

SEAFORE Masterclass 1

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Didik Eko Pujianto, Rachel Malaguit, Maria Angela Villalba, Mahi Ramakrishnan, Ajinder Kaur, Muhammad Adib Faiz, Pichit Phromkade, Danny Yong, Student, Rosa Garcia, Tiara, Pham Thi Hong Van, Alyaa Alhadjri

Danny Yong 00:16

Hi Siew Mun, Hi Rosa Garcia. Hello. How you doing?

Tiara 00:27

Hello!

Danny Yong 00:29

Hi tiara and Rachel Rachel.

Rachel Malaguit 00:32

Hi. Hello.

Danny Yong 00:33

How are you guys doing? Kumara is here as well. Oh, we have Tuoi Tre from Vietnam. Hong.. Do we call you Hong or Van?

Pham Thi Hong Van 00:50

I prefer to be to call Van so call me that. Maybe I renamed it so its easier everyone Hi

Danny Yong 01:03

That's Van from Tuoi Tre, Vietnam. Rosa Garcia from Timor Post Where are you from Rachel?

Rachel Malaguit 01:21

Oh, I'm from New narratives.

Danny Yong 01:23

That's right new narrative. Okay. Yeah, I see Deborah's here. So Tiara is from Themy Thmey Cambodia. Hi Kumara,

Pham Thi Hong Van 01:38

May I suggest that everyone renamed themselves to be the names in the country from which you know, the company they work for? So that will be easy. Yeah,

Danny Yong 01:51

What a great idea. Thanks, Van. So, perhaps you put your company name in the in your, in your in your name and your profile name so that people can see where you're from? Hi, Alyaa. Alyaa is from MalaysiaKini?

Alyaa Alhadjri 02:12

Hi.

Danny Yong 02:14

Can you letak your MalaysiaKini name in in your profile? Yeah. Wow. Ideas as well ideas, Hi Billy. All right. Good. We got more coming in. Actually. are you guys looking at my mainstream? Ajinder am I okay? Okay, great. Good. Good. I think people will continue to trickle in. So maybe I just started so my blah blah can be the filler in between in front before the main event. So I think Vans idea is great to put your the name of your company in front of your in front of behind your name so that your colleagues from across the region can can kind of know who you are. My that's actually one of the big aims of what you're trying to do so that you guys kind of know each other. So maybe I just started doing my my thing. Okay. So welcome, everybody to the first master class in the SEAFOR Asia masterclass series. Yeah. So of course, today is about managing and protecting labor migration in ASEAN. Okay. So this is going to take a little while. Okay, so for those of you who don't know yet, let me have a quick intro to kiniAcademy. KiniAcademy is part of MalaysiaKini. Yeah, it's a training arm. We work a lot. We spend a lot of time on journalism training. We have been involved with investigative reporting past two years. And we are also hopefully want to be helped out with collaboration across ASEAN. So this SEAFOR is one of our one of the initiatives. All right. Oh, I'm sorry. So I'm Danny, Danny Yong. I'm the CEO of KiniAcademy. Right. Okay, so first, let me let me acknowledge the sponsors. They could be coming in as well, actually. So the sponsor is IWPR, Institute of War and Peace reporting. They are all over the place. And they have an office in Manila, whom we liaise with and office in Washington, DC. So they are the kind sponsors of this of this project. Right. So the main, one of the main aims of this SEAFOR is for journalists like yourselves to connect and collaborate with each other. So apparently, ASEAN journalists do not spend enough time collaborating. And this is one of the one of the aims of the program. Okay. So we put all your reporters who are from the same reporting desks. So hopefully in the future when you think of, you know, coming up with stories and reach across to another country to another colleague from another country so that the I don't know somehow enriches your gives you a different angle to your story. This is a this is one of those efforts. So, same reporting desk, and we are also one to connect via common interests. And in this case, it's topics around ASEAN and the kind of challenges that we face. Okay, so this is the one one effort and we have a few masterclass to continue to let you guys have a chance to connect. Alright. So with this particular, CFO has got three main components. One is the masterclass series. Then there's the reporting part where each of you have the opportunity to write stories on each one of these topics that we present during the masterclass. And, of course, we have a reporting project that we've discussed with your companies on already. And there's a there's another element called the forum on that particular the cfr.org. website, and very is an ongoing effort to to create a platform for everybody to collaborate to network to chat. And, actually, for reporters like yourselves, if you want to write a story, and you want to get comments from people across ASEAN, that would be an opportunity. Yeah, and a platform to do that. Okay. So, on the master classes, we have five lined up today being the first one. And please note the dates there, if you want to take a

screenshot. Yeah, most of the master classes will happen on Saturdays 2:30 to 6. The first one because today is based on is on labor migration. Second one next Saturday on the deforestation, transboundary haze, sustainable or palm oil production. Of course, for some of you that the deforestation part is more interesting than the haze part for people from Malaysia or Singapore or Indonesia. That's our yearly event. It's like a haze season every year. And third one is on post pandemic tourist recovery, which is really interesting because we just come out from the Phuket sandbox and even Malaysia is, is starting to is looking at implementing and Langkawi, our own Langkawi sandbox. And that's happening 25th September. Then on the ninth of October, the fourth one is on maritime security. So I know some of you knows, know a lot about it, but some of you don't know that much. And this is a perfect opportunity to learn more about it. 23rd October will be the fifth masterclass that's on turning the tide on corruption. Okay, so the, the the way we put it all together we have, we have my great minds from ASEAN to speak on this subjects. And you you'll notice the anchor person for instance, today's session will be Maha Ramakrishnan. So she herself was a journalist, and, you know, and someone, someone who is deeply involved with the subject matter. So the idea is to ensure and to have our speakers chime in and give their perspective on the most most current state of affairs where that topic is concerned. And the three different speakers were bringing their perspectives from their various organizations and for for journalists, I hope you guys can see that this is a great opportunity for you to write a story even from the content you glean from the masterclass. Okay, so, you see, all the faces are the nationalities the Oh, Jackie or Pichit is from Thailand. You know, the handsome boy in the left, bottom left corner. On the right, top we see Maria Angela, she's Filipino and an Encik Didik is from Indonesia. So this will be the common thread in all our master classes. They'll all be ASEAN speakers ASEAN subject matter experts. Please bear in mind, all these people are Somebody you now will get to know off. Yeah, they are, they can become your source. Yeah, for your story today and going into the future. So see for when I, when we call it Southeast Asia forum for reporting is really very geared towards helping reporters help us, you know, when you write your stories you help to further the agenda of each one of these challenges for ASEAN. Alright, so some simple housekeeping thing we hope to everybody can keep the mics are on mute, mute, I know working from home, we all from at home now. So the kids might be jumping the rooms and making like cute noises. I hope you can keep your video on. And one thing I really want to encourage is for for you guys to ask questions. Okay, so let's, let's get this speakers to work pretty hard for their money. Actually, it's actually some of the speakers don't want to take money from us. So the idea is, get yourself a really good understanding of the topics has been discussed today, you have a unique opportunity to get perspectives from for four different perspectives, and all experts as well. And we have a section at the end where we give a whole hour for a q&a. So Mahi will take us through that. And they will go through all the questions that you put in the chat box. And we'll go through that, of course, I think you guys already know that the session is being recorded. Yeah, after this, we will post the recording in the seafore.org website, as well as our Facebook page. Right. We will we've also have transcripts of the transcripts of the of the recordings done. And we will upload that on our website as well. So those of you who who like to have the transcript, you can get that and you can totally do a google translate to translate that to your own language and use some parts of SEO in your articles. Right. So we did a poll. And we have we have some nine, nine, we have respondents. And so let me just go through the poll, while you know the rest make their way into the Zoom Room. So in this for this questions, have you seen changes in public attitudes towards migrant workers? Well, two thirds say yes. Second question,

which of the following is the greatest concern of migrant workers in your country? So it seems like everybody has got is really concerned with health and access to health care, I suppose. Of course, this is probably this has got relation direct relation to COVID-19. I see there's also great concern for migrant workers in the in the area of social protection, access to relief, slash income support, seven out of nine said they're concerned about that. And six out of nine or So talk about says that they are concerned with their access to justice and their rights. So in terms of this question, to what extent are migrant workers policed in authorities 609 things that they are highly they are they are they are moderately policed in your in the country. Do you think the vulnerability of migrant labor has been affected by the depiction in the media? So there's quite a lot of nine there's quite a unanimous or almost unanimous. The other one is not so sure. So I think this this is really a byproduct of all the reporting and on on testings and then incidences of COVID infections. What changes would you like to see in the perception of and reporting by the media about migrant workers? So 78% talk about wants to have more direct engagement with migrant communities. So it's great to see that many people are concerned with them, because these guys really do need many champions to help them out. So I don't know if I too fast or too slow agenda, but that we will be moving to the keynote presentation now. Okay, great. So let me remind ourselves, that the title for the presentation, discipline stranded and unprotected. So we want to examine the impact of COVID-19 on ASEAN, migrant workers. Yeah. So let me introduce Mahi Rama Krishnan. So Mahi is an award winning filmmaker and investigative journalist. She's worked with both in both TV and print media for the last 20 for the past 21 years. And this has been in with BBC Time Magazine, New York Times, Aljazeera, US Today, Voice of America. So she's she's tackled subjects such as Islamic militancy, trafficking, migrant workers, refugees, statelessness, child brides, underage sex industry, LGBT community. So for your reporters out there, she somebody probably can reach out to when you talk about this our subjects. She currently runs beyond borders, an NGO that promotes and protects the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people and migrant workers in Malaysia. Yeah, she does extensive research on hate speech, and atrocity crimes against vulnerable communities. And she's also currently working with Queensland University to create a hate speech application. So I really thank Mahi to that she volunteered their time with us. Spend time with us, so to speak with audiences with that sort of shedule. So I'll hand it over to you, Maggie. Yeah, I'll stop sharing now. Meanwhile, I'm putting up Mahi's, profile in the chat, so that you guys can marvel at what she's done. But more importantly, you know, bear that in mind, so that, in future if you need a source on this, all sorts of comment on this matters on these different topics, you can reach out to her. Sorry, I just volunteered your your time Mahi.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 18:09

No worries. Sorry about that. I kinda got a bit stuck with that. Yeah. So thank you very much. This is indeed a great opportunity. So thank you very much, to Kini Academy for actually having me. And thanks to everyone who is here today to be a part of this masterclass. and I really wish that this is happening, you know, differently with me actually meeting all of you because I like that discussion. I like you to interrupt me and to ask me questions. I'm good. Unfortunately, we don't have that kind of a privilege at this point in time. So I guess we just have to make do with whatever we have. And I'm going

to share with you, whatever I have known, whatever I know, from my work on the ground with migrant workers, not just in Malaysia, but also Southeast Asia. And also the kind of research that I've done and the presentations that I've been a part of, and also having learned from many other experts globally and from the region as well. So I hope that, you know, this is not about me being the expert, as Danny continuously says, because I believe that all of you know what I'm going to say. But you know, I just hope that we can both like work together. And I really look forward to the collaboration, and also the reporting, in which we can both be a part of I'm really looking forward to that. Yeah, so I'm just going to go straight to what's happening in the region. I know all of you know, what's actually happening is that, you know, at the beginning of I mean, at the end of January last year, World Health Organization declared that we actually have an outbreak, we actually have a pandemic. And until then, you know, people are not really very sure as to what the COVID-19 was all about all the kinds of records and mess that it is actually going to create the habit that it's going to cause throughout the region and the kind of loss of jobs and loss loss of income and even suicides that it is going to trigger. So, you know, we were kinda like anticipating that this is something that will actually come Come on and then pass off. But then I think that you know, as what even the Malaysia's newly minted health minister has said, it is something that we have to contend with COVID-19 seems to be something that we have to live with. And I think in this aspect, Singapore has done really well in terms of acknowledging the fact that COVID is actually here to stay and looking at mitigating our lives around around that. So, you know, COVID-19 the first region that he does actually hit severely is the Southeast Asian region region and us in ASEAN are the ones who have been hit first. And if you ask me why that's because of the close geographical proximity to China, the business that we have with China, the Travel and Tourism that we have with, with China. So the thing is that, you know, now, yes, of course, Malaysia was one of the countries that came out looking really great, because, you know, it seemed that in three months, you know, we had managed to mitigate the pandemic, the cases were down to almost one, and everyone just was really thrilled. And Thailand had also done a great job. But you know, it is just that, we realize that, because Thailand has at one point also stopped. The kind of proactive testing and Malaysia did not really bother about doing rapid testing involving migrant workers, it's like, you know, everyone was trying to somehow rather get rid of this pandemic really quickly. And every government took the easy way out, we are now seeing waves and waves of COVID-19 infections, cases, you know, raging across countries and the number of deaths alarming. In Malaysia, you know, we, we were, we were, we went into a total lockdown when they were like 200 or 300 cases, and everyone was like, wow, 300 cases, oh, my God, what's happening? But now, we have got 20,000 cases. And we don't really know how to deal with it. And neither does the government. But we'll talk about that a little bit more. The thing is that, you know, what we are seeing now is that, you know, we are, we are hit with job losses, income losses, people attempting and committing suicides. And we have come to a point where there is an economic downturn, primarily caused by the continued to lock down global disruption to trade. And unfortunately, for as the people of ASEAN, we may be looking at a recession. Now, if you look at how have ASEAN countries actually responded? Well, they have responded. And I know, we want to talk a little bit about the Declaration on strengthening social protection. And I will talk about the social protection throughout this 35 minutes, because that is where we have actually failed and failed quite miserably. And I think that needs to be talked about a little bit more so that we know, you know, what kind of pressure and lobbying efforts that need to be put on individual governments to ensure that those who are really vulnerable can be can be protected. Now, the first slide, we were talking about what was actually

happening in ASEAN, but you know, if you really take a step back and ask yourself, yes, we the people of ASEAN, small and medium industries, people, students, activists, you know, businesses, all of us have been affected, but who? Or which group has been affected the most. And that's without a doubt, the migrant workers. And that is because you know, when we look at, because we know that it is the small and medium industries, services, as well as tourism sectors that have been mostly affected in Southeast Asia. And if you look at who is working these sectors, these are definitely migrant workers. How is ASEAN actually our ASEAN countries responded, they have responded with stimulus packages. But you know, if you really take a step back and look at where these stimulus packages went, how much of it went directly to support the communities people that were really affected? How many of these stimulus packages were targeted towards social protection towards people like the migrant workers, both in the informal sector and the formal sector, both documented and undocumented? And if I may expand this a little further, even though we are talking about migrant workers, specifically, how much of this stimulus package were actually targeted towards people like refugees, for example, asylum seekers, stateless people, people with precarious immigration status? The answer is to a large extent. Now, we can safely say that, not much of it or very little of it. It was actually targeted towards creating a social protection or creating security and safety mechanisms for those who are vulnerable and primarily the migrant workers. Now we can look at if we look at Thailand, Thailand did give about if I'm not mistaken, 150 US dollars targeted toward migrant workers from April to June last year. If we look at Malaysia, it has failed miserably. I work on the ground as Danny introduced, I do run a non-profit organization called Beyond Borders Malaysia, and we have been doing eight distributions from last year right up to today, we have reached out to about 80,000 families we have done like even the last one to two months, we have done like 10s of 1000s of meals to poor and vulnerable communities. And that is primarily because the Malaysian government, just like any other ASEAN government has also failed miserably to include. Now the word is being inclusive, which I think is just not in the vocabulary of many governments. So it has failed to actually include migrant workers in its physical response packages, which means migrant workers are left to fend for themselves. Now we see that SMEs and you know sectors, services sectors, and also tourism sectors, manufacturing construction, these are the ones that have really taken a bad hit. And they are largely worked by migrant workers. So what happens when there is nothing to actually help them? Well, the answer is what I'm seeing on the ground on a day to day basis. There are relentless calls and text messages to us for food, for essential items for groceries for vegetables. And, you know, we see government's whether it's the Malaysian government, the Thai government, or even the Indonesian President going on his, you know, bike bicycle, looking really, you know, sporty, talking about wearing face masks being saved in public talking about social distancing. But let me ask you a question. You know, we all know that migrant workers live in very precarious situations. They live in congested environments, they live sandwiched like sardines in small apartments, you know, how is social distancing possible? Whether it's Singapore, whether it's Thailand, whether it's Indonesia, whether it's Cambodia, the plight of the migrant workers remain the same remains the same because of, you know, at least let's look at the accommodation. The accommodation is really left wanting. So how do we, how do we get them to do social protection? When social are sorry, when social distancing when social distancing is actually a privilege, it's a privilege for a lot of it's a privilege that that many of us actually take for granted because we have the space. And we have also the capacity to buy ourselves sanitizes Some of us have sanitizers for the home, and we buy masks in bulk because we are just terrified of running out. But when you have lost

your job, when there is no income, when there is no possibility of livelihood, when, you know, you don't even know when cases are going to reduce or if cases are going to reduce and whether it's going to happen. How are you going to spend that little bit of money that you have to buy yourself these protection, whether it's masks or sanitizer, so that is the situation of the migrant workers not just in Malaysia, but in different parts of the region as well. Now, what happens when they live in precarious situations without social support from states, from governments, that actually contributes to the rising infections that we continue to see on a day to day basis, it gives rise to the number of deaths, which are also increasing. And these are people that actually do not have savings to stop to stock up or anything. So what do you think the government could have done or should have done? Well, it should have provided and reinforced income support and also put in place initiatives to allow informal workers to register for emergency social support for example, now, are we seeing this at any part of ASEAN? Are we seeing this in Malaysia Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, no, because these people seem to be have been left out on the on the brink. I'm going to try and change slides here. Ajinder I'm having a bit of a problem changing this slide.

Ajinder Kaur 29:55

Press enter. Or, you scroll your mouse. Okay, the arrow, then use the arrow key. Yes. So you're going backwards. So use the arrow key on the opposite direction. The forward arrow. The ones that's pointing towards your right. On your keyboard.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 30:32

Yeah, that's what I'm trying to do. Was working just now.

Ajinder Kaur 30:41

Okay, just click. There's a message that appears on your screen.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 30:57

Okay. Now, if you I've been talking a lot about migrant workers and how they actually treated by different governments in ASEAN. But if you take a step back in a month, many public health researchers were astounded with the success of Malaysia, and Thailand, and rightfully so, you know, we came out looking great, and so did Thailand. But unfortunately, you know, especially Thailand in minimizing community spread, for example, but now because of the continued mutation of the virus. And also, because I think because of the lack of proper policy put in place, there have been recent

outbreaks in Malaysia as well as Thailand. And you know, we can, if we want to look at three countries in ASEAN, we need to look at Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, which were actually badly affected. And also because major outbreaks did involve migrant workers. And in Malaysia and Thailand, it continues to involve migrant workers. Now policy, if we really look at what kind of policy have, or what kind of policies have these governments, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore adopted in terms of looking at these rising infections amongst migrant workers. Now, I can safely say that the policies were discriminatory against migrant workers, including attempts to segregate them from the rest of the population. So but when you look at Thailand, primarily Singapore, and also Malaysia, this has increased racism, and xenophobia. And it also, it is also interesting in the in the case of Thailand, let me give you a story. There were about 400,000 migrant workers in Thailand's seafood processing sector. And main, many of them are mostly they came from Myanmar, they live in very difficult conditions, conduct congested accommodations, and they speak very little Thai. Now in December 2020, they were testing the rapid testing done in amongst people who are in this sector, and 12,000. Specifically, there were 12,000 specific cases during the testing. And then as it tested more, there were many more 1000s. Now. I cannot I mean, if you look at how the Thai Prime Minister actually responded to these alarming number of cases amongst those who actually worked in Thailand's seafood processing sector, it's actually it's actually mind boggling because this is what he said he actually accused the but he said he accused the Myanmar workers. And he said that by smuggling themselves across the border, that they had actually brought COVID-19 into the country into Thailand. But what Mr. Prayut forgot to actually say is the fact that, you know, Thailand's government officials were actually the ones who are prey who are playing a primary role in allowing for these illegal smuggling of workers from Myanmar across the borders. Now, if we look at Malaysia, Malaysia has also had a similar experience in the sense that for decades, our NGOs have been talking about bad accommodation and the fact that migrant workers were working long hours and they were living in congested environment. Now, even though there was lots of effort, lots of lobbying efforts, he did not actually change any policy where the government is concerned about it because the government kept going after migrant workers and not even after the labor, my labor agents, their employment agents or even Malaysian employees. So you know, sometimes when I talk to my friends and fellow human rights activists and those who actually work on the ground, they tell Things like, you know, this is karma biting us back. This is like karma giving it back to us because of the way we abused migrant workers. Now we are forced to contend with actually looking at their accommodation, looking at reversing policies, looking at putting in place safety and security mechanisms so that this infection can actually be contained at this point in time. And, you know, also in Malaysia we had last year because of the segregation policy, we also had a huge suppression of the media, primarily Al Jazeera because he went on to, to report about the working conditions. And it also went on to talk about corruption involving immigration offices, and the difficult and dangerous conditions in which migrant workers were working. I'm not I'm just going to touch briefly about this, because I'm sure all of you know about what has actually happened. And we had like, you know, we had immigration raids, we had the authorities going after aljazeera. And we also had, we also the former government, which was led by Mahatma in Yasin did not do anything in terms of leadership to contain or to condemn those kinds of victimization of migrant workers, neither did he do anything to condemn the suppression of the media suppression of freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Now, if you really look at all of this, the way our young governments have actually responded to the covid 19 pandemic, in terms of, you know, in relation at least to where the migrant workers are

concerned, you know, they have done it using segregation policies, they've done it using a lot of creating a lot of fear factor, they have done it, they have done a lot of victim blaming, blaming the migrant workers and they have tried to stay away from blame. Now, what does all of this done in terms of where covid 19 pandemic is concerned? Because what is actually contributed what is to severely impact in undermining dependency management by all these respective governments, and that includes Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore to a large extent, even though now in Singapore, we are seeing that the cases have been contained, but the racism, the xenophobia, the hate, against the migrant workers in Singapore has actually become worse because of following the pandemic. Okay, as you know, you can change them. Okay, so before the outbreak of the covid 19 pandemic, there were at least 10 million international migrant workers in ASEAN, out of which 50% were women. Now, it is really interesting to look at how we have or the media has or governments have looked at the response to the pandemic, in relation to women migrant workers. Now, if you really look at this between 10 to 70%, of the of the migrant workers in Malaysia, I mean in Southeast Asia work in informal sectors. And when you talk about informal sectors, the first vision that comes to your mind or the first picture that comes to your mind is the picture of women workers, because they are the ones who work who largely work in these informal sectors. And this they faced specific challenges as they are at the core of the COVID-19 response it curtails their income. And they are also they are also more vulnerable to layoffs. And they are less eligible for support mechanisms. And also there is an increase in domestic violence amongst migrant workers who are here with their families as well. So in terms, if you really take a step back and look at Singapore, for example, Singapore's association of action and research, which is actually a women's helpline recorded, an increase of 33% of domestic violence cases over the previous year. And if you look at Indonesian Women's Association for justice, and legal aid institution, it saw three fold and increase a three fold increase in referral cases. over a two week period from the time women were asked to stay at home and work now most of these women may not include migrant workers. But I just want to give you a sense of how we met, whether they are migrant workers or otherwise, are the ones who are even more affected because of the covid 19 pandemic. Now, I would like to also talk to you a little bit about a particular case that I worked on in Malaysia, involving a migrant workers, a migrant worker, her name is Risa, she's Indonesian, and she actually was supposed to come and help us clean the house. But, you know, we I was waiting and she didn't turn up and I thought, Okay, let me call her mother, I called Risa. I couldn't get ahold of her. I call her mother. And the mother said, you know what she has already left. And I asked her how long ago and she said, about 30 minutes, 45 minutes ago, she was walking to your house, and it takes about what five to eight minutes to get your place? And I'm just thinking, okay, but I can't find her. So I was actually really worried because, you know, I thought that maybe she has had an accident or something had happened to her along the way. But you know, a few hours later, about six or seven hours later, she calls us and tells us, you know, she was in she was hysterical. And she told us that when she was walking to come to our home, that was a person who was sitting in a car, who opened the car door and asked her, who are you? Where are you going? And she said, Okay, my name is resign. I'm a migrant worker, and I'm going to, you know, clean this person's house. And the person is like, let me look at your visa. Let me look at your passport. And she was like, okay, so I don't have documents. And he was like, in that case, you I need you to get into the car. So this girl who is a very young girl was terrified. And you know, not knowing what else to do. She got into the car. And she said that this man actually drove her round and round and round for a few hours before taking her into his apartment. And when she got there, he asked her for sex. She said, No,

he slapped him punched her. And she did not tell me whether she was forced to have sex with him or not. And I really didn't want to I didn't want to push ask her because I thought if she had wanted to tell me she would have done so. So now this is not just one case. But there are many such incidences which are happening. And if you really look at even the law that is put in place where migrant workers are concerned, for example, say Risa has been raped. And I go to the police station and lodge a police report. Do you know what's going to happen to Risa? I'm not going to get police officers coming and you know, talking to her or women police officers coming and talking to her trying to find out who is the person who raped or if she was gang raped. If that was the case, nothing of this sort is going to happen. Because when it involves an undocumented migrant worker in Malaysia, the first law that kicks in is the Immigration Act. It takes precedence over everything else. So what what comes into question is the fact that she doesn't have visa passport, you know that she has an precarious immigration status, which means that before I can say cheese, she will be picked up and she will be imprisoned, she would have been detained. The fact that, you know, she will never ever get to go to court or seek justice of or make sure that the perpetrators serve jail time, or any of those things. So this is actually the kind of the kind of persecution for lack of another word that migrant workers and primarily migrant women, migrant workers are facing in not just Malaysia, but also different parts of the world. Now, in the next slide, you will see that Malaysia's former Prime Minister, Mr. Moody and eosin, you know, actually called for a coherent multi, sectoral, multi multi stakeholder approach to ensure effective response to the pandemic. And, of course, the 26th. The ASEAN Economic ministers meeting in March last year talked about, you know, came up with a statement, which looked at a collective effort or collective action, in particular focus on leveraging technology, for example, in digital trade to foster supply chain amongst the different countries in ASEAN. And also it talked about rollout of a post recovery plan. But let's look at how inclusive these action plans are, how inclusive of migrant workers these action plans are. So let's look at Thailand and Malaysia because you know, these are the two countries which are actually battling widespread infection daily cases as well as debts. Now, going back to the social protection, there has been no social protection measures that actually looks specifically at including migrant workers in both Malaysia and Thailand in June 2021. Just a few months ago, the Thai Prime Minister Mr. Prelude closed campsites for construction workers for until like early July. And, and that pushed them to live in very congested spaces with limited access to medicine and food. Now, this seems to be the kind of immediate, I won't use the word response, I will use the word reaction that as young governments have to trying to mitigate the spread of infections. And then what happened is following what the Prime Minister did, his labor minister stopped all proactive, COVID-19 tax testing, and Maliki but you look at Malaysia, Malaysia for a long, long time, despite lots and lots of lobbying efforts by parliamentarians, as well as non governmental organizations and human rights activists, lobbying the government to actually do rapid testing. So that, you know, we can know the exact number of cases, Malaysia also did not do that, until very recently. And there's also been a lot of flip flop on policies, you know, in terms of standard operating operating procedures during total lockdown during the recovery phase. And also, just like Thailand, there has been every effort to kind of play down the number of cases and infections on the daily rate. Now, if you really look at ASEAN governments, why they do talk about, you know, being inclusive, you know, take taking account of all stakeholders, unfortunately, migrant workers who have always been at the core at the heart of development in each of these countries, have always been left out. So, let's specifically, look at Malaysia's story. Last year, I'm sure all of you know this, you know, the Malaysia's defense minister actually said that, you know, migrant, he said lives to migrant workers

as well as refugees, he said, Please come out, please come out and get tested. And we can we promise you that, you know, we are not going to target you, we promise you that we will not go after you, there will be no chance that there will be no immigration rates. But a few months into that promise, immigration rates started happening. And that was when AlJazeera started reporting about these rates, and also the kind of corruption and the kind of inhumane treatment at the hands of immigration officers that actually got them into into trouble. Now, if you really look at what's happening currently in different countries in Southeast Asia, and you take a step back and look at the kind of policies that's actually happening, the kind of rates which are actually happening, you know, the kind of persecution, the kind of witch hunt that is happening against migrant workers. It is not the government and authorities have not backed out one bit, they have not backed down one bit. So you can ask yourself, you know, how much inclusive or how inclusive do they look at migrant workers in terms of the socio economic development and also the health crises that are happening, but that we are seeing at this point in time, in the case of Malaysia, I would think that it had lost a great opportunity to come up with a more comprehensive health care and also welfare policy, you look at Singapore, it has also failed miserably in capitalizing on this covid 19 pandemic to come up with a more inclusive or I will not even say more to come up with an inclusive health care and welfare policy. If you look at Cambodia, if you look at Indonesia, it is all the same. Now, if you look at all you have already changed the slide a few Thank you. Now, if you look at the lack of looking at the lack of social protection, you know, that was in 2013, ASEAN came up with the Declaration on strengthening social protection. And governments have actually pledged to do so by this remains good in paper, it has not been implemented on the ground, because if it had been implemented on the implemented on the ground, the countries that I've just mentioned, would have capitalized on the covid 19 pandemic and would have taken a step back and looked at experts to come up with a more comprehensive welfare and health care policy. None of this has happened across Southeast Asia. Now if you look at production mechanisms or you look if you look at fiscal measurements, which have been thrown at migrant workers, these are ad hoc, there is no policy that actually governs it there is no framework that actually governs it. In the case of Malaysia there has been absolutely none. But at least in Thailand, you have seen some effort, but like I said it was ad hoc. It was over a period of two to four months of June. For weeks, and it has not really materialized in actually mitigating the covid 19 pandemic, the consequences, or even creating a safe and secure environment for the migrant workers across the region. Now, even if you look at, for example, you look at what's happening in Myanmar, for example, you know, with the kind of persecution, the targeted persecution by the military, which has increased, which has seen an exponential increase of COVID-19 cases in Burma, and it is, and, you know, people, my friends who actually work out of Burma say that, you know, it's, it's just so bad, the situation is so bad, that they won't even be surprised if the entire population minus the elite, you know, I actually, you know, one at some point actually have COVID-19 infections. But the thing is that, you know, if you really look at what stops ASEAN governments from ensuring that there is a proper social protection mechanism, that that is a proper safety mechanism, that there are proper protocols with within the social security mechanisms, then you can actually look at the fact that it's not just the non interference policy, which is so archaic, because, you know, if you look at ASEAN, we have got the ASEAN Economic Community, which is economic cooperation, so you can have economic cooperation, when it comes to actually looking at the human rights violations by individual governments within ASEAN, then conveniently, they use the ASEAN, they use ASEAN non interference policy. But you know, if you look beyond ASEAN as

non interference policy, then you will see that there that ASEAN has always been challenged by corruption, uneven social development, and technological adaptation, environmental degradation, and also the rise of authoritarian governments. We leave it here, because I have an idea for all of you to ponder on, just before we close this session. Now we can talk about migration and forced migration or otherwise without actually talking about the Global Compact for migration. Now, this is not really ASEAN, it's more global. But you know, I thought, I'll just touch upon it a little bit as a way of giving you the sort of giving you something to compare against, actually. So this was adopted in 2016. at the UN General Assembly, in a way it was good, because it was the first inter governmental negotiated agreement. And because it talked about refugees and migrants, then, you know, you can say that, to an extent it sent a very powerful message that matters relating to migration, and refugees have actually taken an international stand does have an international agenda. But you know, the thing is that this Global Compact for Migration actually also says that it respects the sovereignty of each country, which means that the countries can decide which who can get to stay in their country, or who doesn't get to stay in their country. And more importantly, the global the Global Compact for migration is non binding. Now, if you take a step back and look at the ASEAN Declaration on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers, no, very much in our backyard, then you will see that this is also a non binding agreement. And it has got very limited scope in effectively protecting migrant workers from exploitation, and also from trafficking. Right. So and if you also look at this, the ASEAN declaration goes a step forward in marginalizing migrant workers I'ma say, by saying that it will note that this declaration is only effective towards documented migrants, and those traveling in ASEAN. Now, this is really important because if you look at the undocumented migrants, most of them work in informal sectors, and the moment they are in informal sectors, then you can safely say that a large amount of these workers are women. So the Amazonian declaration for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers in ASEAN has actually completely negated looking into the protection of women, migrant workers from trafficking and also from exploitation. Okay, so I was actually thinking of talking about the securitization of migrant workers and politics of insecurity. Because, you know, the whole rhetoric that we hear time and again, whether it's in Indonesia or Thailand or any other country, it's really about, you know, governments saying that, you know, that they are they are worried that the the rise in migration is seen as destabilizing the nation's security. So this is actually a very populist and nationalistic approach, but it does work because, you know, even in Malaysia, for example, there is a lot of xenophobia and racism and a lot of fear when it comes to my remoteness. And largely because this is filled on by the government itself. And in Malaysia, if you look at it, we have this thing called Raila Hwan, Rakyat or Rayleigh, which is a nationalist organization, they carry baton and shields and there are 500,000 volunteers in this organization. And they are largely used to patrol and to nab migrant workers and to check if they've got documents. They are the ones who accompany the immigration when they go on midnight rates. And they are actually a force that everyone is the migrant workers primarily are terrified off. But if you look at that they have got 500,000 volunteers. But if you combine Malaysia's military and police, we have got a total of 101,500 members only. So this voluntary Task Force, if I might may say that goes around targeting migrant workers and primarily looking for undocumented migrant workers is five times more in strength and number compared to the total Malaysia's milk in comparing it to Malaysia's total military and police force. Now, in the east coast of Sabah in 2002 2003. The same rhetoric of securitization and the migrant workers being a threat to national security was used, and the Saba government has then been parroting itself and something it's

just saying that it has completely weeded out undocumented migrant workers. But you know, what has actually happened on the ground is that there has been an exponential growth because when migrant workers come into Malaysia, for example, they come 90 to 95% of them come with legal channels, they come with documents, it's only in Malaysia that they become undocumented, primarily due to labor agents, employment agents, and Aaron Malaysian employers who just dumped them to take away their passports and do not bother to actually renew the visa. Now, the same thing also happens in Thailand, where you have, you know, migrant workers who actually come from Burma and work in in Thailand, who are then at the mercy of Thai employers, and their passports are taken away and kept. And when it comes, when it's time for renewal of your visa, then it's up to the discretion of the Thai employers as to whether or not they want to employ or continue to employ these people whether or not they want to extend the visa. And again, because they speak very little time, they have got no legal recourse primarily also, if they are undocumented, then there is no legal recourse for any country, you know, from any country in the region. But what I would also like to look at, you know, besides the secretary, Secretary, Secretary position of migrant workers, and also politics of insecurity is to actually look at the securitization of COVID-19 itself. Now, you know, for example, the emergency laws have been put in place to silence human rights, human rights workers and human rights defenders, the state of emergency law in Cambodia, for example, actually allowed authorities to monitor and give them the powers to restrict what is being posted on social media. You know, in Philippines. human rights defenders were charged when they were actually out, donating and delivering goods and groceries, because they had what was quoted as anti government pamphlets and flyers in their car in Indonesia, police regulators. us no regularly indulge in arbitrary arrests and in Timor Leste. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press have been curtailed in light of its national state of emergency now in Malaysia. Yes, finally, the emergency has come to an end, but it was no better because you know, the government used the emergency to actually do procurements during COVID-19. And because parliament was not interested Because parliament was suspended, there were no debates. And nobody actually knows as to how these money were actually used. Now, earlier, I did speak about this access to vaccination. Actually, earlier, I did speak about migrant workers and how, you know, the government went back on it work on its words, and how it actually targeted media, not just Al Jazeera, but also local media to ensure that they were not propagating fake news. Now, the word fake news was so vague, that anything that the government construed to be fake news, could get media as well as human rights activists into trouble. But what is it that we are seeing now, because of the gap because of the policies that Malaysia's government has actually has actually implemented? Now the government goes round, saying that by the end of October, which is by the end of next month, we would have achieved 80% herd immunity, which means that it's good for the country. But we have been asking the government this question when you talk about 80%? Are you talking about everyone who make up a part of the Malaysian society? Are you talking about migrant workers, both documented and undocumented? Are you talking about refugees, stateless people, asylum seekers? Are you talking about people who do not have birth certificates, but who could be Malaysians, but do not have access to actually get themselves vaccinated. But if you really take a step back and look at Malaysia and vaccination access to migrant workers, it is so flip flop that even somebody like me who actually works towards getting migrant workers to turn up at vaccination centers to get themselves vaccinated, do not really know what's happening on the ground. Because Firstly, you need to have this thing called My suggestion are downloaded. And you need to fill in your particulars in order for you to be called in for registration. And

even if you want to go and stand in line and do a walk in, you need this Meister giedre vaccination, this Meister giedre application to have been downloaded and filled up. Now for someone like me who works on the ground. It's such a frightening prospect, because I'm continuously worried that after the vaccination drive is over, that the government can actually use the data to actually go after the migrant workers because the addresses are there already. And so this impending fear has actually kept a lot of migrant workers from actually from actually going and getting themselves vaccinated. So Malaysia, Malaysia's 80% herd immunity remains very much to be seen to be seen. So I'm just going to take another three minutes to wrap up, I've got a note from our deep saying that, you know, a warning saying that, hey, you know, wrap it up. So the thing is, you know, the good thing that has happened in Southeast Asia, in ASEAN in the region is that we are seeing lots and lots and lots of people, citizens, ordinary people like you and me, coming together to do everything they possibly can to those who are on the fringes of the society, migrant workers both documented undocumented refugees, and others. And in Timor Leste. We have the Women's Network and the environment network, which is, which is coordinating emergencies, emergency support. in Philippines we have. We also have a lot of a lot of lobbying effort asking for transparency in government procurement process. In Malaysia, we have the kita Jagger kita movement, which is a group of ordinary citizens who have come together to help those who are less fortunate than us, you know, people like the migrant workers and others as well. Now, before I wrap up, I did say that at some point, I would like to talk about ASEAN and the fact that it has always been seen as a toothless tiger, and nothing more that ASEAN has failed miserably, whether it's in terms of actually coming up with Social Security, for those who are vulnerable for the migrant workers, you know, looking at ensuring the safety of women, migrant workers, or even as a body coming together to reprimand each other of human rights violations. But here, I see a lot of you who are representing different parts of the region, and you have come together to try and work and report. Now I would like to ask you a question. Do you think that you you folks can actually form a formidable Alliance, so that you know beyond this four and a half, three and a half hours that you're with us, you will continue to communicate with each other that you will come in and continue to push and lobby for better, Media for for for a better environment in which media in your respective countries can work in and in the process of doing so if one of you get persecuted? Would the others come together to actually lobby to ensure that your rights are protected that they will actually on social media platforms that they will go to the respective human rights organizations and lobby for you. So the question here is, can you be the alternative to ASEAN that never was anything, but just a group of big boys, you know, patting each other on the backs and having, you know, maybe incredible meals during the meetings. So I really hope that you know, you will be able to do something that you'll be able to come together and that you will be able to form formidable force that can be that has to be reckoned with, and also act as some kind of a watchdog beyond today. Thank you very

Ajinder Kaur 1:05:37

Thank you so much, Mahi. Our next speaker is Maria. Perhaps Mahi would like to introduce Maria to everyone?

Mahi Ramakrishnan 1:06:02

So Maria is from the Davao city resource rich region in Mindanao. But poverty pushed many women in Davao to work and live overseas as migrant workers. My aunt lived in Hong Kong for 10 years, where her activism led her to co found migrant forum in Asia MFA original Alliance and platform of cooperation among migrant workers and advocates in countries of origin and destination. Today, MFA is a well recognized voice of migrants in the ASEAN in the Asian region. Milan also developed the practice of migrants savings for alternative investments, or save and invest as a strategy for productive return and reintegration to countries of origin, create their own jobs and make overseas employment choice. Maria organized savings associations in destination countries, and founded online kabayan. For this strategy, Milan was awarded social entrepreneur of the year 2007 by Ernst and Young and Schwab foundation. She has a master's degree in management in yupi, and attended a short course on Non-profit Management at Harvard Business School. So over to you Maria, thank you.

Ajinder Kaur 1:07:21

Hi Maria, would you like to share your screen? Or would you like me to control it from here?

Maria Angela Villalba 1:07:26

Um, let me check how? Mahi you have to stop your share.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 1:07:34

I have ready?

Maria Angela Villalba 1:07:38

Give me a minute. to work on this.

Ajinder Kaur 1:07:42

Alright. Should I share it for you Maria is to speak like it's probably.

Danny Yong 1:08:20

Meanwhile, I think Van has got a has got a has got a question for Mahi, maybe you can just take it now. This is it?

Pham Thi Hong Van 1:08:30

Should I can I take questions or wait until you know the end of all this section?

Danny Yong 1:08:38

Maybe since we got a time now, then.

Pham Thi Hong Van 1:08:43

Sure, I can go ahead. I think there's a you know, thank you, Mahi for for a very great presentation. I think it's inspired. But at the same time, it's also sticky a lot of questions. Because, for example, when you mentioned that ASEAN countries lack of an inclusive social protection system, is it fair? And you know, I think each of us here can and you know, also recognize that but in you know, in the pandemic, we also, you know, and a lot of your ASEAN countries like, say Vietnam also also say that, oh, you know, like the whole social protection system is is not you know, it's not really comprehensive yet and even for their own cities, and they didn't even protect it well, and protect them well, so you know, so it's really understandable that you know, migrant migrant worker is is you know, is at the bottom of the ladder. But you know, when it's also system, it's also protection system is not there, who get first, who get it first is really a questions and say in In case of Vietnam, if protecting immigrant immigrant worker first, you know, if other cities and also also asked for their benefit. And this is one point that I want to raise I agree with you that in terms of, you know, when when they suffer from, from from abusive in any cases, sexual harassment, and the first thing that kicks in if they seek law protection is is they they, they, they, they they work illegally into the contrary, and that, you know, my result in, in law enforcement kick them out. And when you mentioned, and it also hard to protect them, you know, because then they violate the law first. And I think the last thing is, is when you mentioned that you're Malaysia pm saying that, you know, we need, we need we need, we need to have a turban, and conclude and concluded comprehensive abroad about immigrant worker, I think they mean that his legal immigrant worker, you know, because we all know that, you know, at the first place, nobody should even legally enter one countries. So that's my pre discussing point, I guess, you know, and again, thank you for a very great and inspiring presentation. Thank you.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 1:11:32

Since you asked the question, I'll, I'll take two minutes to just answer them. I think one of the other question is whether I was talking about just domestic workers. No, I wasn't talking about domestic workers. I was talking about all the migrant workers. And when you say yes, there has been lots of conversations not just in Vietnam, but also Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, primarily Malaysia, Singapore, primarily about who gets the treatment when you look at social protection, who should be protected as our citizens have them. Now, this othering othering is where the problem is, because what we need to look at is a comprehensive welfare and health care policy that is inclusive. The other thing is the fact that is the one that has actually put us in this kind of trouble primarily for countries where the rising and raising infections are coming from migrant workers. So this othering has to stop. You know, that is a real progressive step forward, in my opinion. And when I talked about the Prime Minister, the Malaysian Malaysia's former prime minister, I wasn't talking about him in terms of migration, he was talking about inclusivity, he was talking about bringing together different people and businesses and stakeholders. But in that process, just like ASEAN has always talked about the ASEAN Economic Community, but very cleverly, and conveniently left out those who are in the lower rung of the social stratification. Malaysia's prime minister also left out, you know, migrant workers, both document documented undocumented asylum seekers and others. So it's about you know, those are our people. But even when you look at our people, even if you look at our people who are Malaysians, you need to look at who the other people are. That is why it's really important to look at what World Health Organization has said, for you to be fine, I need to be fine. For them to be fine. You know, she has to be fine for all of us to be fine. Thank you.

Muhammad Adib Faiz 1:13:19

Thank you very much. Yes. So now, I think we'll move over to Maria's presentation. And I just like to tell everyone that if you have any questions or comments with speakers, please feel free to leave it in the chat. And what we'll be doing is we'll be compiling the questions. And we'll be dealing with them and during the question and answer session. And that way, we can have a more fruitful discussion. So now we'd like to hand it over to Maria.

Maria Angela Villalba 1:14:11

Thank you very much and good afternoon to everyone. Um, it's a good occasion to share with you the situation of migrant workers, particularly from the perspective of migrant workers themselves. And from the countries of origin, the experiences of migrant workers as they start to come home from the destination countries because of the pandemic. Since the 1990s, labor migration and migrant workers efforts to control their lives has come a long way. When they were just mere commodities during that period, this time around, they are now becoming visible one and becoming more vocal about the

situation, that and abuses that they experience. That was we talked about migrant workers in the ASEAN. I would like to underscore the character of the ASEAN and Timor Leste. As we know that when people write about ASEAN and Timor Leste, it's an understanding of labor migration that is conscious of shared history and heritage and also an appreciation of the multi diversity of the region and because of migration, this is what has brought the kind of what do they say in the language of the DNA of Southeast Asians. ASEAN is one of the more active regional cooperation. bloc's implementing many of its agreements and declarations, including those or underscoring those declarations and agreements that has to do with trade and investments. It has also on the social front active work and agreements on social contracts on women and children. Education and Culture. However, in the area of migration ASEAN is sadly quiet kind of skirting around the issue and very consciously neglecting the area of responsibility and accountability. Here is a if you can see the map of Southeast Asia and Timor Leste, you will find that multiculturalists, culturalism and diversity. And you will find that this region has what we would call a lot of common commonalities. On the other hand, when it comes to migrant workers, we have something like 6.5 million migrants from ASEAN and to ASEAN countries of destination. They represent a very neglected part of the population. The reason why we could not get a strong declaration for migrant workers rights and dignity in the ASEAN is because what is primary to the ASEAN is the recognition of the sovereignty of each country to determine its own immigration policies on entry and conditions to remain. Although we have what we call, you know, a visa free entry for ASEAN citizens, the conditions for remaining in the country is very stringent. The other reason is the decision making principle of consensus within the ASEAN region we have at least four next, migrant receiving countries that is Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. When we raise the issue of migrants rights and dignity in the sec and immediately what is juxtaposed to us is the principle of non interference in the affairs of each member country, which is why we we don't get too much. We don't get a response in fact, on what happened to Myanmar, although there is a declaration of ASEAN under when it came to the coup in Myanmar, ASEAN was pretty silent in that.

Pichit Phromkade 1:20:05

And yet what is beneficial to the receiving countries in the ASEAN more liberal policies were adapted. For example, the entry and stay of skilled migrants, such as accountants, engineers, techies, medical professionals, particularly in this period, and media included the diversity of the ASEAN and Timor Leste where migration has played a major role. And in its history, there had been in and out migration of Chinese Indians, Polynesians, melanesians, and Malays that contributed to its multi ethnic, multicultural, multi religious, multi linguistic, gender and class complexion can be Can we move to the next slide, please. Now, this complication of Southeast Asia and Timor Leste could never be this regard. But this character also should be able to bring out the richness of the Southeast Asian experience, including migration. Now, let me tell you a story where the media as we are now addressing you, journalist and media people the critical role that media plays in society, and in particular in migration. The story that I will share with you now is just super mystory. Otherwise, we'll go on and on with the next stories. But superm is an Indonesian foreign domestic worker, which the Indonesians called takeaway, or the Naga Khadija, Juanita she's from Colorado is Java. She worked in

Hong Kong as a as a domestic worker. She took the drudgery of housework and the care of two young children without a single day of rest for more than a year. What broke the camel's back so to see for subpar me, was her not being paid her salary for a year. According to the employer, the money was paying for the cost of her recruitment. So for that period, she was wondering what has happened to her mother and to her children, because they depended on her salary. So when she couldn't take it anymore, she asked her employer to leave employment, go home, or get another job. The employer said no, you can't do that. You can only go back to Indonesia. And now so he said, No, not not not that soon. But she was asked to pack her bags and build the Lord that she will go there as soon as the recruitment agent comes to pick her up. When she refused to do this, she started started shouting, which the Filipino neighborhood and said call the police please. I want to go and complain. Fortunate for her Hong Kong laws are working. So the police came and said you cannot detain her inside the house. Neither can you force her to go where she doesn't want to go. So the police released her and told the employer and the agent they had no right whatsoever to keep supermoney the Filipino brought her to the Asian migrant center which was a an office that assisted domestic workers of different nationalities. There, she was advised to file a case and money claims with the Labor Department. So the next day she went to the Labor Department, but at the Labor Department to control it, staff were waiting for her. And there was a tug of war between the country officials and the migrants who were trying to help support me. A labor officer happily came out and told the punch late guys that they should leave Superman alone. So far, me came home, went back to the Asian migrant center, and started to call her friends and tell them, I'm okay, don't worry about me. The following day, six other Indonesians came to the center to file their own complaints. This time, the consulate was conscious of what was happening was informed of what was happening with the recruitment agencies and employers. So the controllli went to the AMC and try to come to a compromise. According to them, they said it's better to have a compromise You know, this is the Asian way. So, we will return the passports we will allow them to go and process the cases, receive the money claims and go home and exchange. We will ask you not to breathe a word of this situation to the media in Hong Kong, in Hong Kong. Culturally knew the power of the media in Hong Kong. The ticker is AMC could not make a decision. So the takeaway is plead the saying Please agree to that, because we only need the money so we can go home and give the money to our families. AMC had his partner organization in Jakarta and informed them that this is the situation and if the women returned to Jakarta to help them get safely to their homes. So two weeks passed and piece was was their cases were in progress. But suddenly, two takeaways on the way to the legal aid department were taken by two men from the country late brought to the airport and put on a plane to Jakarta. The women so distressed arrived in Jakarta, but did not go home because they were told by their family that when you arrive home, we will all be harassed. So they went straight to the partner organization and told their story. This angered the partner, and they called a press conference

Maria Angela Villalba 1:28:16

So that the families and the migrant workers can be interviewed. No one came. Only the editor of swara pembaruan responded and dispatch an investigative reporters to Hong Kong. To make a long story short, the journalist wrote the first story. And his media contact in Hong Kong collaborated to write a

series of news stories that went front page in Jakarta and Hong Kong at the same time. It was if it was in this day and age it would have been called viral. From then on media in Jakarta became bolder in reporting the abuses not only in Hong Kong, but also in Singapore, Malaysia and the Middle East. My friends, that was the day when the pen was mightier than the sword. It was here racing for us took more than a decade or two to build the strength of migrant workers. Can we go to the next slide please? The issues and problems of migrant workers in Southeast Asia is deep rooted poverty corruption in our case, I would like to emphasize economic mismanagement. In this destination country, it is job security and the lack of social protection. I don't have to elaborate on the social protection it has been discussed adequately by Mahi. The vulnerability of those in elementary jobs where they get arrested because they don't have a passport or they don't have an ID, but the multi layer discrimination and xenophobia is one of the hurtful to say the least of the problems that migrant workers face every single day to be shouted up in Chinese in Bahasa, they don't understand, but they know it's a very bad language used to them. And that is a daily experience for many of the migrant workers. Because of the multi diversity of the ASEAN, there is also the multi layered discrimination, of gender, of class, of nationality of religion, and all those differences in the ASEAN and Timor Leste. Other problems also had to do with the porous borders of the ASEAN region, where many of the migrant workers and their children and up stateless and up traffic because they don't have the proper documents and they are not able to have to go to a process to redress their grievances and have an identity problem. So we had ties, for example, not ties, that is we had Korean women with fake documents traffic to Taiwan, and in Taiwan, the labor attache in Taiwan, the labor attache of Thailand in Taiwan would not recognize them because they were not Thai citizens. So these are the issues and problems that were earlier elaborated. But two decades or so. migrant workers, mostly migrant women, were now building strengths, that there was no way for them to just sit back and wait for the employer to be what they call transforms, or wait for the government to be enlightened. They had to act themselves. So came the rights and roots movements, right is about migrant workers claiming the rights and exercising them. The migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong were able to have labor attaches in Taiwan and in Hong Kong because they lobbied very strongly the Thai consulate and the Thai government Labor Department in Bangkok. The Indonesian migrant women were able to defy the orders of the Indonesian consulate to quietly go home is abused after the subpar me a story the supermec case 1000s literally came to the Asian migrant center to ask whether they would be able to be assisted if they filed complaints. What they did was not just to ask for help, but to organize themselves. Now the Indonesian migrants have a union strongly unionized in the Indonesian migrant women and they have a representation of the Union from the different parts of Southeast Asia, a branch in Singapore and in Malaysia and Malaysia and they have also in Indonesia. Interesting for migrant domestic workers unions who are part of the crafting of the ILO convention 189 sorry, it's not 181 it's 189. It is the standard setting of domestic workers. It has set to one I think 31 countries that have ratified it. And it is the responsibility of the parties state party when it ratifies that convention to formalize the status of domestic workers in their country as part of the formal labor force. So this is a huge step for domestic workers. So in the many host countries, Singapore Malaysia, what started as just hometown associations became unions savings associations Coalition's and alliances even across nationalities. The momentum of rites and routes gave rise to many more campaigns. The roots campaign is about addressing the root cause, which is poverty and joblessness. And so instead of going home, in disarray and in bad shape, planning for going home must become a part of their preparation in the destination, country's savings associations were organized in Singapore, Malaysia,

Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong, migrant families and partner organizations in the destiny in the home countries were also organized to build the grounds for acquiring assets, investing and creating their own jobs. This may be a decade old, but I would like to share the Indonesian migrants in East Java from Mita. And from jumble jumble. Were able to build businesses for themselves and for the community and create jobs for others in the community. So that is the rights and roots movement. At present, the campaigns are what they call the hands. Next slide, please. Our hands campaign, which is beer, education, teaching others their rights and joining into the whole movement. Recently, the just the Justice campaign for wage theft against migrant workers during COVID-19. When COVID-19 started, many employers just told the migrant workers to go home, you know, and the migrant workers were also you know, worried about their situation, and worried about their families. So going home was uppermost in their mind. But what happened was that their wages were not paid their travel costs. Were borne by the sending governments Philippines had to charter planes to bring migrant workers back. Many my many of the employers just said you know you want to go home Go home, just like that. So right now, some of the migrant workers are filing cases, but then file cases to reach office, the National Labor commission in the Philippines is most of the time locked down. Next slide, please. Now what was the impact of the pandemic on migrant workers in the receiving countries in the countries of destination, Particularly the migrant workers were one had no access to health and medical services. In Thailand, for example, they were completely ignored. The priority is for the locals. The listing of people to be vaccinated are the local some migrant workers they don't exist. In Singapore. There was already a big problem in the dormitories because there were so no social distancing was taking place there. They did not have jobs. And so they were just huddled into the dormitories. And what do we expect in a situation like that? So many of the migrant workers had the problems of the COVID-19 and even vaccination To be paid by the migrant workers was not there because the supply of vaccines was limited the loss of jobs and livelihood This is how do we say an over arching problem where a loss of remittance by the household of the household and loss of remittance of the community and loss of remittance of the economy is in my country is more than a tragedy. 10% of our GDP comes from remittances and that's a lot. Now, what can remittance do or what does a remittance do pre COVID it is used to pay for the schools, it is used to pay for the teachers It is used to pay the drivers to bring students back and forth from school and back, it is used to buy food It is used to pay the the sellers in the vendors, the market the wet markets, the supermarket's without, without this what happens without the remittances then what happens and the lack of capacity of government to respond to immediate and medium term needs of returning migrant workers. Next slide, please. As I was telling the administrator of over, I said, how could we sell migrant workers in millions? And then not think of our capacity to provide for their needs to provide for services? If you have what seven to 10 million migrants out there? What is our capacity? How much social amelioration fund do we need? How How many planes are we going to use to bring them back? For the pandemic, even now, some responses were coming from government. Oh Singapore, for example, realizes that it cannot go on without the migrant labor. So it started to is the re entry and rehiring of migrant workers. I think the border between Singapore and Malaysia is starting to ease up because during the pandemic, all the workers from Malaysia who were they workers in Singapore could not enter Singapore there was a lockdown close to Singapore. And those work with Malaysian workers who were in Singapore are unable to go to Malaysia. So they stayed in Singapore without any job. But now Singapore is reopening the hiring of construction workers including domestic workers, it has also introduced reforms in the household services scheme. In the destination in the post

home countries, Philippines for example, is providing cash assistance, free vaccination hotel and meals but only for something like half a million migrants. What is happening to the rest of the migrant workers. Next slide please. Exactly how many migrant workers are coming home? This is something that perhaps us in the media would like to know and tell people how many are coming home because what we only get from the media is how many were vaccinated. How many were not vaccinated how many were unserved? There are those who are stranded. The seafarers are unable to land. Those unable to leave the destination countries because there is no flight. What these are areas that media has not really talked about and coming home with a jobless rate we had something like seven to 10% unemployment added to the existing unemployment rate already. Clearly it is not business as usual. Is there any plan of government or private sector, what is the recruitment agencies planning? Is there a foreign employment industry to look at next slide please. Next slide. Before COVID return and reintegration save and invest as a strategy was already part of the whole campaign. And migrant workers will save and invest in as we studied it, were in a much better situation, especially those who invested in agriculture particularly in the COVID period, when food supply chain had to be to continue to be vibrant supply of food in the store supply of rice supply of these things, they had to be vibrant, otherwise people will go hungry, particularly in the cities. So I just have this tale of two Mrs. Mrs. x, who saved and invested and started to how do you say redeem her land, which she has mortgaged when she went out of the country, and upon redemption, was able to go back and find the land now it is a flourishing piece of asset that supports her family and provides jobs to her neighbors. Mrs. Y invested in a resort in one of the islands where surfing has become an attraction. So she has built a resort the building and purchased all the paraphernalia for surfing and all those things restaurant or when COVID came, there was a lockdown. And so suddenly, no customers were coming. But happily, she was able to have assets that could be diverted to some other use. So she used it as a teacher, a community kitchen, and people were flocking into that area and started to donate food for the others who were really having difficulties with the food supply. Next, this next one next time, please. Next one, yeah. Now here are some issues to interrogate. And as media would like to contribute to rebuilding an equitable, a more equitable and prejudiced and economically robust societies, the biggest challenge of migrant workers is coming home to an economy that is in disarray. And light at the end of the tunnel, or the going away of COVID is not going to be a scenario that we can see in the next few years. It's living with or without COVID. Still will the economy and labor migration as we know it be the same again. The call for this time is job creation. And it should be the work of the whole of society. There are many recommendations being pushed forward by ADB by AI O as to how to normalize the situation under COVID. It's a cooperation of the three sectors that are wealth creating in a society the private business should harness its capital and technology to sustain their jobs. With a lot of care, the social sector where many migrants are, should engage in entrepreneurial activity and create employment particularly in the micro Small and Medium industries where they have that kind of scale and capacity. There is Is this a small group of young people who join the UNDP us challenge for innovation, who are selling the products of big house, you know, the Filipino sea gypsies to Kuala Lumpur. And the income that they get is used to run the schools of the children of this budget also are considered stateless in Malaysia. Those are some of the contributions small stories as it is called, but they are the ones that make the local economy move. The other small wheels of local economy that continue to support this social sector. Now the public sector, although it is already overstretched, because of COVID expenses, must support in terms of financial and policy reforms that can lead to a rebooting of the economy. I say

rebooting because the economy as it is now is unable to cope with pandemics and problems of this magnitude. And this is particularly addressed to receive to countries of origin, like the Philippines, I think we is a lot to do in this area. And we cannot afford to be paralyzed because of COVID. We may be slow in our movements physically, but our minds should be faster in developing innovative and creative ideas to overcome the difficulties that we meet small, slowly but also contribute to a macro economic change. Thank you very much. I hope I have challenged you enough. Thank you Ajinder.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 1:52:10

Thank you very much for that Maria. And I can't agree more. I think observation about how migration has characterized the DNA of the region and in sharp contrast how ASEAN has miserably failed to protect migrant workers who are exploited by their employers. And thank you for that very astute presentation. And now, our next speaker is pichi from cat, who is the communications officer for the joint ILO, UN Women safe and fair program. As part of the US spotlight initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. He is responsible for content research and production in the regional context, and leads public outreach efforts and campaigns to improve knowledge and attitudes on the rights and contributions of migrant workers, especially women migrants in the ASEAN region. Prior to the ILO, he worked in the field of communications over the past 10 years in various international organizations, including the United Nation volunteers program, the British Council, and express and a Swedish National multichannel newspaper. And now, over to you, PJ.

Pichit Phromkade 1:53:31

Thank you so much, Mahi for your kind introduction. And first of all, I would like to thank you for SEAFORE program and the academy as well for having me, it's really great pleasure to be here and speak with you all but you know, personally, I would like to meet everyone in person instead of you know, sitting here using the zoom because I truly believe that nothing can replace, you know, the direct human interaction. Anyway, further ado, I like to start my presentation, but um, I have a question Ajinder? Since you are now managing the presentation. Would you mind changing the slides for me as well?

Ajinder Kaur 1:54:28

Okay, sure. I'll share my screen that right.

Pichit Phromkade 1:54:33

Yeah, it would be great.

Ajinder Kaur 1:54:48

Here you go.

Pichit Phromkade 1:54:51

Thank you. Right So, my session today I will be presenting the key findings of the ILO, UN Women recent study on the public attitudes towards migrant workers in the ASEAN region especially in the countries of destination: Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Japan. The reason why Japan is included is because Japan has becoming one of the main country destination for migrant workers from the ASEAN region and that is why it's included in our study. Before I start, I would like to also note that this study was conducted in 2019 and it was launched in December 2019 just a few months before the COVID-19 hit the ASEAN region. So, um, so, the the the findings of the research may or may not reflect the COVID-19 context, but we will see and we will have the conversation afterwards about this. Next slide please. So, um, what I will be presenting to you folks is that the trends in labor migration in the ASEAN region and then the selected findings from the study and the way forwards Next please. So, just to give you a little bit of the background of this study, it is done jointly by two programs. One is the safe and fair program, which is a joint ILO, young women program and the Triangle ASEAN program, which is another program under the implementation. So, as you can see on the screen, the map, so, the United Nations estimates that between now and 2013 the shape of the population aged older will increase in the ASEAN region. So, migrant workers will be needed more to fill labor shortages in key sectors especially in manufacturing, in domestic and care work, services and agriculture. As per the map you see here, dependency ratios or shares of the non working population in relation to the working population through the region are changing. So, higher dependency ratios suggests that there are gaps in the labor market generally with female workers population. Next please. So, now, let's see um, the trends in labor migration in the ASEAN region. Next, please. Right, thank you. Um, so, the ILO estimates that, in 2017, the number of migrant workers in the ASEAN region is around 11 point 6 million and half of that nearly half of it are women representing 5.2 million. So, as you can see, the figure shows that near equal of the share of women, migrant workers across the region, women, so women are a big part of labor migration in the region. Next, please. Also from the last eight or nine years, the number of women in the outflows of nationals for employment has also increased. Let me give you the example of some countries in our region. So in Indonesia, from 57%, to 80%, and in Lao PDR, from 46% to 52%, in Vietnam from 33% to 40%. And in Cambodia from 32% to 40%, and from Myanmar from 24% to 35% Next please. So, the vast majority of migrant workers in our region, almost 90% in of migrant workers in Brunei and Malaysia, in Singapore and Thailand, they work in the service and industry sectors. And I think everybody knows that more women migrant workers are working in, service sector than any other sectors. So, what does this say here, um, women are still on the move actually, more and migrant workers can be I mean, labor migration can be a tool of empowerment, because through labor migration, migrant workers can learn new skills, they can support themselves,

they can support their families, and they can also become more financial independent. Next, please. And this table, let me give you the example of the main countries of destination in the ASEAN region, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. As you can see that the number of migrant workers in these three countries are a lot actually in Malaysia, almost 2 million migrant workers now currently residing and working, in Singapore 1.3 million, and in Thailand, up to 2.7 million. And they make up a significant part of labor markets in the countries of, of destination. So, in 2019, as you can see, the stock of international migrant workers and ASEAN countries of destination has been increasing a lot. Even though we see some effects of the COVID-19 towards migrant workers, a lot of them are now on the move, they're going to the countries of origin. But that doesn't mean that the need of migrant workers in our region are decreasing. This is this could be just a short, temporary trend. But if you look at the bigger picture, the trend is still is still valid that the ASEAN region, especially in Thailand will soon become an ageing society. And with that, more migrant workers will be needed. And there will a lot of countries would need them to feel the labor shortage. Next, please. Now let's see the public attitudes towards migrant workers. Here are some of the headlines that I would like to highlight. I think my he has already mentioned about this already in her presentation that you can see that migrant workers are still on the headlines, be it negative or positive. We will talk about that. But I just want you to see that, you know, some of them are based on myths of false beliefs. Some of them are based on facts. Let's see why. Next, please. When we did the large scale survey, we asked the public what effect do migrant workers have on the national economy? The answers were quite polarized, as you can see that in Singapore, about 58% say that an overall positive net effect. Meanwhile, in Thailand and in Malaysia, and in Japan, the perception towards migrant workers is that they have kind of more negative impact on the national economy. So, so this is something that that is interesting. And especially in Thailand, a lot of public believe that migrant workers are actually taking their jobs. But that is not true. Because we know that around 3.3 to 6% of the GDP are from migrant workers. So they contribute to the economy of the country. And they feel the labor shortage just like I mentioned before, so it's not that they're taking the jobs of the local people. And migrant workers are making crucial contributions to their countries of origin as well as that's as destination many countries in the region, again, rely on migrant workers for the functioning of their countries. So, migrant workers, including women migrants, make up a significant share of the total workforce and contribute to the wage growth of the region. Next, please. Another finding that I that I find very interesting is when we when we ask the public about about crimes, they say that migrants and crime are related. But is that true? So, there is the relationship between labor migration and crime however, is an issue that is not so well understood by the people in general, there is a very little evidence to back up the claim that migrant workers are more likely to commit crimes than the rest of the population or then local people, unless lack of documentation is considered a crime. So painting migrant workers as criminals, only foster suspicion, discord and lack of social cohesion in the society. So it is very unhealthy for for our community to paint them as criminals. Next case. And here are some quotes that I would like to show you, can you Uh, yes, okay. So, as you can see the quotes. Some believe that migrant workers do commit more crimes and associate area inhabited by migrant workers or foreigners as having more crime. On the contrary, others argued that the connection between migrant workers and crime is just only fictional, and it's not based on facts. Next, please. When asked about a, Ajinder, can we move to the next slide? There we are, yes, thank you. So when we ask about social inclusion and social and cultural threat, the results are quite alarming. This perceptions of migrant workers as social and cultural effects. As you can see, in Malaysia and Thailand,

the perception that migrant workers threaten that country's culture and heritage and heritage is notably high, as you can see a high percentage of them. So it suggests that trust buildings in Malaysia and Thailand should particularly be a target of any interventions. So I would like to give I mean to leave a questions to you like as journalists, what could be your intervention to help us debunk the myth? Next please. So now comes to the support for issues related to us. What's your inclusion? Again? As you see that the public were surveyed on within migrant women should be allowed to marry citizens or bring their children with them when they are migrating, as well as attitudes on offering migrants a path to citizenship. neither of which are allowed for elementary, skilled or elementary migrant workers in Japan, Malaysia or Singapore, however, in Thailand, so the Thai government does not restrict marriages. And those children are not part of the documented in more EU immigration process. In law, they are given access to the Thai education system regardless of their status. Next, please. When it comes to equal treatment with nationals, the public across the four destination countries hold a fundamental view that migrant workers should not be treated differently. And that discrimination, however, is not a problem. Unfortunately, this kind of discrimination can lead to unequal treatment. And women migrant workers can even be more at risk of violence and harassment. Next, please. Interestingly, when asked whether women migrant workers specifically should have equal wages, with women nationals doing the same job, only majority's in Japan, around 60%, and Thailand, again 60% supported this. Next, please. Now let's look at support for maternity leave and pregnant migrant workers. In Malaysia and Singapore. There is this date the government have imposed legal restrictions, subjecting many migrant workers to Pregnancy Discrimination and sanctions during all the phases of their migration, be it recruitment, employment, and terminations. So women are required to perform a pregnancy test before their departure from their country of origin and also to repeat it on an annual basis. And should there should the test be positive, the women will be deported at her own expense. Next, please. Now let's continue to look at the support for women migrant workers who experienced violence. There is evidence to suggest negative attitudes towards women migrant workers and that create barriers to their access to essential services in case of violence against women. Women migrant workers may struggle however, to access services due to perceptions around their respectability or due to, sadly, victim blaming. Pervasive negative attitudes can also further isolate migrant women restricting their movement and preventing them from seeking support due to fear of reprisals. Next, please. So with all of this evidence that we have, so what can we do as we are a journalist, we have the tools and we have the platform, right? So let's see what we can do. Next please. Here are some recommendations. So, as a media professionals, we can promote the facts, the evidence of the of the benefits of migrant workers, right. And we can also help breaking the stereotype and the stigma that is widespread at the moment, especially during the COVID-19. As we know that now, many of migrant workers are going back to their countries of destination. And they have faced a lot of backlash, and they also have to face with discrimination. Many of them were stigmatized, as the disease carriers, you know, they have faced these challenges reintegrating back to their communities. So we can ensure that the the content or the messaging that we report does not promote migrant workers, especially women as victim or inherently vulnerable. Right, because by doing so, instead of making a labor migration as an empowering tool, it on the contrary, you know, we'll paint that picture that this is the consequence, if you migrate, you know, this is the consequence, this is what will happen to you. But we don't want to do that we want to make labor migration as an empowering tool for migrant workers, especially women. And also, in the absence of direct interaction with migrant workers. We know that public attitudes towards them are often shaped

by one sided portrayal or the false information, hate speech, stereotyping, or even xenophobia. And this results in misperceptions of the role they play in our society, which can condone discrimination and even violence against women migrant workers. So, with the tools and the channels we have, we should come together to address harmful stereotypes and shine the spotlight on the issues of violence and harassment towards migrant workers, especially women. Next, please. What else can we do? So we as the media, we can help shape the public attitudes towards migrant workers? Well, the language we use, can we know that it can put forward specific positioning and impressions including at times perpetuating stereotypes. So therefore, it is very, very important to be clear about terms and definitions related to women, migrant workers and violence against women and establishing a common ground from which to have conversations and to work towards the society or even the world in which rights labor rights respected for all. And one in which Mike and workers voice, choice and agency is recognized. Now I like to wrap up my last slide with inclusive terminology. Next slide, please. Can you can you go back to the previous slide, thank you. So these are the would go right. Okay. I'm sorry, my, there's some delay on my side. So okay, now we have this slide up. So um, these are the terms that we really encourage to use because they are right base and they are Many many words that we have seen in the media unfortunately, that does not empower migrant workers and at times stereotype migrant workers and in the back, you know of the readers mind You know, it's shaped some forms of perceptions and attitudes toward migrant workers. So, instead of saying sending countries or home countries, we are encouraged to use the term country of origin, why because the word sending country carries the connotation that that the state would take an active part in making workers leave the country to find employment and residents abroad. Similarly, the word country of destination or destination country is encouraged to use because the term the term if you say, the receiving countries or the host country, this term implies that migrants are guests and because and since they are guests, they are not part of our community. Another term that I would like to put an emphasis on is irregular status, migrant workers or undocumented migrant workers. These words should be used instead of illegal migrant. Why? Because the word illegal migrant is seen as stigmatizing and associated with criminality. And a person can never be illegal just because being a person, being a human being, being a person is not illegal. Their action can be illegal, but being a person being a human being is not illegal. And that is why we encourage to use the word undocumented migrants that. So that's it from me, Ajinder if you can put the last slide up so that our colleagues here can have further resource. And this is my email address. If you have further further questions, you can also reach out to me as well. Thank you.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 2:22:50

Thank you very much, Pichit. That was an insightful presentation. But I must say the fact that migrant workers will be needed more. In various sectors such as services, agriculture, manufacturing, due to the gaps in the labor market raises even more concerns, given the fact that you know, as young governments don't seem to have proper policy mechanisms to support and to put in safety mechanisms, and that makes it even more imminent. For us to be able to together with our media friends, lobby for a more inclusive and comprehensive social protection policy, and especially those tailored to protect women workers. So thank you very much. And now it's time for me to introduce our

last speaker Didik Eko Pujianto is the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore. Didik has a background in Law from Brawijaya University, Malang and International Relations from McGill University, Canada. Throughout his career Didik has taken many foreign diplomatic assignments in Switzerland, South Korea and Singapore as well as the Indonesian Consulate General in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. He's also a regular contributor to the Jakarta Post over to you today. Thank you.

Didik Eko Pujianto 2:24:10

And Good evening, everybody. This interesting to be here with all of our very good and very resourceful persons this evening. First of all, I would like to Oh, let me start my presentation. Yes. First of all, about the data, it is interesting.

Ajinder Kaur 2:24:59

Sorry, sorry, Mr.Didik, if I can just interrupt you need to click on present

Didik Eko Pujianto 2:25:03

present, wait wait

Ajinder Kaur 2:25:04

you see it right on the top right hand corner, you see?

Didik Eko Pujianto 2:25:07

Oh, yes, yes, yes. Okay Yes, first of all is this interesting that everybody tried to present about the data and it seems to ask the data and there are many differences on the data. like the first speakers, Maria explaining, that the foreign worker in ASEAN, approximately about 12 millions and then also she also saying that this 11.8 million and my presentation it should be 12 million, not 2 million actually. This is reflecting that the data itself, it is still debatable, because every single country, every single institutions, not try to refill the exact data about the migrant workers, so, we can understand why and then who responsible about the data, why they are cannot reveal the exact data and so on and so forth. Because as already stated by the previous speakers, that many many peoples including institutions, companies, and even government agencies, not to review the exact data about working foreign workers, this is the interesting point that may be being a journalist our collect who are joining this program, can try to

collect, collect some more information and dig more into this kind of facts. And then second thing that I would like to say there, which is actually similar to our previous speakers, is the fact that the in the ASEAN countries, the economic development, economic growth is very different. So the countries like mine, so, yes, the table is clearly stated. Among the 10 ASEAN countries, at least seven member countries, it can be called us country of origins, while three of them like Singapore, and then Brunei and Malaysia, actually the country of destination, but for Malaysia at the same time, we can put country of origin and also country of destination. And through this table, we can see the role of foreign workers towards the economy of the country of origins to remittance, we can see actually in many data and many resorts, we can double checks whether in the World Bank or maybe in national economic institutions. So our colleague from any of the media in the local media can try to double check the remittance of age of the foreign workers in its own country. And now, we are touching on the medium and long term factors that will help save labor migration in Asean. Of course, everybody already explaining about the impact of the pandemic during the COVID-19 almost every country on facings similar problem, and now the economy recovery, become the tech line of every single country. So that's why because of the economic growth, economic development slowing down, then of course, the unemployment rate in every single country also going down. So this is one of the challenges by most of the country that of course, the country of origin of the foreign workers. So, this is one of the most important and another factor is the use of technology. We are aware that most of the country tried to use the technology rather than labor intensive companies. By using technology in many countries like Indonesia, in Vietnam, Cambodia and so on and so forth. So, improve the number of unemployment. So, those who have less skill then they have to find out another jobs outside of their own country. And, of course, the sluggishness of the economic growth and developments because of many situations, especially to the pandemic and push every peoples who are rescued and unemployed to go everywhere This is the interesting time. And the last factor is the political instability of insecurity in the country of origins. Maria and also said already explaining the situation in Myanmar right now, most everybody in this country tried to find out a better job outside of their own country and foreign workers actually in some country, it can be called, a Development Engine just take an example in Malaysia, especially in the palm oil sector in Malaysia, from the data, you can see that many percentage of agriculture sector become source of the GDP of Malaysia especially for the palm oil also supporting and providing many percentage of the of the GDP and maybe Maria later on, can you share with us that in Sabah and Malaysia, the people who are working in one on sector almost all of them are from Indonesia and from Philippines and it's almost unreplaceable by any nationals. So, it can become part of the development engine, but as already discussed before, the treatment to way the receiving country treat and look and look after of the foreign workers in the sector. There are a lot of questions on that. So, there are a lot of questions at one end. Of course, Maria already explaining men example of other cases, on the bank owned sector, there are 1000s or maybe 10s of 1000 cases actually don't their point for the session contract, if we are talking about the contract of the foreign workers, especially in the palm oil or maybe in the manufacturers only stated on the two years, while by nature palm oil plantations it takes under 20 or 30 years. So, this is not can be considered just based on the contract which is only three years while Palm Oil should be taken care under 30. So this is the problem and also the challenges faced by the companies who are working in this sector. And at the same time, the regulations on employing foreign workers. Of course not and they're specifically stated under 25 or 30 years. So this is one and the people who are working in specific sector, in certain country, it's also can

be called irreplaceable as mentioned before, for example, domestic workers caregiver manufacturing and construction, even food search for cleaners healthcare, public transport, it's not easy to find all the replacement from local people or even from other countries. And of course, the way the local government the way the receiving country or destination country, in treating them, it should be much more better compared to the previous that is rising many cases. And of course, many critics. And of course, we also see some problems, some challenges in this point. Specifically in this sector, there are points for further discussions, because already mentioned before, the high costs of employing foreign workers. And of course, it will become a problem and answer to the support salary cuts. And it's also happen not only workers from ASEAN countries, but also from other nationals. And then unclear cost structure, minimum wage versus free markets. And then we're clear the dispute that up with criminal accusations, there are a lot of problems in this specific sector. And we are all quite aware all of these problems arise because of the excessive role of the requirement of placement agencies, private sector, and in many countries, including in the destination on origin country, actually, the company's got the agency companies. So the way they treat foreign workers, not, quote unquote, human, they're just company. If you take on company, this like, like goods. This is actually the interesting point of view, all of the journalists can dip further, I can explore further to try to find out the root of the problem and also write good and maybe propose to the government or the citizen who are responsible for that a better policy. And then the applicability the applicability of job versus unplanned unemployment, this is actually related to the economic downturns because of the economic growth and economic development faced by the pandemic. So everybody, every country facing similar situations, both the economic recovery and of course, the unemployment. And, of course, there are many choices, whether it is in the origin, country or destination country, in juicing the sector, that is much more labor intensive, or maybe capital intensive. Maybe the one of the alternative is so small and medium enterprises that can be to some to accommodate more unemployment. And then coordination between nationalities lesson policy by an inter government collaboration platform that's already mentioned by Mahi, that the regional arrangements within the ASEAN, eventhough Mahi underlined that ASEAN has become like the toothless tiger, because in this case, specifically about the migrant workers, the instruments just instruments, there is no legally binding scheme that can be applied by every country in this specific sector. But at least in certain auditing country, this special agency, the design and establish for the purpose of taking care of these issues. For instance, in Philippines, they have special institutions and in Indonesia. Also special instsitution and of course, it should be bilateral cooperations between country of origin and the destination country. As I mentioned before the example for the Indonesia, we have special agency for the protection of Indonesian migrant workers, why Philippines Philippine offices employment administration's Of course, in the country like Cambodia, Myanmar also has its own specific agency. How far the agencies can really taking care of those making, who are in this category can be protected by this agency. So our colleague from every single country can make try to have a kind of further studies and then can review the outcome. Of course, the preparations of the migrant worker before they going abroad, that's the most important part Otherwise, they will face many problem since the beginning on. And we can discuss further later on about the unprepared workers less feel healthy, and also the responsibility of the private company that arrange the placement is the responsibility of the private sector. And many countries call it companies or agencies on this matter, and we have a lot of problems, because the responsibility of the private company is very minimum, and at the end, they just rely on the government and of course, with many limitation and also the specific

arrangement, which is not in place, the role of the representative foreign represent that in every each country is also very limited. Now, I would like to touch on the issue, or maybe the terminology, that is not really correct, but it's always around quite sometimes. It's just like illegal, undocumented, and unprocedural. Maybe some people mix up between those three wording, but let me share because not every scheme from one country to another can be applied 100% similar to others. For instance, the terminology of unprocedural, it's actually applied for Indonesians to Malaysia and from Indonesian to Singapore. Why? Because those two countries accepting free visa scheme tourist visa and train those country and at the end can be switched to become working permit. So that's why it is not easy for everybody to refill the real data of the foreign workers they did sign accounting or origin country or destination country because the procedure is different. It's also happen for foreigners in the Middle East because some of the Middle East countries also Oh in the people who are coming to Middle East countries using tourist visa or visit visa and at the end can be switched to working. Now, I would like to move on the socio and political impact of this foreign workers. In many countries, the foreign workers can rise and become socio this costs in Malaysia, for example. Well, as already mentioned by Mahi a lot of discussions because of the status of the foreign workers, whether documented or undocumented, legal or illegal, and then every single society, every single group, you can worsenings about the role of the migrant workers. On the one hand, they are needed by companies, whether it is in the plantation sector or agriculture, manufacture, and even domestic sector. But on the other hand, there are also many problems arise because of the mismanagement, the way they handle the foreign workers, not properly. They become illegal, they're not illegal, but they are become illegal when they come into the country, they are provided with proper document, proper passport, proper contracts for at least two years. But after arriving centrally because of several problem, several reasons, maybe treat does not correctly and then he or she ran away, he or she tried to move from one company to another company and not properly arrays then become illegal. So, this kind of scheme become issues in the political and also social- for the receiving country. And the questions because of this many, many problems actually on the ground, how the country of regions and the destination country can cooperate it's and this is actually not easy for everybody in the ASEAN as mentioned before, the regional arrangements not clearly and also can be applied directly because there is no enforcement mechanism. While bilateral agreement It is also not easy, because not every single arrangements between a country a and country b has its own agreement or specific criminal like memorandum of understanding and if there is, but the applications and the law enforcement of the MOU not as expected. So, at least not the forum like communications or bilateral cooperation in specific sector, especially migrant workers can be established and become a forum for bilateral communication between the country of origin and the destination country. Even though it is not easy, but we also see discussions much better compared to these no discussions at all, because we have some experience on that matters the private company try to stay away from the problem and then the employer just throwing away of the problem and at the end, whether it is government representative or NGO coming into and giving help many many problems. And now, I would like to come to the summary of my presentations. The best way to overcome and try to find out the unemployment problem is the creating jobs, which is of course not easy during and after the pandemic. It needs time of course, but every single country also trying to in this scheme and it's on the path. And of course economic development with trial and error will become solutions. But still the economic disparity one the countries were resul in the unemployment and also the post factor for the people who would like to find out jobs outside their own country. And the most important thing in solving

the problem and seeing the pattern is the way the country of origin and the country of the destination try to fix better ways, discuss and make arrangements try to offer come what happens at least trying to profile correct and proper data. Because Up to now, we have many problems about data itself. Some institutions say that the data of migrant workers in certain country is less than 100 1000s not the institution's 150 1000s It seems to us it's not that difficult actually, because every single person who are living and working in certain countries it should be recorded by the immigrations but the problems not every single immigration in every single country refilling this can update setting those data this also become one of the very challenging situations and of course, with the help of NGO, and of course, with the role of the journalists any problems and delicate problems on the foreign workers situations, which is very prone to the any kind of situation can be explored further and it can be tried to make it public and then the governments the private sector, society, and also the foreign workers itself relies on what is going on where he or she would like to call and try to seek help and also for the government especially, then try to discuss further about the possibility to trying to find out the best solutions. And last, I would like to say about the Indonesian experience. Maybe Mahi and also our colleague in Kuala Lumpur have access about the data center in Indonesian embassy in Kuala Lumpur. There are hundreds every single day hundreds of Indonesians foreign workers. And this people meaning hundreds problems and already explaining by Mahi during the conflict there are 1000s 10s of 1000 Indonesian foreign workers in Benin soba in Sabah, in Sarawak, left behind by any programs. Our representative in Kuala Lumpur our Consulates in the in Penang, in Kuching in Sabah they are struggling to send staple food, to distribute staple food in every corners of the country. It is very challenging and it's quite touchy situation. In Singapore also, we have small shelter. It taking care almost every day. The minimum is 50. The highest is 200. And of course there are some NGOs in Singapore, in Malaysia also having the problem solving the problem of the migrant workers because if everything's every problem should be addressed by the government or the its representative. We have limited capacity and of course with the corporations Between the government's NGO, society, including the journalists, we can reveal further about the problems and try to work hand in hand to find out the best solutions, at least trying to make everybody knows about the real problems of their foreign workers.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 2:55:25

Thank you very much. Thank you. I want to say, when you talk about the age distribution, just to give you a short story, Huey, Charles Santiago and when there are migrant workers in Klang, in his constituency will ask us for food, we normally approach his office and he distributes on our behalf. So a few weeks back, there was a request from 16 Indonesian migrant workers who said that they hadn't eaten in a week. So we approached him and he immediately sent aid through one of his a woman counselors. And what happened was the Indonesian migrant workers upon receiving the groceries, knelt down and, and said, Thank you and the woman broke down in tears. And when that story was recounted to me, I had tears in my eyes as well, because it's it's such a difficult situation on the ground, actually. And thank you also for correctly pointing out that many migrant workers who work in the manufacturing construction sectors, as domestic workers and caregivers, caregivers are irreplaceable

but continue to be discriminated upon by the governments. So now, we move on to the forum. And Ajinder and Adib, I think what I will do is I will also pick up some of the questions from the chat from those who will be listening in so that that can be incorporated. So Didik, starting with you, you spoke about you know, this. And, you know, I know that there's been lots of discussion, I stand corrected, but I do know that there has been lots of discussions between the Indonesia, Indonesia and Malaysia. But why is it that nothing concrete has been done to do away with labor or employment agent or the third party and how much of a role does corruption play in ensuring that these unscrupulous labor agents get away from the grips of power?

Didik Eko Pujiyanto 2:57:34

Thank you for the very interesting questions. This is actually quite a challenge challenging, because the discussions bilateral communication between the two countries happens many, many times. But the communications in the national level, which is from the headquarter in Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur, while the problem on the grounds actually completely difference between the people who are working in the peninsula and the people who are working in Sabah and Sarawak. And the people who are working in the plantation, one of your plantations is also completely different compared to the people who are working in the manufacturing or construction sector. And many discussions cannot come to conclusions, problems still there. And it seems to me It should be addressed. Specifically, if we would like to discuss about the people who are living in the plantation sector. It's a should be focused on that one. Because as I mentioned before, the plantation sector, it can be 25 until 30 years, where the contract only two years. So by nature, the plantation companies setting up basecamp for the people who are working in those companies. And of course, by setting up the basecamp not only 10s but hundreds and even 1000s 1000 people's living together, it is impossible, meant it to be a woman. And of course, there are a lot of children, many, many children in Sabah 10s of 1000 children in Sabah. They are undocumented, even when they are married, they not register. So when they have children, they also not registered. But recently, finally the government of Indonesia and Malaysia come to a conclusions. They can provide all the children with the passport can provide those who are married with the marriage certificate. So they can have a legal ground for the marriage itself, and also their children. And up to now, the contracts for the people who are working in the plantation sector still two years, how come they can two years and then extended another two years and then maximum only can be extended two times. After then they come back to Indonesia and then return to Sabah with the new contract. Whenever they're written with the new contract, it can be considered completely new. Whenever they completely new, then the deductions of the salary can be extended again. This is not easy situation for the people who are working in the plantation setup. Well, in the domestic sector, it is also completely different this who are working in Sabah, and Sarawak and those who are working in Peninsula, who are those who are working in Sabah and Sarawak, mostly from the eastern part of Indonesia, where those who are working in Peninsula, they are working from Sumatra or Java, the nature is difference, the arrangement is different. And the players, private players is also different. And the interesting point, they might hear what so called corruption to be fraying. They are some people or institutions, which is this who are arranging the scheme not properly or incorrect. Actually, that's my

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:02:01

okay. And like I said, Just now I have had the privilege of actually going to the shelter, I run within the compound of the Indonesian embassy and I do see Yeah, like he says, cause of people, primarily women from the domestic, you know, what were domestic workers who have been through severe trauma and exploitation by Malaysian employers, but Maria, Just now you said that, you know, you know, even though migration, you know, characterizes the DNA of Southeast Asia. And I cannot, I mean, agree more. But, you know, ASEAN chooses to say, stay silent on issues relating to migration, and also in, especially in recognition of its own sovereignty, especially on immigration policies. And of course, you know, it throws in the principle of non interference as and when it pleases. So with this, with the emphasis on sovereignty of nations with the emphasis on immigration law, with the emphasis on the non interference policy, which is archaic, how relevant is ASEAN today, especially when we are battling the covid 19 pandemic, which has adversely affected and continues to affect vulnerable population, not just the migrant workers, but also refugees and others.

Maria Angela Villalba 3:03:20

I think regional alliances have a role to play in, in smoothing the relationships and addressing the problems that would otherwise be confrontational. If there was no such a glow a Regional Forum for that. It is still a platform for dialogue, as Stevie was saying, it's better to dialogue and maybe find a solution or not find a solution, then keeping away from each other. I think that is a role that ASEAN is playing. It has put premium on certain certain issues and certain areas of relations for example, trade and investment is something that they are very interested in. Because all of the ASEAN countries want to have investments from outside to come in from the EU from the US from Australia, things like those now, if they come like all running, competing and you know, race to the bottom, kind of thing without a decent agreement among themselves. I think that would not be a good image for ASEAN for countries in the ASEAN. Okay. Labor migration will have to, is taking a backseat. It is a how would we say it is As a symbol of steel, the status of migrant workers that is there on the low skilled and the low skilled, so repeated its elementary jobs and the the discrimination that is taking place it is there. Even among those who are well intentioned advocates it is there that, you know, like they say, if you have a white person scratched the surface, and you will find that there is racism, which, you know, is difficult to believe. But there are very few exceptions. But that's a kind of thing that comes

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:05:50

Pichit, how would you agree with Maria, who says that, you know, it's okay for us to still continue engaging with ASEAN, however irrelevant It can be? You know, especially because you said that no, there has been based on the on the study that you talked about, that is going to be a need for more and

more migrant workers. So do you think we need an alternative that can actually deal with these issues of exploitation, labor exploitation, and whatever else, given the fact that there's going to be an increase in migrant workers, given the fact that the pandemic is here to stay, and also, given the fact that ASEAN will continue to be a toothless tiger?

Pichit Phromkade 3:06:32

Thank you Mahi, first of all, I like to say that we need to accept the fact that migrant workers play a big part in our society, you know, they contribute to our economy and to our society. In the ASEAN region. There are lots and lots of numbers and figures that prove that migrant workers feel the labor shortage in in not only I mean, I'm talking about men and women. So once we accept that, that we we need more migrant workers. Right, and, and that the public attitudes that we have towards them as well. For example, we have I mean, we have seen from our research that a lot of people think that the work that women migrant workers do is less of value than the national workers do. Or it less values than the work of men do. But we know that that is not true. That is not true. So I think with the better attitudes, you know, it can result in better policies for migrant workers. So, so So yeah, I think the the fundamental thing is that there is a need of the ASEAN community to build the environment where migrant workers can live and can work with no fear with no discrimination. And and and with that as a starting point, I guess. And I believe that there will be more inclusive policies or even gender responsive policies for migrant workers.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:08:33

Thank you, Pichit. Didik, there's the question from Rosa Garcia, Timor, from Timor post. So her question is, what is the advantage or disadvantage for the migrant workers who enter countries with tourist visa and then legalize it? Because this is done in East Timor. So do you think this is a viable option?

Didik Eko Pujianto 3:08:57

Yes, actually, for the worker itself, who has some good information to work abroad without the help of anybody, they can use and utilize free visa coming to the certain countries that provide the facilities and then having discussion with the local employers and then the employer agreed to arrange an employing him or her and then the employer trying to manage everything in the local institution and then switch his or her free visa to become a working permit. But the problems especially in Singapore, in Malaysia, and also in the Middle East, They're not provided with the proper document by contract, they have no knowledge at all about the rights and the obligations. Some yes, because they're quite literate enough in reading through the contract. So at any time they facing problem, they can try to solve the problem with the employer itself. But in many cases, because they know nothing about the contract, some

actually provided with the contract just signed in the last page, but the first second or the third page, then no nothing at all, at any time, the facing problem, even there is no contract. So this is actually one of the pros and cons. But the people who can try to switch the free visa to working from it. And of course, we understand the professional person, actually that free to choose to go everywhere in the world. They can arrange their own traveling, they can arrange their own working, even many people are actually using this kind of skills, but for the people who are working in the very low skill sectors has become problems.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:11:35

Thank you. Maria, there is a question for you from Indonesia. Do you have data about how many migrant workers saved and invested before pandemic?

Maria Angela Villalba 3:11:47

Oh, oh, that is data that is difficult. What we can have straightforward I'll share with you. Individuals and groups in Indonesia, for example, saved invested and prosperous migrant workers in East Java, migrant workers in what is in North Sumatra, migrant workers in Bogor, they have established some kind of business, they've established livestock farms, they have put up restaurants and they have put up there is a very interesting, what you call these hot springs are in Kota Batu by a migrant worker, we have those examples. And the Indonesian government has been promoting this kind of reintegration for migrant workers. And I think it would be a good idea if the EU can encourage some groups in Indonesia to track this reintegration initiatives so that they become models for others. Okay, yeah,

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:13:08

I do understand that, you know, sometimes statistics are hard to come by, and you need to do research. And that takes a lot of funding and effort and time. So but I think you also answered another question, you know, by giving examples of some of the initiatives for returnees returning migrants to as to how they helped to reintegrate into society. So Pichit there is a question from Adib, you talked about the concept of inclusive terminology. How does this apply to visual media?

Pichit Phromkade 3:13:41

Thank you. Um, so visual media, you're Are you talking about the graphics?Or?

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:13:50

Adib? Could you please explain

Muhammad Adib Faiz 3:13:55

why well, the Eugenia would respond to chat. Yeah, visual media in the sense of the use of images, photographs, and also audio visual media as well.

Pichit Phromkade 3:14:08

Thank you for the clarification, of course, um, the basic principle is to do no harm. So, it is encouraged that when we present migrant workers, especially women, we do not want to re re victimized migrant workers. We don't want to, to project them or to show them as, as the victim of discrimination of violence, we would like them to be shown as you know, because they, we want the labor migration to be a tool of empowerment. So many times we have seen images or even illustration of migrant workers as someone who whose life is so miserable and Is that the message that we want to send across to our audience? I don't think so. Because we don't want to, to paint them, you know, as a group of people or, you know, a group of population whose life is so miserable, right? Because labor migration is a is a tool for them to learn new skills to advance in their financial independence, to to, and also to support their family. So that that that would be my answer. I hope that answer your question?

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:15:42

Adib, does that answer your question?

Muhammad Adib Faiz 3:15:45

Yes it does, Thank you.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:15:47

Okay, um, I do totally get you Pichit because sometimes, it's also good for us to kind of talk about the kind of contributions that they have done migrant workers and their contributions as a way of doing it into a film or making into a photography exhibition, or something like that, because you know, you're

telling them the other side of the story as well. And that also can go a long way in wiping out some of the hostilities that seem to be quite prevalent within ASEAN itself. So here's another question. So it's either for Pichit or any other panelists, if we agree that migrant workers play a big part of ASEAN, then how to realize the policies and gender issues around it, to allow them to work in ASEAN safely and legally. Well, we already have that, I think, the 2013 ASEAN Declaration on the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers, but it has not been implemented. So I think it's not whether we need more policies, I just think that we do have existing initiatives and declarations and policies, but whether or not these are implemented on the ground, that is the question the political will for governments in ASEAN to implement what they have in caper? You know, that is a question. So that is why it has been taking it continues to take lots and lots of lobbying efforts from CSOs and NGOs and human rights activists, and also some parliamentarians, ASEAN parliamentarians for human rights, for example, to keep pushing for more progressive policy or existing policies to actually be workable on the ground. But Didik, Pichit? You know, Maria, what do you have to say about this?

Maria Angela Villalba 3:17:22

I think there are enough policies, for, for women, for the protection of women for the upholding of women's rights, whether they're migrants or not, for as long as sexism, for as long as male sexism exists, there will be the exploitation of women, especially in elementary jobs, whether they are from a foreign country or their locals. So there is really the truth of sexism and male chauvinism culture and so on, that denigrates the position opponents of it becomes the main becomes the main interest of private sector that promotes the export of labor, which is the worst kind of labor for labor migration.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:18:30

Maria taking, taking up from what you said, since women seem to be at the, you know, bearing the brunt of, you know, migration and also some of the discriminatory or discriminatory policies by ASEAN. And now, given the COVID situation, do you think that civil society organization should work closely with media to encourage them to look at reporting from a gender lens as well?

Maria Angela Villalba 3:18:55

In fact, it should, in fact, it should, and lobby the government, really, because many of our you know, sexism and male chauvinism is actually a power play. It's, it's a kind of, you know, show of power over someone. And here, the gender plays a role where men think they are, you know, they have power over the weaker sex the women. And so, that has to be, you know, brought out and media will have a big role to play in taking out the myths of power in this period, particularly domestic workers, for example, who earn more than their husbands left behind them that violence within domestic violence becomes a

possible issue also. So there are those many things that come with this male chauvinist, and sexist culture.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:20:01

Right? So I'm really glad that we have our media friends here, who, with whom we can continue to engage with to push this, you know, this narrative through. Pichit, there is another question for you. Could you give examples about contributions by migrant workers to the economy?

Pichit Phromkade 3:20:22

Yes, thank you for the question. Um, the United Nations estimated that around 63.9 billion US dollars were received in remittances in Southeast Asia, in 2016. It is estimated that also that women's remittances can make up half of this.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:20:48

Okay, thank you. So we have got, I think, a few more minutes left. One last question. That's also from Adib

Pichit Phromkade 3:20:55

Mahi, if I may, I would like to also complement Maria's remark to the previous question. That I mean, from from from, from communications perspective, I think, to conduct or to design a campaign, you know, to raise awareness by providing accurate and positive information about migrant workers and their contributions to, to the countries of destination is also very important. If we wanted to drive or to make the policies or reality, you know, we can promote the campaign that address the root cause of negative attitudes toward migrant workers or tackle stigma and raise the status of the roles they play in, in many different sectors. So an S media professionals, I think we can also take care to ensure that messaging does not promote migrant workers, especially women migrant workers as victim, but inherently vulnerable. We we want to, um, to communicate with the audience that again, I would like to repeat that, that labor migration is a tool of empowerment, not only for men, but for women as well. So over, thank you

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:22:23

one question, because I have been also trying to work very hard, you know, campaigning and putting the right messages out there, not just where migrant workers are concerned, but also refugees. And one stumbling block is the fact that there is no political will by the government, the government does not partners, because, you know, it can do a way bigger campaign than we can. And those messages from the coming from the government, it will stack send a strong message. So how effective can these campaigns be without the participation from the government without the green light or, you know,

Pichit Phromkade 3:22:55

so, let me give an example of one campaign that we are doing in the seven step program between ILO and UN Women, we are working a lot with our CSOs and, and our local partners and stakeholders, who are not government to run the campaign. In Malaysia, we are working with our project liberate, to raise the awareness of violence against migrant workers, including women and also to promote the better understanding of their situations and their contributions to the society in Malaysia. So seeing the youth as the entry point, you know, because we know that, especially the university students in one day, they will become employers who employ migrant workers or one day they will become a policymaker, or even maybe now their parents are in their house, they have domestic workers working and supporting them. So So if not, with or supported by the government. I think working with the CSO and local partners is also another way.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:24:14

Okay, thank you. I'm sorry. I know. That's an interesting question. And you can talk for another hour or so. But you know, I think it's just nice. So we have to wrap up. Thank you very much. pichard. Did again, Maria for the right.

Didik Eko Pujianto 3:24:33

My head? Yes. Yes. May I have a just a few words before your closing?

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:24:39

Like one minute?

Didik Eko Pujianto 3:24:41

Okay. Okay. Yes. Mahi is interesting. The last question you raised to Pichit about the how if our effort not supported by the governments, we experienced actually recently the role of the social media. In the role of social media, of course, it is also backed by the journalists, because through the social media, the empowerment of the foreign worker itself will become much, much more better. And then the NGO role, CSR role become also the most important thing. And one example that I would like to set in this forum, whenever a certain problems can be put under the carpet, because it's many, many interests, whether it is in the government officer, or government institution, whenever it is revealed by the social media, and the journalists with the specific report, even the report can be read by the Presidents through Facebook through whatsapp to tik tok, even the tik tok become a specific power to let everybody knows about the problem. And of course, find out the best ones. And thank you.

Mahi Ramakrishnan 3:26:03

Thank you very much. Thank you so much for that. But you know, just like what he said in a social media is also a double edged sword. And sometimes you have trolls, you know, really pushing us to say no opposite. But thank you very much do they can pitch it and Maria, and also to Ajinder, Adib and Danny for this incredible opportunity for us to be able to present our views. Thank you. And now it's Danny, your platform. Thank you. Yeah.

Danny Yong 3:26:30

Thank you so much, everybody, I hope everybody has got a good chance to understand the situation a little bit better. We only have two more things to do small ones. Hope you guys can assist. We have a small little poll. As usual, when it comes to finance, they want to see that hey, you know, you guys have attended and you guys have appreciated and etc. So please fill in the poll for us in the poll, also, I asked that the journalist if you agree that we start a whatsapp group for the journalist here, yep. so that you guys can reach out to each other, and in now on a future so that you can collaborate and network further. Yeah. So you leave your your your your contact details in there. In the poll number two, we do take a picture with everybody's cameras on right. So please take three minutes to fill up the poll. I think it should be in the chat. Yes, there it is. Yeah, maybe as you feel the poll usage on your camera, so we'd have to take more time. Small your time. I mean, Rosa, Rachel?

Student 3:27:57

I had a question.

Danny Yong 3:27:59

Yes?

3:28:00

Im just a students so is it okay. I think they should disable my camera. I don't know what happened.

Danny Yong 3:28:12

I put your picture on.

Rosa Garcia 3:28:15

I will I will. I helped with my video. Hey, what happened? I think so. I don't know what I do with my camera.

Danny Yong 3:28:29

Rosa is the editor in chief in the demo post. Very nice lady.

Rosa Garcia 3:28:37

think this one is this is like I don't know what to do. Turn it around and basically alright. That's why I have to turn around but I don't know what happened. Sorry, because we have a problem in my country. No power just power on and then noise noisy. Alright, my God. I don't Oh, yeah. Yeah, already already. Okay, got it. Yes, sir.

Danny Yong 3:29:09

Alright, so yeah, Ajinder, go for it. So I guess. Yeah, please complete the poll. like to thank Mahi again, Maria, Pichit and Didik for a great session. Right. So journalists, if you have more questions for them. I wonder if they are okay to take your questions. If yes, I get them to send the questions to me. And I will direct them to you. Yes. Yes. So if any of you want to write a story about today about the subject matter

today, and going forward, if your story project has got that and you need them to be your source, just send me the question. And I'm passing along to them.

Rosa Garcia 3:30:02

Okay. We can call today in our news. We can call today, today's date. And for our news, because I'm very interested about the last panelish from Indonesia. This is the this is what this has done in our county. So I want to code that are on the state news. I mean from the news for Monday

Danny Yong 3:30:30

is it okay, Didik, she wants to quote you?

3:30:35

For the visa. He said a number of reason will be free. These are not the tourism numbers on there. So I want to I like to quote about the important

Didik Eko Pujiyanto 3:30:49

Yes, no problem, as long as you can explain the date and prodigious and also the advantages, as I mentioned before.

Rosa Garcia 3:30:58

Yes. Thank you,

Didik Eko Pujiyanto 3:31:03

Welcome,

Danny Yong 3:31:04

Right, so I like that already. Okay, so if everybody's completed the poll, I did I took a picture really narrow him just put on his camera. Yes, I have. Everyone. Next round, remember next Saturday, same time. Okay. going on. Of course, we will send you a reminder before that. There's nothing else. Thank you, everybody for turning up. Throughout. This next week, you have a break. I shall bring him in the middle. And okay, so thank you, everybody. Have a good weekend. See you again next Saturday. Yeah. Okay. Thank you. Bye. Bye, weekend. Thank you, everyone. Thank you.