

**For Immediate Release**

**Hong Kong, August 28, 2015**

**PATHFINDERS' RESPONSE TO 26 AUGUST 2015 MEDIA REPORTS ABOUT THE ARREST OF AN  
INDONESIAN DOMESTIC WORKER WHO GAVE BIRTH IN HER EMPLOYER'S BATHROOM AND WHO WAS  
ARRESTED AFTER THE BABY WAS FOUND DEAD**

PathFinders, a Hong Kong charity dedicated to helping and protecting migrant women and their Hong Kong-born children, today commented on media reports about the death of a premature baby born to a foreign domestic worker in her employer's residence.

**Background:**

Over the last 8 years, PathFinders has helped several hundred pregnant, migrant domestic workers and their Hong Kong-born children. PathFinders helps these babies, children and women by providing crisis intervention and counseling as well as humanitarian support including food, clothing, shelter, access to healthcare and access to legal support and advice.

A woman's right to reproduce is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At local level, Hong Kong laws provides all employed women, including foreign domestic workers, with pregnancy and maternity rights and also with protection against discriminatory treatment on the grounds of pregnancy.

In PathFinders' experience, however, employment agencies, foreign domestic workers and the employers of foreign domestic workers are unsure how, at a practical level, to manage a successful pregnancy and maternity leave for this particular employee population. The situation is complex and involves employment, immigration, insurance, accommodation, birth registration, documentation and cultural considerations. There is heightened sensitivity because terminating the employment of a woman for a reason related to pregnancy is a criminal offence.

Humane, reasonable and lawful solutions are available.

**Key Messages:**

For foreign domestic workers: If you think you may be pregnant, please do not delay seeking help, no matter how difficult or embarrassing it may be to tell people. Please call PathFinders' hotline: 5190 4886 to speak to a case manager who will, in a non-judgmental manner, help guide and counsel you. You are not alone. PathFinders has helped hundreds of women in this very situation.

For employers and agencies: Domestic workers are entitled to the same employment maternity legal rights and protections as all other female employees in Hong Kong. Terminating the employment of a foreign domestic worker for pregnancy-related reasons is unlawful. If you think your foreign domestic worker is pregnant and you need help to manage the employment situation successfully and lawfully, please call the Labour Department, your lawyer or PathFinders' hotline on 5190 4886. Other employers have handled this situation successfully.

**Quotes:**

According to Kay McArdle, CEO of PathFinders, “The issues affecting Hong Kong’s pregnant foreign domestic workers and their babies who are born here, can be extremely complex and difficult to unravel. Multiple laws and government departments need to be navigated. PathFinders urges any worker who suspects she may be pregnant to seek advice early on. And for the employers to do the same. Do not delay. From a medical perspective, delayed intervention presents risks and complications for all concerned. I would urge you to call the Labour Department or PathFinders’ hotline if you need advice and support (5190 4886).”

**About PathFinders:**

Established in 2008, PathFinders is a Hong Kong-incorporated, non-profit entity and registered charity.

PathFinders works to ensure that the most vulnerable children in Hong Kong, and their migrant mothers, are respected and protected. We help the children by helping their mothers. Most of the women served by PathFinders are either current or former foreign domestic workers.

This exceptionally vulnerable population of babies, children and women can fall outside the social welfare radar and safety nets for many, and complex, reasons but they are here in Hong Kong and they need help.

To date PathFinders has assisted over 2,800 babies, children and women and mothers. Year after year the number of people we help grows. In 2014 alone, PathFinders assisted 621 women and children, which included nearly 200 babies and children.

PathFinders also collaborates with consulates, policy makers, academics, local and international agencies and governments to identify and address the systemic gaps and root causes which give rise to the complex issues affecting, and precarious existence of, these babies, children and women.

**More Information:**

2014 Annual Report: <http://www.pathfinders.org.hk/public/2015/07/our-2014-annual-report/>

PathFinders’ Website: <http://www.pathfinders.org.hk/>

Social Media:



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