

2020

# LAW FOR CHANGE STUDENT COMPETITION

TEAM

6

PROJECT TITLE

Domestalliance

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## OVERVIEW

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Foreign domestic workers (“FDWs”) have long been an integral part of the Hong Kong workforce since the late 1970s. However, the landscape of FDW employment appears to tilt the balance in the employers’ and agencies’ favour, as the inequality in bargaining power often puts FDWs in a disadvantaged position. This problem is especially acute during the COVID-19 pandemic, where reports of FDWs being unlawfully dismissed, exploited or discriminated proliferated. This proposal first explores the current problems faced

by FDWs by examining the interaction between the key stakeholders in the FDW ecosystem. Next, the proposal outlines how Domestalliance could enhance the resilience of the FDW community by empowering them to enforce their legal rights. To achieve this, Domestalliance positions itself as a middleman in the current ecosystem and engages different stakeholders (mainly NGOs and FDWs) via several initiatives. Lastly, the proposal concludes with a timeline and evaluation of the project’s cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

## PROBLEM ANALYSIS

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After conducting a survey with over 50 FDWs and qualitative interviews with two NGOs (HELP for Domestic Workers and Equal Justice - both of which we have established connections with)<sup>1</sup>, it is suggested that the current ordeal faced by FDWs stems from the following problems associated with various stakeholders in the FDW ecosystem:

1. **FDWs’ Legal Rights Awareness:** The rights of FDWs mainly come from two sources, namely (a) employment contracts and (b) the Employment Ordinance (Cap.57), which are both complex and technical. Therefore, laymen often face difficulties in understanding them, not to mention FDWs, among which some of them may not be as fluent as native English or Chinese speakers. Therefore, FDWs generally do not fully understand their legal and contractual rights (as affirmed by our first-hand survey<sup>2</sup>), making them vulnerable targets of exploitation by unscrupulous agencies and employers. Moreover, even if some FDWs are aware of their own legal rights, they may not know the ways of enforcing them or where to seek help from.
2. **Employers:** It is generally perceived that existing FDW-oriented non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”) are predominantly focused on addressing the needs of FDWs instead of focusing on employer-related information as to their legal rights and responsibilities. Indeed, current resources on

this topic are seriously deficient, with only a few lengthy guides and pamphlets available on the web. This lack of awareness is possibly exacerbated by employers’ scepticism towards FDWs and the language barrier between the parties. Ultimately, this sows the seeds of distrust, and thus conflicts between FDWs and employers over their respective rights and entitlements inevitably arise.

### Existing Service Gap

Moreover, we identify the following problems in the existing support offered to FDWs by NGOs:

1. **Weak FDW-NGO Nexus:** FDWs generally lack knowledge and awareness towards the existence of NGOs in Hong Kong. Therefore, when faced with contractual or employment difficulties, most FDWs do not contemplate seeking help from them. Instead, many of them seek help from employment agencies. While a few employment agencies (e.g. Fair Work Agency) are non-profit entities, the majority of them are profit-driven. When solving conflicts between employers and FDWs, profit-driven agencies, which account for more than 99.5% of the total number of FDW agencies, are inevitably placed in a position of conflict and thus their effectiveness in solving such problems are dubious, especially when they have an interest in the conflict.

Conversely, NGOs which are theoretically well-suited to tackle such problems and assist FDWs are not actively involved in many of these conflicts. Such a situation, if remedied, could empower FDWs to enforce their legal rights and create a conducive environment for NGOs to weigh in and resolve the conflict.

2. **Scattered NGO Network:** Currently, NGOs are highly specialised and usually only target certain niche areas (e.g. pregnancy, debt problem, contractual disputes). From our interviews with them, we observe that these NGOs are highly scattered, with at most an informal reference network binding a few of them together. Therefore, there is a lack of comprehensive one-stop-shop service available to FDWs. Given the sheer number and diversity of NGOs, FDWs often do not know which to approach even if they know of their existence. As time is often of the essence, it is neither efficient nor practical

for NGOs to refer FDWs to one another through informal networks when they have approached the wrong NGO.

3. **Ex Post Assistance:** One of the reasons why FDWs lack awareness of their own rights is the fact that most NGOs focus on providing *ex post* assistance to FDWs when they have already encountered difficulties. On the other hand, *ex ante* pre-emptive support that tackles the root problems (e.g. education) are almost non-existent, save perhaps for a few online booklets published by NGOs that are long-winded and highly technical. This is a key deficiency as conflicts between employers and FDWs often arise because both parties are unclear about their respective rights or they fail to appreciate the gravity of the disputes. Indeed, it is impossible to expect FDWs to achieve resilience when they do not even know that their rights are being infringed in the first place.

## HOW THE LAW COULD BE USED TO SOLVE THE ISSUE AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

Domestalliance uses the law in two different ways to tackle the above problems. First, FDWs face a myriad of employment-related legal challenges. However, many of them are not conscious of their legal rights, let alone enforcing them. For instance, wrongful termination has become prevalent amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In many cases, FDWs are tricked into signing “mutual agreements” so as to justify the employers’ wrongful termination without realising that this is prejudicial to their rights. Therefore, we aim to **use the law to empower FDWs in protecting themselves against exploitation**. As observed during interviews, FDWs form a close-knit community that look out for each other. By raising FDWs’ awareness towards their legal rights, the FDW community is empowered to become more resilient and independent in capably

confronting challenges themselves. This could help alleviate the problem of inequality of bargaining power, especially during COVID-19.

However, knowing one’s rights is different from enforcing one’s rights. Therefore, we also aim to use **the law as a way for FDWs to enforce their rights**. As a corollary, (1) a harmonious and non-adversarial working environment between employers and FDWs and (2) a society aware of FDWs’ ordeal would be highly conducive for FDWs to enforce their rights. Therefore, Domestalliance also aims to use the law to **raise the public’s and employers’ awareness towards FDWs’ legal rights**, thereby fostering mutual respect between the various stakeholders.

# STAKEHOLDER'S ENGAGEMENT

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## FDWs

FDWs are our main targeted beneficiaries. It is found that FDWs may not be comprehensively familiar with their legal and contractual rights and protections, forcing them to take a passive and disadvantaged position in case of disputes with their employees. Meanwhile, FDWs are generally not familiar with the local NGOs that target them as beneficiaries, rendering their services incapable of reaching a wider FDW community.

By adopting a holistic, one-stop-shop approach in targeting FDWs, we could connect with the FDW community via popular social media platforms, and provide them with informative insight on their contractual rights and relevant issues online and through community talks. Such measures purport to confer a better understanding of their rights so granted by the law. Where necessary, they could also refer to our website directory for information on the services available at different local NGOs so that we could fully assist them in resolving the problems they face.

## NGOs

Collaboration with NGOs is a core aspect of our project. Currently, we have already built up a number of connections with various NGOs (see Section Support to NGO Partners), and we would further expand our network as our initiative progresses. We aim to establish a mutually-complementary relationship with these NGOs in the following three respects:

1. In organising community talks on FDW-related issues, we seek to gather NGOs' professional knowledge and input to substantiate the content covered in the events. With a wide spectrum of NGOs each focusing on a specialised area (see Section Support to NGO Partners), we would be able to deliver comprehensive talks on a broad variety of topics with well-diversified content to satisfy the different needs of the FDW community.
2. We act as a middleman in bridging a connection between FDWs and NGOs. Our goal is to facilitate the NGOs' professional work (e.g. consultation, case-management) and ensure that FDWs in need receive precise and effective advice from the best-suited NGOs.
3. Our initiative would engage student volunteers to help support NGOs in their legal-related work (see below).

## Law Student Volunteers

Law is all about application, and law students as eager contributors carry immense potential in applying their knowledge to promote the common well-being of different stakeholders, thereby strengthening FDW resilience at the community level.

Through writing blog articles and regularly publishing content on social media, Domestalliance provides a platform for student volunteers to utilise their legal knowledge in a wider context and serve a wide spectrum of target readers. Moreover, student volunteers could also support partner NGOs in their regular legal work (such as analysing past case files, digitising databases and assisting in relevant legal and policy research for consultation services). Overall, not only would student volunteers develop a profound understanding as to FDWs' contractual and labour rights, but their contributions would bring about genuine impact in empowering NGOs to provide better legal support and bridging the gaps between different stakeholders in the ecosystem.

## Employers

While employers may neither be acting in bad faith nor seeking to exploit the FDWs, they may not have a full picture as to their legal obligations towards FDWs, triggering a host of legal disputes and grievances. As mentioned above, raising employers' awareness about the legal rights of FDWs could create an ideal context for FDWs to enforce their rights.

Therefore, we would also include employer-related issues and information in parts of our community talk and blog article initiatives, such as addressing common misconceptions they have regarding their legal obligations. Ultimately, we hope that our efforts could facilitate the organic development of harmonious FDW-employer relationships, hence reducing the probability of legal disputes preemptively.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

Our target group is mainly Filipino and Indonesian FDWs in Hong Kong.

	Primary	Secondary
<b>Goal</b>	To empower the FDW community to develop self-resilience by letting FDWs know their rights and how they can enforce their rights.	To facilitate the self-cultivation of a healthy, non-adversarial and harmonious working relationship between FDWs and their employers.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	To adapt to the existing ecosystem and fill existing gaps by (1) formalising existing NGO networks and connecting them, (2) introducing our own initiatives and reaching out to at least 100 FDWs by February 2022 and (3) providing legal and manpower support to at least 4 NGOs by October 2021.	To engage with at least 50 additional stakeholders (employers and the general public) via our community talks, website and social media to raise their awareness about FDWs' rights.

Domestalliance aims to be a one-stop-shop platform and serves three specific functions:

Functions	Explanation
<b>Clearinghouse Directory</b>	Domestalliance facilitates the interaction between NGOs and FDWs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestalliance's website provides a comprehensive directory of FDW-oriented NGOs (such as our NGO partners) specialising in different problems. Essentially, we aim to be the starting point for FDWs who face difficulties.</li> <li>Domestalliance's website acts as a clearinghouse to connect NGOs and formalise the existing networks between them by referring or rerouting cases to the relevant NGO(s), thus expediting the resolution of cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Awareness Builder</b>	The foundation of Domestalliance's awareness-building work lies on its emphasis of "prevention is better than cure". Therefore, we focus on both preemptive and remedial support to FDWs and employers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestalliance's homepages on two key social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) serve as various stakeholders' "first exposure" to what we do, through which the detailed services of our website and activities (e.g. community talks) would be introduced.</li> <li>Domestalliance's dual-stream community talks not only provide practical legal information for FDWs and employers, but also serve as an outreach to the general public in raising their awareness towards FDW-related issues.</li> </ul>
<b>NGO-Student Synergy</b>	NGOs are indispensable partners of our initiative as collaboration unleashes immense synergy between (1) law students' legal skills and knowledge and (2) NGOs' practical on-the-ground experience. Such collaboration takes two different forms, involving both complementing existing NGO services and our own initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In areas covered by existing NGO services, Domestalliance provides brain power and manpower (via student helpers) to assist in the delivering of the services while avoiding redundancy.</li> <li>In areas where NGO services are deficient or lacking, Domestalliance launches our own initiatives (see Section Community Talks) and consults NGOs for expert input and support when required.</li> </ul> <p>Ultimately, we aim to generate complementary harmony between our initiative with existing NGO services so as to achieve our common goal of providing the best possible services to FDWs and empowering them to enforce their legal rights.</p>

We recognise that some FDWs are more comfortable with comprehending information in their native written languages. Therefore, all relevant online and physical written materials introduced below would be available in different languages, such as Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai. We would seek interpretation services from professional bodies, among which we would prioritise and target for long-term collaborations with NGOs as a matter of financial sustainability (to be elaborated in Section Budget and Cost Effectiveness). Currently, we are exploring the potential for partnership with the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER), which offers professional translation services free of charge for NGOs and school entities.

## Website

Our website aims to provide multilingual information for FDWs of various ethnicities to enhance their awareness towards their own legal rights.

### Blog Page

The goal of our blog is to serve as an information dissemination platform that allows not only FDWs, but also employers and the general public to understand and be more aware of current issues relating to FDWs' rights and needs. The blog page would feature the following sections:

- **Rights and Responsibilities:** This section features short articles summarising FDWs' legal rights and employers' responsibilities in different areas in layman terms so that they could have a better understanding of their legal positions. Areas of discussion include contractual rights, employment rights, etc.
- **News Updates:** This section provides updates on recent social policies (e.g. Labour Department and Immigration Department policies) and news (e.g. court cases and COVID-19 related news) related to FDWs. We would also analyse the relevant news and provide suggestions and remedies as to how FDWs could cope with the latest developments.
- **Case Studies:** This section provides case studies (subject to the client's consent) drawn from our own database and the databases of our NGO partners (e.g. HELP). By analysing how we or NGOs could successfully resolve the relevant FDW's problems, FDWs facing similar issues could know what to expect and where they stand before even engaging us.

The relevant articles would be written by law student volunteers and pro bono lawyers and published on a bi-weekly basis.

### One-stop-shop NGO Directory: Chatbot

Our website would include a chatbot to help FDWs find the most suitable NGO according to their individual needs. The chatbot would be regularly optimised through machine learning and updated by us to ensure that more recent issues are covered. The basic flowchart is as follows:

1. After entering the webpage, FDWs would choose from a range of options about what difficulties they are facing (e.g. debt problems, pregnancy, legal disputes etc.)
2. After identifying the keywords input by the FDWs, the chatbot would suggest suitable NGO(s) to best solve the problems and provide their basic information, which include (a) an overview of their services and target audience, (b) contact information and (c) link to their respective websites.
3. If FDWs are still uncertain as to which NGO to approach (especially if their cases are complicated) or would like to seek preliminary support, the chatbot would direct FDWs to Facebook Messaging service (which has in-built auto-translation functions) where they could contact us in real time. After providing preliminary support to them, we would refer the FDWs to the relevant NGOs for further advice and support.

In addition to the chatbot, there would also be a more comprehensive directory which sets out the details of different NGOs so that FDWs could further consult it when necessary.

## Common FAQs

The Common FAQs section provides a quick reference for FDWs in relation to common issues of enquiry. These questions would include questions commonly raised by FDWs during talks or on our website and those received by our NGO partners. Accordingly, student volunteers would research on such topics and provide suggested answers and remedies, and ultimately compile them into a FAQ list. The page would be updated monthly in order to respond to the changing circumstances, especially the emerging questions due to COVID-19 pandemic.

## Upcoming Events

This section is regularly updated to serve as a notice board for FDWs. Announcements and reminders for soon-to-be-held events organised by our team and/or NGOs (e.g. workshops, consultation services, community talks) would be set out in the section.

## Social Media

Social media serves as a key channel for us to disseminate information related to FDWs' contractual and legal rights and suggested remedies to our target stakeholders in conjunction with our website. It would also be a key platform for us to promote our website, community talks, other events and to recruit student volunteers.

We plan to set up an official Facebook and Instagram page for this purpose. Notably, the Facebook page, being the primary social media used by FDWs, would similarly serve as a preliminary platform for which FDWs could seek information via a chatbot or contact us directly via FB Messaging. On the other hand, the Instagram page would mostly target the general public (especially law students). The promotion of the pages could be achieved through our team and volunteers' informal networks, word-of-mouth effect and social media advertisements.

The detailed content of our social media materials includes links to our website, infographics, FDW-related news updates & info packs, introductions of relevant NGOs, posts for promotion of events or online workshops, and advertisements to recruit student volunteers.

## Community Talks

We propose to organise community talks bimonthly on weekends, which is in consideration of both FDWs' and the general public's best availability. These talks would be divided into two main streams, one targeting FDWs and another targeting employers and the general public.

### Stream 1: FDWs

- **Aim:** The talks aim to provide practical legal information and guidance to FDWs in relation to common employment issues and predicaments.
- **Content:** Each talk would cover several pressing issues faced by FDWs at the corresponding time (e.g. work under COVID-19, wrongful termination, updates of legislations) with multiple guest speakers. The talk would also involve case sharings by FDWs and NGOs, and information about relevant NGOs specialising in those areas.
- **Duration: 1 - 1.5 Hours / Target Number of Attendees per talk: 30**

### Stream 2: Public and Employers

- **Aim:** The talks aim to raise awareness towards FDW-related issues, keeping other stakeholders engaged with the importance of safeguarding FDWs' legal rights.
- **Content:** The talks would cover awareness-building content, such as overviews on FDWs' legal rights and common scenarios or problems faced by both FDWs and employers. Case sharings by NGOs or FDWs would also be included, along with practical tips on creating a harmonious working environment and healthy FDW-employer relationships. A key NGO partner in this area would be Open Door.
- **Duration: 1 - 1.5 Hours / Target Number of Attendees per talk: 40**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the talks and workshops are proposed to be held online, predominantly through Zoom for its accessibility and simple operation. The talks would involve a two-way dialogue. For Stream 1, the talks would adopt a FDW-oriented approach by first inviting FDWs to share their experiences on the topic. Afterwards, the speakers would elaborate on the problems and suggested solutions, with input from FDWs during the process. Similarly for Stream 2, the audience would be invited to share their knowledge and perception about FDWs, with the speakers elaborating on such inputs.

To make our information disseminated through community talks more accessible, particularly for FDWs who may not be able to attend the talks in real time due to their work commitments, the online talks would be recorded and uploaded to both our Facebook homepage and our website. Our target beneficiaries would hence be able to access the information at any time that best suits their convenience.

While the talks are to be organised on our team's initiative, we would actively seek collaboration with NGOs (see Section Support to NGO Partners) and legal practitioners, for which they would be invited to contribute their expert insight on the presentation topics, promote the events to the target beneficiaries, and take part as guest speakers.

## Support to NGO Partners

After interviewing several NGOs, we observe that NGOs in general face personnel and resource constraints in their provision of professional services, which range from frontline FDW consultation services to behind-the-scenes data compiling. Therefore, in fostering a strong collaborative bond between our team and NGOs, we would provide a source of law student volunteers (including members of our team) for personnel and administrative support to our partnering NGOs in their daily work. Depending on the NGOs' individual needs, our support would cover areas such as analysing past case files, reorganising and digitising databases and assisting in relevant legal and policy research for consultation services. We believe that such support could create synergy between law students' legal knowledge and NGOs' on-the-ground experience and expertise.

Currently, we have established close contact with two NGOs, namely HELP for Domestic Workers and Equal Justice, in exploring the potential for collaboration and what we could offer to support their work. Details of the proposed support are set out below:

### HELP for Domestic Workers

- **Mission:** HELP aims to empower FDWs through legal advice, assistance, education and support, and help them gain access to justice and receive fair and equal treatment.
- **Work:** Educates FDWs on their legal rights; Offers legal advice when FDWs are arrested for criminal offences; Helps FDWs pursue claims in Courts and Labour Tribunal and assists them with court documents.
- **Proposed Support:** Our student volunteers would assist HELP in their current initiatives. First, HELP is currently operating Sunday Zoom clinics to help FDWs with the help of laymen volunteers. From our interview, it is believed that law students could generate synergy with HELP by providing extra legal support to help run the clinic. Second, law students could assist HELP with its ongoing work of analysing past case files for common issues and trends, and providing legal solutions correspondingly. Third, student volunteers could assist with the consultation services provided by HELP by providing a legal perspective to help solve the problems faced by FDWs.

- **Proposed Hours: 8 hours per week / Volunteers Needed: 5**

### Equal Justice

- **Mission:** Equal Justice aims to help FDWs anticipate, prevent, and solve their legal problems through free, practical legal education and support.
- **Work:** Provides services to FDWs in navigating the justice system; Educates and empowers FDWs through information training; Encourages knowledge sharing for collaborative research with the academic and public policy field.

- **Proposed Support:** Our student volunteers could primarily assist Equal Justice through legal research support so as to facilitate their advocacy work. Moreover, our student volunteers could also collaborate with Equal Justice in their legal education efforts.
- **Proposed Hours: 6 hours per week / Volunteers Needed: 4**

Given the initiative's novelty, we plan to first focus on developing a close collaborative relationship between the aforementioned NGOs, which are chosen for their relatively broad-based service coverage. As our project progresses and gains momentum, we would be able to expand our support to other NGOs based on our experience and reach out to more niche NGOs such as PathFinders, Enrich HK, Mission for Migrant Workers and Open Door.

## TIMELINE

Tasks for 2021	Start	End
<b>Phase I: Preparation</b>	<b>Feb 2021</b>	<b>Apr 2021</b>
Develop website	Feb 2021	Mar 2021
Prepare online content (blogs, articles and info packs)	Feb 2021	Apr 2021
Design promotional materials	Feb 2021	Feb 2021
Recruit law student volunteers	Feb 2021	Apr 2021
Finalise collaboration details with NGOs	Feb 2021	Apr 2021
<b>Phase II: Launch of Project</b>	<b>Apr 2021</b>	<b>May 2021</b>
Launch website and social media pages	Apr 2021	Apr 2021
Conduct promotional campaign (social media ads, distribute leaflets)	Apr 2021	May 2021
<b>Phase III: Operation (Ongoing)</b>	<b>Apr 2021</b>	
Website maintenance	Apr 2021	-
Engage in NGO support (Pilot Stage)	Apr 2021	-
Update blog and social media	Apr 2021	-
Organise community talks	May 2021	-
<b>Phase IV: Sustainability and Monitoring (Ongoing)</b>	<b>May 2021</b>	
Analyse social media data	May 2021	-
Engage additional NGOs for collaboration	Jul 2021	-
Hold interim evaluation meetings with NGOs and acquire feedback	Jul 2021	-
Recruitment of a new session of student volunteers	Sep 2021	-

## BUDGET AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

Category	Item	Budget (HK\$)
Website	<b>Website Development</b>	
	Domain name	300
	General maintenance	5,000
Website	<b>Content Development</b>	
	Material translation*	3,000
Event	<b>Promotion - Recruiting Law Student Volunteers</b>	
	Materials (stationery, notes, promotion stands etc.)	500
	Venue booking**	1,000
	<b>Promotion - Targeting users</b>	
	Leaflets	1,500
Event	Zoom account**	1,200
	Advertisement on social media***	5,000
Others	Contingency / Reserve Funding	2,500
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>		<b>20,000</b>

\* As previously set out, we would seek free-of-charge partnerships with NGOs such as CHEER for translation services to maximise our limited resources. In any event, we would utilise our position as a non-profit start-up to seek the best prices for translation services without sacrificing quality.

\*\* In order to minimise expenses and ensure effective allocation of our financial resources, we would endeavour to maximise the use of existing free-of-charge or discounted resources. This would include, inter alia, making use of school venues for meetings and volunteer training sessions, actively collaborating with NGOs and seeking charity or non-profit body discounts for online resources.

\*\*\* To ensure that the potential of social media advertisements could be fully realised, we would frequently analyse the background data and demographics of our page's visitors, and adjust the scope and coverage of the advertisements accordingly to best target our intended audience, including law students and FDWs.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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To ensure that what we offer are in alignment with the stakeholders' needs, we would adopt a continuous monitoring and evaluation framework as follows:

## Via Our Social Media

We would review the visitor analytics of our Facebook and Instagram pages and compile a regularly-updated database on the demographic breakdown and reach of the social media audience. Our promotional strategies would be adjusted with reference to such information.

## Via Our Website

We would compile and analyse data of the issues encountered by the chatbot in our website to identify common difficulties faced by FDWs, and adjust the content of our website and talks accordingly to better address the issues and provide preemptive support.

## Via Our Community Talks

Response sheets would be collected from participants after each and every talk. Student volunteers would analyse the collected data and compile reports for both our team's and partnering NGOs' reference. Based on the feedback on "satisfaction", "relevance" and "usefulness" of the talks, we would make adjustments to the content and presentation to maximise the effectiveness of future events, as well as fill in the gaps in addressing ancillary issues via the website blog.

## Via NGO Feedback

We would hold tri-monthly meetings with our partnering NGOs to discuss the progress of events, effectiveness of service, and future plans and objectives.

## Via Our Student Volunteers

Student volunteers are an important source of feedback as they work on the ground and directly interact with the NGOs and FDWs. Therefore, questionnaires would be sent to student volunteers to understand the difficulties faced by them during the service, pressing issues observed, effectiveness of training provided and their efficacy in cooperating with NGOs. Afterwards, we would pinpoint any practical difficulties in our project and take remedial measures to maximise the effectiveness of student participation in the project.

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# SUSTAINABILITY AND MULTIPLIER EFFECT

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## Sustainability

Domestalliance is a dynamic and on-going project in HKU which constantly improves itself and responds to new problems faced by FDWs. As collaboration with NGOs is the lifeblood of our project, it is essential for us to build a long term and mutually beneficial relationship with them. Therefore, as set out above, we would maintain close communication with our partnering NGOs through regular meetings to obtain feedback and be constantly informed of both sides' directions and plans. Moreover, we would analyse the data collected from our social media pages and various activities to pin down the latest difficulties faced by FDWs and provide new services accordingly.

Currently, many student-led initiatives recruit student volunteers separately in each school term, thus having to continuously commit resources and time to train new "sessions" of volunteers. We propose to take a step further by building a "core group" of enthusiastic student volunteers who are committed to our project in the long run: They would be groomed and empowered to gradually take up positions of responsibility within our initiative - they would be trained to take charge in briefing sections and provide hands-on training to new volunteers based on their previous experiences, hence ensuring a seamless handover between different "sessions" of volunteers. Ultimately, the core group initiative would build up a body of accumulated knowledge. This would ensure the sustainability of Domestalliance as the core group's continuous involvement makes them ideal candidates as future leaders of the project. Most importantly, smooth transcendence of Domestalliance's mission between different leadership "sessions", would eliminate the disruptive effect caused by project leaders' graduation as time goes by.

Financially speaking, our project's financial expenditure is expected to decrease as our project continues to run. The majority of expenses incurred throughout the project's operation would fall in its commencement year, during which we would have to seek external

sponsors to fund for kick-start expenditures (e.g. fees for domain name registration and Zoom account) and preliminary resources for student recruitment and workshops. As we acquire increasingly extensive experience, we would be able to draw better estimates on necessary expenses and cut unnecessary costs. Moreover, as our project matures, the need for promotion expenses (e.g. social media ads) would decrease as we could increasingly rely on the word-of-mouth of NGOs and beneficiaries in spreading our service to a larger audience (see Section Multiplier Effect). As a matter of continuous financial support, we would actively seek the HKU Faculty of Law's funding for our project in anticipation of the exhaustion of the seed fund.

## Multiplier Effect

Domestalliance aims to amplify the multiplier effect in three main ways. First, Domestalliance's website attracts more NGOs and FDWs to utilise it through the network effect. As our platform is a clearinghouse matching FDWs & NGOs, its effectiveness depends on the number of FDWs and NGOs using our platform. As the number of users grows on both sides, the platform's utility to both sides and the motivation for other non-users to join would increase simultaneously. Ultimately, when the critical mass is reached, a bandwagon effect would follow. Specifically for our platform, the number of NGOs cooperating with us would be crucial: Once a sufficient number of them are willing to cooperate with us, our clearinghouse service would become highly attractive to FDWs.

Second, students engaging in our project would have a clear understanding of difficulties faced by FDWs and build a strong awareness towards the problem. Through word-of-mouth and student volunteer's positive sharing of comments and feedback, more and more law students would develop an interest towards FDW issues and be eager to contribute, i.e. they would be incentivised to take part as student volunteers, if not core team members.

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Third, we could implicitly build the reputation of our project's effectiveness informally through the success and results of our work for stakeholders such as FDWs and employers. For instance, through encouraging FDWs in finding NGOs through our directory, they would become more confident in seeking external support. This enables FDWs to receive the most suitable support and NGOs services could be better utilised.

In a nutshell, Domestalliance aims to utilise the snowball effect to promote our initiative to all relevant stakeholders. Every time we organise a new event or engage a new stakeholder, our influence would be amplified. Ultimately, this ripple effect would raise public awareness about our work and the problems faced by FDWs, hence benefiting all stakeholders in the ecosystem.

## ENDNOTES

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1. For details of the survey, contact Marco Lee at marco00551199@gmail.com.
2. For details of the survey, contact Marco Lee at marco00551199@gmail.com.
3. Labour Department Employment Agencies Portal. (2020). Extracted from [https://www.eaa.labour.gov.hk/tc/result.html?en-name=&tc-name=&sc-name=&en-addr=&tc-addr=&sc-addr=&tel-no=&fax-no=&email=&types=F&region=&location=&district=&search=SQ&filter-by=&page-no=1&row-per-page=30&sort-by=TC\\_NAME\\_ASC](https://www.eaa.labour.gov.hk/tc/result.html?en-name=&tc-name=&sc-name=&en-addr=&tc-addr=&sc-addr=&tel-no=&fax-no=&email=&types=F&region=&location=&district=&search=SQ&filter-by=&page-no=1&row-per-page=30&sort-by=TC_NAME_ASC) accessed 8th Dec 2020.