 9%
5	Vietnam	6% – 8%
6	South Korea	4% – 5%
7	Hong Kong	3% – 4%
8	Philippines	2% – 3%
9	Indonesia	1.5% – 2%
10	Australia	1.5% – 2%

Da Wang



Photo from
WCPFC website.

Mr. A asked help from social media when he was demanded to sleep on the deck of Da Wang in April 2020.



Mr. T, another Filipino fisherman on Da Wang has been half-paralyzed after exhausted from work in 2020. He couldn't even eat by himself and need someone to feed him.



WRO sanction from CBP

- The Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in US issued an Withhold Release Order (WRO) on Da Wang on August 18, 2020.
- [CBP Issues Detention Order on Seafood Harvested with Forced Labor](#)



The screenshot displays the official website of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The header features the CBP seal and logo, along with navigation links for 'About CBP', 'Newsroom', 'Travel', 'Trade', 'Border Security', and 'Careers'. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. Below the header, a banner indicates 'Archived Content' with a note: 'In an effort to keep CBP.gov current, the archive contains content from a previous administration or is otherwise outdated.'

The main content area shows a news article titled 'CBP Issues Detention Order on Seafood Harvested with Forced Labor'. The article is dated August 18, 2020. The text of the article states: 'WASHINGTON — Effective August 18 at all U.S. ports of entry, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will detain seafood harvested by the Da Wang, a Vanuatu-flagged, Taiwan-owned distant water fishing vessel. The Executive Assistant Commissioner of CBP's Office of Trade (OT) directed the issuance of a Withhold Release Order (WRO) against the seafood harvested by the Da Wang based on information that reasonably indicates the use of forced labor, including physical violence, debt bondage, withholding of wages, and abusive living and working conditions.'

On the left side of the article, there is a sidebar with links to 'Newsroom', 'Advisories', 'Media Releases', 'Photo Gallery', 'Video Gallery', 'Press Officers', 'Publications', 'Social Media Directory', 'Speeches/Statements', and 'Spotlights'. On the right side, there is a box for 'CBP Public Affairs' containing contact information for media: Phone: (202) 344-1780, Email: CBP Media Relations, and All Other Inquiries: (202) 325-8000.



The only photo Mr. B got from his contract with the recruitment agency. It shows clearly that the monthly salary is USD 1,000.

However, the employer claims that it's only signed between the worker and the Philippine agency, and it's not valid for there is no signature from the employer.

CONTRACT OBLIGATION
(OBLIGASYON SINANG-AYUNAN)
Sa Pagitan ng
Pangalan Nakalagda at Global Marine & Offshore Resources Inc.

3. 我的航程薪資起薪為美金1000元
3. My salary will start at USD1000 of my sail.

Nakatira sa _____
Nasa hustong gulang, naka kontrata sa GLOBAL MARINE AND OFFSHORE RESOURCES
Pinaliwanag sa akin sa salitang nauunawaan ko at sinasang-ayunan ko ang mga sumusunod na kasunduan:

1. Walang hiningine Placement Fee para sa aking pagsakay.
2. Dapat kong tapusin ang napag Kasunduan kontrata na Dalawang taon
3. Ang sahod ko ay magsisimula sa \$ 1000 ng aking pagsakay.
4. Ang patakaran ng aking pagsahod ay tuwing ika-labing limang pangatlong buwan.
5. Anumang pangako na **CATCH BONUS** ng aming kapitan sa barko ay hindi pananagutan ng GLOBAL MARINE AND OFFSHORE RESOURCES.
6. Ipinaliwanag sa akin ang kahulugan ng **SAVINGS** na makukuha ko sa **PAY.**
7. Ang **Final pay** ko ay makukuha sa **unang buwan o higit pang buwan** lalagpas sa **dalawang buwan** matapos ng aking kontrata.

Both countries are facing xenophobia

- Immigrants and migrants are often taken as possible enemies or spies.
- Undocumented migrant workers are often taken as the source of crimes and social problems, despite the clear fact that the crime rate of the migrant workers is much lower than locals.



What more should be done?

Ban on import and export of products of forced labor

- Both Japan and Taiwan should ban all products of forced labor, so the forced labor can be warned.

Policies and laws should be reviewed and modified

- Fair recruitment guidelines by ILO should be followed, and all migrant workers should not pay any recruitment fees.
- All the current laws that allow or encourage different treatments between local and migrant workers should be modified.
- The limitation of years of contracts and years of service should be reviewed and modified.
- A fair pathway to become residents and citizens for migrant workers should be established.

Governments should pressure buyers and retailers to share the costs of recruitments

- The brands and retailers often earn the biggest shares of the profits, thus it is not fair only to request the employers/ suppliers to pay the costs of recruitments.
- Governments should work with businesses and NGOs to pressure the buyers (brands and retailers) to share the costs, and that will be the next stage of real fare recruitment.

Discrimination and hate speech should be banned and punished

- These kind of speech is harmful for the integration of the country and should be banned and punished.

A worker-centered approach should be built

- “Nothing about the migrants without migrants” should be the motto for all policies and laws relevant to migrant workers.

Strengthen the solidarity between CSOs

- CSOs in both the home countries and destination countries should work together to pressure the governments, employers and brokers to address the issues of forced labor.

Assisting migrant workers to unionize

- Union is the biggest power of workers, we should assist migrant workers to unionize and eliminate the legal and factual obstacles for them to unionize.
- Only the independent unions with migrant workers can know the details of exploitation and can help to fix the problems.
- All forced labor conditions shows bias, violations, scandals, briberies, cheatings inside the companies, so they are harmful for the running of business and bad for transparency. The existence of unions with migrant workers can help to facilitate the transparency.



**So, let's work together to make our society better
and with justice, human rights, brotherhood of all
human beings!**



Thank you for your attention!

- My contact information:
 - Email: ydwong@gmail.com
 - Mobile phone: +886-933908994
 - Facebook, LinkedIn: Lennon Ying-Da Wang
 - Line, Skype, WhatsApp, Signal: ydwong
 - SPA's Facebook pages: 桃園市群眾服務協會 / Serve the People Association, SPA-Service Center and Shelter for Migrant Workers, 挺移工, etc.