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Translation by PathFinders

When the seed grows in Hong Kong.

By Santi

SARAH, not her real name, passed out on Jordan road side, it was not the first time she passed out in the public area because of her pregnancy with a Nepalese man. Since she found out that she was pregnant 3 months ago, she became easily tired and passed out very often.

The fact that she passed out this time might be triggered, not only by her poor physical condition, but also by some emotional burden. After the Nepalese man she's been dating went home to visit his mother in January, Sarah had to face the fact that her employer had decided to cancel her third-year contract upon learning that she was pregnant.

Thursday night, (25/2), when she was found passed out in Jordan, was the last day before her Hong Kong visa expired. Luckily, Lorna, staff from PathFinders, an organization helping the migrant workers having problems in HK, found her.

Lorna brought her to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in time and she was granted sick leave for 4 days after the consultation. With the sick leave letter, both Sarah and Lorna were hoping that the Immigration Department could grant her a rather long visa extension.

However, when Lorna took Sarah to the Immigration the next day (Friday 26/2), the Immigration only gave her a 4 days extra stay in Hong Kong, just exactly the length of time requested by the doctor.

Thus, she had to pack her belongings on Monday night (1/3) because the plane was going to bring her back to Indonesia on Wed morning (2/3). Interviewed by SUARA on Monday night (1/3), SARAH admitted that she had no intention to abort her baby, especially after she found out that it was twins. However, she was not ready to tell her parents in Indonesia. *"My mother has heart disease so I dare not to tell them at this time, maybe I will tell them when the babies are born"* she said. She was a girl from Blitar who came to Hong Kong the first time in 2004. Flying back on Tuesday (2/3) she did not tell her family and did not even go home directly. No one knew that she was already back in Indonesia.

Lorna referred her to a Catholic Sister who had a relative living in Yogyakarta and advised SARAH she could stay there for a while. SARAH told SUARA that she had not decided if she would give up the babies for adoption or to ask her parents to take care of the babies, or if she would take care of them by herself. Whatever the decision, after the babies were born she planned to come back Hong Kong to get a job again.

120 cases

Many cases, such as the one of SARAH, are still under the assistance of the PathFinders. Kylie Uebergang, founder and also Director of the organization, advised that in the past 15 months, PathFinders handled 120 cases involving pregnant women of which 80 percent were Indonesian migrant workers. Most of the men (fathers) were Pakistani and Nepalese.

Kylie states that majority of these Indonesian migrant workers are very young. Their limited social life before they left Indonesia and the lack of sexual education could have been the reason of so many unwanted pregnancies among them.

Kylie says PathFinders works together with many institutions and organizations in Hong Kong to deal with such cases, such as Christian Action, Helpers for Domestic Helpers (HDH), Caritas, International Social Services (ISS) and Mother's Choice. For counseling women can go to Mother's Choice, for employment claims to Christian Action and HDH and for the torture claims to the ISS, etc.

Kylie said PathFinders attempts to help those women who have to deal with unwanted pregnancy, to be able to survive and to make plans for their future.

Most of the pregnant migrant women working in Hong Kong are confused because the men (fathers) disappear after they become pregnant and end up overstaying their visa in Hong Kong. Employers often terminate their work contract and refuse to sign new contracts due to the pregnancy.

Being a pregnant woman going back Indonesia is not something these women want. They feel ashamed to face their family, relatives, friends and neighbors. They feel even more ashamed if the baby has no father. On the other hand they still want to work in Hong Kong.

For these women, Kylie encourages them to be strong and not to give up their hopes. There is always a way out.

Kylie even encourages those who overstay to surrender to the Immigration Department, "*In the case of pregnancy, in general, they will cancel the detention*" said Kylie. Kylie also used an example of a migrant worker who overstayed for 10 years.

Once their legal status is clear, the next step is to figure out whether they will take care of their children by themselves or to have their children adopted, as most of them still want to work in HK.

"*The decision is in their hands*" Said Kylie.

Some babies were brought home (Indonesia), some babies for adoption (In HK)



Ada yang mengirim bayinya pulang, ada yang memutuskan diadopsi

Kylie Uebergang handled 120 cases in 15 months.



KYLIE Uebergang menangani 120 kasus dalam 15 bulan terakhir

One migrant worker woman decided to give birth to her baby in Hong Kong. (Pathfinders document)



SEORANG perempuan migran yang memilih melahirkan bayinya di Hong Kong

g. (dok. Pathfinders)

Saat benih tumbuh di

Oleh Santi

SARAH, bukan nama sebenarnya, pingsan di jalan di kawasan Jordan. Ini bukan kali pertama ia pingsan di tempat umum. Sejak benih yang ditanam seorang lelaki Nepal tumbuh di rahimnya tiga bulan lalu, ia mulai cepat lelah dan gampang pingsan.

Namun pingsannya kali ini bisa jadi dipicu oleh beban pikirannya yang bertumpuk. Setelah lelaki Nepal itu pamit pulang menengok ibunya Januari lalu, Sarah juga mesti menghadapi situasi dimana majikannya batal memperpanjang kontrak ketiganya setelah mengetahui kehamilannya.

Kamis (25/2) malam, saat ia jatuh pingsan di Jordan itu adalah malam terakhir sebelum visa tinggalnya habis.

Beruntung ia ditemukan oleh Lorna, seorang staf Pathfinders, sebuah lembaga yang bergerak dalam penanganan



KYLIE Uebergang menangani 120 kasus dalam 15 bulan terakhir

buruh migran yang tengah menghadapi masalah.

Lorna kemudian melarikan Sarah malam itu juga ke Rumah Sakit Queen Elizabeth. Dokter yang memeriksa memberi Sarah surat istirahat 4 hari.

Dengan surat ini, baik Sarah maupun Lorna, berharap pihak Imigrasi bisa memberikan perpanjangan visa tinggal yang agak panjang.

Namun saat Lorna membawa Sarah ke Imigrasi keesokan harinya, Jumat (26/2), Imigrasi hanya memberi perpanjangan visa tinggal 4 hari, persis seperti waktu istirahat yang diminta dokter.

Jadilah Sarah harus mengepak barang pada Senin (1/3) malam karena penerbangan Rabu (2/3) pagi sudah harus membawanya pulang ke Tanah Air.

Diwawancarai SUARA, Senin (1/3) malam, Sarah mengaku tak pernah berniat menggugurkan benih yang di kandungnya, terlebih saat mengetahui bahwa janin di rahimnya adalah kembar.

Hanya saja, ia belum berani mengatakan kondisinya pada orang tuanya di rumah. "Tbu saya punya sakit jantung. Saya belum siap memberitahu sekarang. Mungkin nanti kalau (bayi) sudah lahir, saya baru berani ngomong," ungkap



SEORANG perempuan migran yang memilih melahirkan bayinya di Hong

perempuan asal Blitar yang pertama kali menginjakkan kaki di Hong Kong tahun 2004 ini.

Kepulangannya Selasa (2/3) itupun tak langsung menuju Blitar adan tak ada satupun keluarganya yang diketahui perihal kepulangannya.

Menurut Lorna, untuk sementara Sarah akan tinggal di Yogyakarta. Di rumah kerabat seorang staf yang dikenal Lorna di Catholic Centre, Hong Kong.

Kepada SUARA, Sarah mengaku belum memutuskan apakah ia akan memelihara sendiri bayi kembar yang

bakal dilahirkannya itu, menitipkan pada orang tuanya, atau menyerahkan ke orang lain untuk diadopsi. Yang pasti, ia berniat kembali ke Hong Kong setelah proses persalinan itu.

120 kasus

Banyak kasus sejenis Sarah yang ditangani oleh Pathfinders. Pendiri sekaligus Direktur Pathfinders Kylie Uebergang, menyebut bahwa selama 15 bulan, ada sebanyak 120 kasus perempuan hamil yang mereka tangani. Dari jumlah tersebut, 80 persen diantaranya adalah kasus yang dialami buruh migran asal

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rata-rata berusia masih sangat muda. Lingkungan pergaulan mereka yang terbatas saat di Tanah Air dan pemahaman seksualitas yang minim, menurut Kylie, bisa jadi menjadi salah satu alasan maraknya kasus kehamilan tak diinginkan di kalangan mereka.

Pathfinders, menurut Kylie, bekerja sama dengan banyak lembaga dan organisasi yang ada di Hong Kong untuk menangani kasus-kasus mereka. Diantaranya Christian Action, Helpers for Domestic Helpers (HDH), Caritas, International Social Services (ISS), dan Mother's Choice.

"Untuk konsultasi bisa dengan Mother's Choice, untuk gugatan ketenagakerjaan bisa ke Christian Action dan HDH, untuk kasus torture claim (gugatan terkait penganiayaan) bisa ke ISS, dan sebagainya," terangnya.

Kylie menyebut Pathfinders hanya mengupayakan bagaimana para perempuan migran yang hamil di Hong Kong bisa bertahan dan punya masa depan melanjutkan hidupnya. Karena hampir rata-rata perempuan migran yang hamil di Hong Kong kebingungan menghadapi kondisi yang menimpanya, baik karena status tinggalnya yang sudah overstayed, ditinggal pacar atau lelaki yang menghamilinya sehingga

status tinggalnya juga tak jelas, diputus kontrak oleh majikan, dan tak ada mau yang menerimanya bekerja dengan perut yang semakin buncit.

Sementara pulang ke Tanah Air dengan perut buncit menjadi pilihan yang takut mereka bayangkan. Selain karena malu pada keluarga, kerabat dan tetangga—terlebih jika ayah sang bayi tak jelas—juga karena mereka masih ingin kembali bekerja di Hong Kong.

Bagi perempuan yang dibelit situasi semacam ini, Kylie menghimbau agar mereka tak gampang putus asa. Selalu ada jalan keluar untuk semua masalah.

Bahkan bagi mereka yang sudah overstayed, Kylie berharap agar mereka lebih baik menyerahkan diri ke Imigrasi. "Dalam kondisi hamil, biasanya Imigrasi akan membatalkan penahanan terhadap mereka," ungkap Kylie sambil menyebut contoh kasus seorang buruh migran yang sudah overstayed selama 10 tahun.

Setelah status hukumnya jelas maka tahapan lanjutnya bisa dipikirkan apakah ia akan memelihara sendiri anak yang dilahirkannya atau menyerahkan untuk proses adopsi. Karena rata-rata mereka masih ingin melanjutkan kerja di Hong Kong. "Semua terserah pilihan mereka," ujarnya.



Ada yang mengirim bayinya pulang, ada yang memutuskan diadopsi

ig. (dok. Pathfinders)

Indonesia. "Kebanyakan (hamil) dengan laki-laki asal Nepal dan Pakistan," ujar Kylie.

Kylie juga menyebut bahwa kebanyakan perempuan Indonesia tersebut

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