

# HomeBased Workers in Southeast Asia

Global Conference on Homebased  
Workers

8 -11 February 2015

Hotel Radisson Blu, Dwarka,  
New Delhi, India

# Situation of HBWs in SEA

- Are the majority in Workforce
  - *Philippines : 22.5 million or 75% of the total workforce*
  - *Thailand : 26 millions or 65% of the total employed persons*
- Are considered as workers, but still be the 2<sup>nd</sup> class workers

# Situation of HBWs in SEA

- Lack of equal access to labour protection law and policy
- lack of access to social protection
- Lack of rights to organized & bargain
- Lack of necessary support from gvt. : skill training, product development, marketing, revolving fund
- Poor in economic work condition and living conditions

HNSEA : Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos,  
Philippines and Thailand

HNSEA mechanism :

- Regional Constitution
- Regional committee
- Sub-regional workshops, every year :
  - 2010 on Disaster management
  - 2012 on Fair Trade
  - 2011, 2014 on OSH
  - on Food security
- Regional Assembly, every 4 years

# Homenet Cambodia

## Achievements:

- Organize 666 self employed, include HIV positive and people with disability
- Economic Empowerment
- Visibility of HBWs and IFWs
- OSH program
- Work with government and local authority





# Homenet Indonesia

## Achievements:

- Organized 4,000 women homeworkers
- Establishing HomeNet Indonesia as a network organization of homeworkers at the national level
- Creating a model social protection for women homeworkers
- Capacity Building on economic alternative for homeworkers through women HBWs' school program, Vocational and skill training





Woman  
Homeworkers'  
School  
Program



# HBW Business Center's Program



# Homenet Laos

- Achievements:
- Organized 100 women HBWs
- Women saving group as a tool to organized and develop HBWs business
- Develop leadership of women HBWs

# Homenet Philippines

## Achievements:

- Organize 19,598 HBWs, 98% are women
- Obtain accreditation and avail of government programs.
- Participate in electoral politics and governance
- Drafting Quezon City Informal Sector ordinance







# Founding Congress HOMENET PHILIPPINES 2011



# Homenet Thailand

## Achievements:

- Organize 6,000 IFWs : HBWs, street vendors, domestic workers, sub contract farmers.
- Organization of IFWs, Network of IFWs registered as Assosiation in June 2013
- Universal Health Care system, tax based
- Specific article of Social Security Act that provide benefits for informal workers.
- HWs Protection act that ensure minimum wage, safety and other rights
- Recognized of HBWs and IFWs representatives in all national committees & bodies that work on IFWs









# TOGETHER WE ACHIEVED

- Visibility of HBWs and other IFWs in the region
- MBO of HBWs in the region
- Good practice cases and learning process from each country  
specialization : fair trade, OSH, social protection, policy advocacy, sustainable livelihoods, food security, Gender etc.

# TOGETHER WE ACHIEVED

- Advocacy on workers protection and social protection in ASEAN by
  - work with ILO on social protection floor
  - Input in Drafting Declaration of Social Protection in ASEAN
  - Participation in the ASEAN People's Forum 2014 in Myanmar with output as provision in the statement of Social Protection
  - participation in drafting the ASEAN Agreement on the rights of workers

- Country Briefs featuring studies on Homebased Workers in CAM, THAI and PHI prepared



# HOMEBASED WORKERS in CAMBODIA



### ISSUES OF HBWS

- Invisibility**
- Lack of Income Opportunities**
- Access to Market**
- Unsafe housing, workplace & Environment**
- Access to Infrastructure & Utilities**
- Health, Education & Social Protection**
- Limited economic resources**

### UNRECOGNIZED WORKERS VOICE OUT THEIR ISSUES AND HOPES

Homebased workers in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, although largely invisible and voiceless, contribute a lot to the local urban economy. Available information reveals that they make all kinds of toys, bags, baskets, boxes, containers, jewelry, key rings, musical instruments, and wood carvings. They produce smock (fish, flowers, birds and other items made of palm leaves) to sell in markets and along temples. They also sew pants, neckties, scarves, mats, and hammocks. Despite their substantial economic contributions as they strive to lift themselves out of poverty, they are not yet organized and recognized. Their problems as producers remain hidden, especially from local government authorities who can easily assist them based on what they say they need. Their potential to reap greater gains not only from the tourist but also from the export markets remains largely untapped.

What are the current issues faced by the mostly women homebased workers in Phnom Penh city and Siem Reap province, and which of these do they consider to be of top priority? How can local governments help?

Norm Sina of the Artisans Association of Cambodia conducted a study for the Inclusive Urban Planning (IUP) Project, based on interviews with 109 HBWs (83 percent women) from Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.



### SITUATIONER

Homebased workers in Phnom Penh live everywhere in the city, which includes urban and peri-urban areas. Most of them are migrants from other parts of Cambodia, and among them are people with disability. In Phnom Penh, they are able to find employment, build their homes, send their children to school, develop new skills, and run small businesses. Homebased workers in Siem Reap are already born in this province. They are completely dependent on the tourist market, and their skills have been transferred from generation to generation to produce products for this market.

More than half (53 percent) of the HBWs interviewed are subcontracted, meaning they receive job orders on piece rate. About 38 percent are self-employed or own account, meaning that they produce products on their own and sell directly to the market.

Why are they engaged in homebased work? HBWs say they are poor and this is often the only option for them to earn an income for their families and improve their standard of living. (Almost half – 44 percent of the HBWs interviewed – earn a monthly income between USD10 – USD40, and the next biggest group -38 percent – get between USD50-USD60). They have control over their time and have a sense of independence - this is particularly true for the self-employed.

For women who are not supposed to work far away from their house because of their domestic obligations, homebased work gives them the best opportunity to take care of both their homes and their children while earning an income. Some have disability, are in poor health or have no access to transportation so they cannot work outside of their own homes. Those with disability who are able to do home-based work are proud that they have dignity and can help themselves.



# Modules for Organizing Homebased Workers in Asia

This module covers

1. Concepts of organizing
2. Benefits of organizing
3. Strategies for organizing
4. Leadership and Capacity building
5. Experiences from other local and international organizations





# News magazines





# Case Stories and Good Practices

**Good practices of Homebased Series 2005-001**

## Mayeng's Journey

Initiatives in organizing homebased women and informal workers in urban areas are a new initiative adopted by PATAMABA Region 6 which are deeply rooted in PATAMABA's experiences and programs in the rural areas. Going back from the time when PATAMABA Region 6 has done intensive organizing, networking, training and capacity building for their members in 1992, valuable results have transpired in terms of getting more informal and homebased workers organized.

PATAMABA is the first national organization of homeworkers, which later expanded to include other informal workers, that was established and provided the face and the voice for the thousands of unrecognized and neglected homebased workers and other informal workers. To date, PATAMABA has about 17,000 members with more than 9,500 urban HEWs and other informal workers in 25 cities in 15 provinces and nine regions. Its rural and urban chapters, active in social enterprises, networking with and participating in local government bodies, community housing, training, and health services.

**Support and Recognition from Government Agencies**

Successful outcomes of projects gained the interest of government agencies and officials and technical support for the activities of PATAMABA Region 6.

In 2003 PATAMABA Region 6 was able to get funding from TESDA to implement the pilot project for community-based training for economic empowerment in Region VI. TESDA provided the amount of Php 670,000 for a food-processing training center production project where more than a hundred members (45 from Sta Barotom, 30 in Antique, 30 in Cebu, and 25 in Molo) mostly women participated. Out of this grant, the group was able to save some Php20,000 which they used as seed capital for their Microfinance Program (MFP). The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) also provided funds (Php40,000) to procure equipment such as freezers and meat grinder in addition to training.

Because of PATAMABA's success, it also gained recognition and accreditation from other government bodies. In 2005, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) gave the group Php40,225 to train the youth in handicraft making.

In 2006, the Foundation for a Sustainable Society (FSSS), a social investment organization committed to support social enterprises, gave PATAMABA Region 6 a grant amounting to half a million pesos where P50,000 was used to conduct training on Accountancy for Non-Accountants to enable the group to become financially literate. The other P450,000 bequeathed by the MFP funds which currently amount to P1.6M after getting an additional Php400,000 in

**Homeenet South East Asia**

## LEADERSHIP PROFILES in THAILAND

December 2013

**Chairwoman as a Social Protection Advocate**

**Soudkai Duang-ogee**, a skilled brass handicraft producer in Bangkok, organized the Bangkok Homebased Crafters Union in 1994. Formerly engaged in farming, he had to learn new skills in goldsmith, silversmith and various crafts made from brass and copper. The group he belonged to was originally comprised of the families who migrated from Angkor Wat, Main Prince and worked as goldsmith workers in a gold factory in Bangkok. The two families increased to about a hundred and some were producing various crafts and jewelry items from gold, silver, copper and brass. This may become a traditional handicraft activity among the migrant families. In 1995, a center for arts and crafts was established in Chantarak where artisanal products made of copper, silver and brass were produced. Under Soudkai, he is called, successfully continued his crafts and improving its quality to suit market demand. His products consisting of spoons, hangers, and various craft items are usually sold in malls, markets and exhibits showcasing products of other homebased workers.

Soudkai has been recognized and respected as a leader of homebased workers in Bangkok. Soudkai's strong leadership qualities enabled him to influence groups of informal homebased workers to advocate for their rights, to gain visibility and voice as well as to put across their issues and concerns regarding access to social protection benefits. He has largely been an active leadership work of HomeNet Thailand on occupational safety and health/OHS issues which started in 2001. He participated in various activities such as leadership, organizing and skills training, action in hazard control, influencing change in behaviors of employers and policy advocacy to include OSH in regular health services. He has been seen to initiate training workshops locally and abroad on leadership and skills development. Soudkai is part of the group advocating for and developing OSH modules in coordination with the National Health and Safety Office. The National Safety Act of 2001 was the first to provide universal health care coverage for all Thai people. HomeNet Thailand is continuing its advocacy efforts for the National Health Security System in terms of occupational safety and health. It also has a strong representation in the National Policy Committee in the person of Soudkai who sits as an advisory member. Ongoing initiatives include advocating for

**LEADERSHIP PROFILES in CAMBODIA**

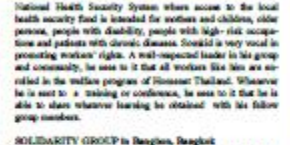
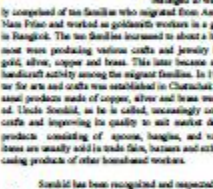
December 2013

**SELF-HELP WOMEN IN SEN SOK**

**Vong Saven** gathered 15 women one afternoon in the space underneath her house in Sok Sen and tried making various novelty items from recycled colored magazine paper and plastics. The group was organized way back in 2007 by the Scaro Organization which taught them skills in sewing. After the project ended, Artisans Association of Cambodia (AAC) through the Inclusive Urban Planning (IUP) project came in, continued organizing and conducting capacity building activities for the women, and encouraged them to join trade fairs/exhibits. The group has now split into three. Currently, there are two groups engaged in making products from recycled materials - one they call the Recycling group comprised of 11 women and the other they call Women Solidarity Group. Another group called Women Prosperity Group of 33 women HBW's is engaged in making baskets from dried grass materials. A smaller group used to produce Tang Moon Cake or the Cambodian Women Dessert which they sell locally.

When asked why and what made them stick with the group, her members unanimously agreed that as individuals they find it more difficult to earn and look for markets for their products. Products are seasonal and Vong Saven tries to sell to friends in the city who help them promote their products for weddings and festivities. The months from September to February are peak seasons while March to August are lean months. The women only get paid when their products are sold. Whatever they produce during a certain period is submitted to their leader who notes it down to facilitate payment which is on a piece rate basis. Raw materials are gathered from the market and from neighboring junk shops. These include aluminum tabs from softdrink cans which are used for making coasters out of crocheted plastics.

Vong Saven is an inspiration to jobless women in the community. She is a role model in the community and repeatedly shares how she became better off and was able to support and send her children to school—and even buy their needs. Her son wanted to buy a bicycle and she motivated him to appreciate and help her in the recycled bead.



**Homeenet South East Asia**

## LEADERSHIP PROFILES in CAMBODIA

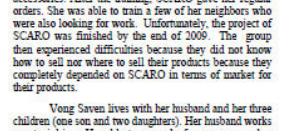
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# Thematic Reports

## GOOD PRACTICES IN THE REGION

### SOCIAL PROTECTION for HOMEBASED WORKERS

"Only one in five people in the world has adequate social security coverage. Lack of social security coverage is largely concentrated in the informal economy of the developing world, which are generally poorer than for men." (ILO website, Facts on Social Security).

Access to adequate social protection is a basic human right. It is also widely considered to be instrumental in promoting human welfare and social cohesion on a broad scale, and to be conducive to and indispensable for fair growth, social stability and economic performance, contributing to competitiveness.

SOCIAL PROTECTION consists of "POICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT SEEK TO REDUCE POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY TO RISKS AND ENHANCE THE SOCIAL STATUS AND RIGHTS OF THE MARGINALIZED BY PROMOTING AND PROTECTING AGAINST HAZARDS AND SUDDEN LOSS OF INCOME, AND IMPROVING PEOPLE'S CAPACITY TO MANAGE RISKS."

(NDSA SDC Resolution No. 1 of 2007, Philippines)

1. Extending the coverage and effectiveness of social security schemes
2. Promoting labour protection.

### AROSS Declaration 2013 - Reclaiming Our Future. Restoring the People's Dignity

A social problem grew across Asia with the prevalence of social inequality and the poverty of jobless youth and across countries, workers continue to be trapped in precarious work arrangements and hostile working conditions.

It is against this backdrop that the participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Roundtable on Social Security, gathered in Manila in 2013 are good for



4th Asian Roundtable on Social Security, Philippines, October 2013

## OSHA for HOMEBASED WORKERS

Homebased workers, by the very nature of their work and context, are informal workers. Having no formal employer-employee relationships, informal workers often face conditions of high unemployment, underemployment, poverty, gender inequality and precarious work.

It is easy to see informal work due to low requirements for education, skills, technology and capital. However, most people under the informal economy are not by choice, but out of a need to sustain their work and survive. Often, they tolerate unsafe, unhealthy, and hazardous work conditions just to continue earning. Many of them get sick or even die due to work-related causes, just because of informal work.

According to Chinese figures of the Asia Member States Cluster (see above graphic), an estimated 3.8 million people died from work-related accidents or diseases in 2005, of which 2.0 million were caused by various types of disease and 201,000 from work-related accidents. This equates to an average of more than 6,000 work-related deaths every day.

With Asia being the manufacturing hub of the world and with China as the world's second ship, Asia's workers and communities are exposed to the use of hazardous substances like asbestos and chemicals. There is an alarming reality that workers get the minimum price for goods when sometimes cheap labour is also in demand.

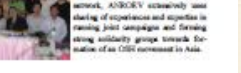
Statistics show that there is an underreporting of accidents in Asia that is not reflective of a real-time issue that needs to be addressed. Many OSHA emphasized. There is little to implementation of existing laws,

### Advocacy and Good Practice in the Region

A Multinational Planning Workshop was held by HOMENET Philippines in Manila in 2013. This was followed by a sharing of knowledge and experiences on OSH advocacy and practice in various ASEAN countries through the overall framework of social protection.

AMSC, as introduced by Ms. Ocasio, is a Regional Labor NGO based in Hong Kong. It was established in 1995 as a dissemination centre and started to conduct research and training for labour groups in Asia in the early 1990s. AMSC has been involved in popular education for workers since 1998 with the aim of empowering the workers.

ASROREY is an AMSC-initiated wage network, which primarily consists of labour groups, labor NGOs, trade unions, labor researchers and individual labor activists. It is working for the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) rights of workers and workers in Asia and has members from 14 Asian countries. It was initiated as a result of two free in Kuala Lumpur and 2001 in China. As a network, ASROREY's primary aim is sharing of experiences and expertise in raising joint campaigns and forming cross-country groups towards the realization of an OSH movement in Asia.



Workshop on OSH advocacy and practice in various ASEAN countries

## GOOD PRACTICES IN THE REGION

### Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods for HOMEBASED WORKERS

"Food security of the individual household is not only a function of the physical and economic access to it, but also of the dietary needs and activities." (The World Food Summit of 1996).

The world's population is projected to reach 9 billion by 2050. More than half of the world's population is projected to live in Asia, and majority of them will be residing in urban areas.



Woman working in a field

More than 70 million people are chronically undernourished, 98 percent of them located in the developing world. Over two billion people suffer from a lack of food. Nearly six million children die every year (17.6 million) from malnutrition or related diseases, equivalent to about 48,000 preventable deaths.

The last couple of years also saw severe flooding, terrestrial fires, hurricanes, and other extreme weather events found to increase. Amidst these challenges, the world needs to increase food production by 70 percent in order to feed the 9.1 billion people expected to populate the earth by 2050. More than half of the world's population is projected to live in Asia, and majority of them will be residing in urban areas.



Woman working in a field

The group has various activities in a variety of regions such as in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. They also have activities in various other ASEAN countries, including Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. They also have activities in various other ASEAN countries, including Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar.

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## GOOD PRACTICES IN THE REGION

### FAIR TRADE for HOMEBASED WORKERS

Fair trade is a strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable development. It is based on the principle of fair trade, which is a strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable development. It is based on the principle of fair trade, which is a strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable development.



Group of people

### Artisan's Association of Cambodia

The Artisan's Association of Cambodia (AAC) is a non-profit organization that provides training and support for artisans in Cambodia. It was established in 2001 and has since then been working to improve the lives of artisans in Cambodia.



Artisans working together

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# What would HNSEA like to achieve in the next 5 years

- Laws & policies at national level to protect the rights of HBWs & other IFWs.
- Continuing Advocacy for the Rights of HBWs and Other IFWs, decent work & social protection
- Capacity development of second liner leaders through training & exchanged program.

# What would HNSEA like to achieve in the next 5 years

- Economic Empowerment : product development & marketing of HBWs' s products
- OSH of HBWs work on the ground and policy level
- Expand more members : Myanmar, Vietnam, Malaysia etc.
- Accredited with ASEAN
- Established ASEAN standard on labour protection & social protection.