

CONTACT

Website: www.pathfinders.org.hk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pathfindersHK

Email : info@pathfinders.org.hk

Address : Unit 11D, Worldwide Centre, 123 Tung Chau Street, Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong S.A.R.

Telephone: + 852 5500 5486 (open 10am - 6pm)

ABOUT PATHFINDERS

STORY:

In 2007, PathFinders' co-founders rescued four babies born to migrant women in Hong Kong. Realising a gaping need for support for vulnerable children and their migrant mothers, they founded PathFinders in 2008. PathFinders has now helped over 6,500 of Hong Kong's most vulnerable babies, children and migrant women. Over 10% of the children we have served would, but for PathFinders, have been at extreme risk of abuse, neglect, even trafficking.

MISSION: To ensure that the most vulnerable children born in Hong Kong, and their migrant mothers, are respected and protected.

VALUES: PathFinders believes that every child deserves a fair start in life. Our approach is non-judgmental, respectful, passionate, courageous, empathetic, discreet and collaborative.

WHY DOES HONG KONG NEED PATHFINDERS? The babies, children and women we help are either not supported, or are inadequately supported, by Hong Kong's existing public welfare, healthcare and access to justice structures. In effect, they fall through the cracks of our otherwise world class social welfare safety nets.

WHO DOES PATHFINDERS HELP? PathFinders helps pregnant, migrant women (principally current or former foreign domestic workers) in distress and their Hong Kong-born children. Despite legal protections, too many of these women are unlawfully fired once their pregnancy is announced or discovered. Once their employment is terminated, these pregnant women immediately become homeless. Within two weeks they lose access to all public welfare support. Now destitute, they and their babies are among the most vulnerable and underserved people in Hong Kong.

People ask for PathFinders' help when they are:

Still-employed Women: Pregnant and unsure about their statutory maternity rights and obligations, how to access health care and how to plan for a safe and legal future;

or

Unemployed Women: Pregnant or with a newborn. They and their baby are typically homeless, hungry and penniless. Typically, the women have been illegally fired or have been pressured to resign. They and their babies are often undocumented and in urgent need of medical attention;

or

Abandoned, Abused or Neglected Children: these are our most upsetting and time-intensive cases. Where necessary, PathFinders acts as the voice of the child.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND APPROACH: Our key activities focus on filling the public service gaps in social welfare and support, healthcare, education and access to justice. We ensure that the standard of service and care given, where possible, match that of Hong Kong's public welfare system. We address all humanitarian needs from the beginning to the end of the particular crisis, typically:

- **For a woman:** from pregnancy through to when the woman and child find their path to a sustainable and legal future; and
- **For a baby/child:** from ensuring that all children are legally documented and immunised, to placing an abandoned/neglected child in a safe, permanent and loving family.

COMMUNITY: PathFinders' work would not be possible without concerted community support. To get

the job done, we partner with over 50 agencies and non-profits, two universities, over 50 lawyers, 10 doctors and a private hospital.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Catherine Gurtin - Chief Executive Officer

Catherine joined PathFinders as CEO in February 2019 following seven years with Save the Children, most recently as Chief Operating Officer in Hong Kong.

Prior to this, she was a consultant Project Manager at Save the Children International's Asia Regional Office in Singapore and worked with the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO) as a Consultant Coordinator for the Asia Pacific region, developing their advocacy programmes.

Before pursuing a passion to join the NGO sector, Catherine spent over a decade working in Communications and Public Affairs, latterly as an Associate Director in the International Public Affairs team at Pfizer.

Catherine, a proud and devoted mother to her 5 year old son and 4 year old daughter, has lived in Asia for over 9 years.

She earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from The University of Surrey in England.

Jessica Chow - Director of Social Work and Healthcare, Co-Director of Services

Jessica is a Registered Social Worker and serves as Director of Social Work and Healthcare, overseeing and developing case management programmes.

Before joining PathFinders in 2012, Jessica worked with Caritas Family Crisis Support Center and Senior Citizen Home Safety Association. She urgently wants to fill the social service gap and serve the most needy, assisting migrant mothers in regaining their confidence, dignity and hope.

Carmen Lam - Director of Community Development and Education, Co-Director of Services

A registered social worker, Carmen has dedicated herself and experience working with ethnic minorities, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers. Prior to joining PathFinders in 2013, she worked at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to manage the entire welfare programme for over 100 refugee families as a Social Counselor and took on a role as Service Development Officer at Caritas, Hong Kong at Social Services Division with over 2,000 staff. She had worked with over 200 cases of asylum seekers and shelter management as a Case Manager at International Social Service (ISS). Carmen has extensive experiences and knowledge of social welfare system in both U.S. and Hong Kong. She also worked at foster care and psychiatric rehabilitation centre in the states as a case manager.

Carmen holds Master degree in Social Work at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and obtained her Bachelor degree in Social Work with a minor in Psychology and Music at Salisbury University in Maryland, United States.

Jenny McAlpine -Director, Head of Special Projects

Jenny is responsible for overseeing PathFinders' projects across Business and Client Programmes to develop and enhance internal and external operations, and coordinating lobbying and systemic change initiatives. Previously Access to Justice Programme Manager, she brings a wealth of programmatic and leadership experience.

Previously, Jenny sat as a Magistrate for over 17 years in England, gaining valuable experience in criminal, family and youth matters. She is a strong believer in justice and fairness for all. Married, Jenny has a grown-up son and daughter.

Celine Dermine - Access to Justice Programme Manager

Celine joined PathFinders in December 2015 and manages the Access to Justice Programme. She has worked on access to justice issues for migrants for over fifteen years both in Europe and Asia. Previously, Celine developed multi-jurisdictional pro bono and anti-trafficking initiatives for domestic workers at H.O.M.E., a Singapore-based NGO. Prior to that, Celine represented asylum seekers at various courts in Belgium and collaborated with NGOs to develop training for unaccompanied minors' advocates.

Celine is a Belgium-qualified lawyer and holds a postgraduate degree in Human Rights from the University of Coimbra.

Harriet Beavis - Fundraising and Events Manager

Harriet joined PathFinders in 2017 and is a key member of the Leadership Team, reporting directly to the CEO. She oversees fundraising and donor management, with key responsibilities including fundraising strategy and day-to-day operations, management of income and cashflow projections, business development and donor relationship management, and fundraising event management.

Prior to PathFinders, Harriet was Programme Officer at COMO Group in Singapore where she managed a grant portfolio for COMO Foundation, the Group's philanthropic arm, and the sustainability efforts for the Group's lifestyle retail businesses. Harriet holds a First Class Honours BSc degree in Economics from the University of Bath, UK.

Victoria Street - Consultant

Victoria supports PathFinders' business programmes including operations, finance, fundraising and development, and technology. A 20-year Asia veteran, Victoria joined PathFinders in September 2015, and previously worked in senior roles at financial institutions across Asia including Goldman Sachs and PAG.

STORIES

All names have been changed to protect identity

Mum Daisy and Baby Leo

Daisy approached PathFinders whilst pregnant and still employed as a domestic worker.

PathFinders helped Daisy to liaise with her employers, who were at first unsupportive but eventually decided to support Daisy.

When baby Leo was born, Daisy was unable to contact the father, Andrew, a Hong Kong permanent resident. He had ended their relationship and cut off all contact with Daisy since learning of the pregnancy.

After obtaining Leo's birth certificate, PathFinders insisted that baby Leo's Hong Kong resident status be established. Daisy issued a paternity suit and maintenance claim against Andrew with help from PathFinders' Access to Justice Programme.

Following a successful result, Andrew has gradually started to take active parenting and now visits and cares for baby Leo who receives love from both his parents.

Mum Samira and baby Rohit

Samira and her 7-day old baby had been homeless, sleeping unprotected in an outdoor garden during winter. Rohit had a serious infection, due to improper care and poor hygiene.

After coming to PathFinders, a social worker took both to the hospital for a professional diagnosis. Samira received parental counselling and child development education from the PathFinders team.

Netra

Netra spent the first four years of her life living without an identity. She had never accessed social services, been to school or received identification. She did not exist. Her mother had been unlawfully terminated from her job when she became pregnant.

After finding PathFinders, a social worker helped Netra's mum to submit a paternity claim and re-register her father, a Hong Kong Permanent Resident, on Netra's birth certificate. After a 9 month long process, Netra could access the healthcare and education she was entitled to. Netra's mother had applied for asylum-seeker status. Having faced these hurdles, PathFinders are thrilled to report that Netra is now healthy and well and attending school - meeting friends, playing with peers and receiving an education!

Baby Dian

Dian is a young baby boy, who was born in Hong Kong but was given asylum-seeking papers because of his mother's status. His mum wanted to release him for adoption but was unaware of the process and procedures. One week after Dian was born, she discovered PathFinders and came to seek help.

Baby Dian was visited by the PathFinders team the following day, along with a pro-bono doctor. Severely underweight, the doctor realized that Dian's mother did not have the knowledge, resources or readiness to care for him. Dian was in danger, to such an extent that the doctor repeatedly urged PathFinders to bring the child for regular monitoring and check ups.

After PathFinders' work to secure arrangements, baby Dian was housed with a foster family and has now been released for adoption by a loving family.

Mum-to-be Devi

Devi left her home in Indonesia as a teenager to begin working as a foreign domestic worker in Hong Kong. Although her relationship with her employer, Eric, and his family was good, Devi hid her pregnancy from them, as she was very scared that she would lose her job. As a result, Devi's employer only found out that she was pregnant when he had to call an ambulance to take her to the hospital to deliver the baby. Once the baby was born, confusion set in for all. Devi wanted to put the baby up for adoption in order to continue working in Hong Kong, but was not sure of the process. Eric was angry, but wanted to stay on the right side of the law. Did he have a responsibility to pay her hospital bills? Was Devi required to "live in" during her maternity leave?

Eric wanted to continue to employ and support Devi, but did not feel comfortable with her living in his home during her maternity leave. Devi read about PathFinders in an Indonesian newspaper and called the hotline for support. A PathFinders case worker met Devi at the hospital and began the adoption process, leaving Devi with specific instructions. The case worker also spoke to the Eric and his family, explaining their responsibilities and the legal procedures of adoption in Hong Kong. After talking to them for a long time, the case worker reported that they seemed to relax a little bit. Given that Eric

mainly did not want Devi living in his home during her maternity period, PathFinders arranged for her to stay in one of our shelters. Once she was discharged from the hospital, she moved in to a PathFinders shelter and was collecting her salary from Eric. Later, afraid that her employer would terminate her contract, Devi broke her contract and is looking for new employment. Given that she only has two weeks to remain in the country, Devi is willing to go back to Indonesia temporarily until she finds a good employer.

Mum Widya

Widya, a single mother of two in Hong Kong, was struggling to support her children. Her former husband, a Hong Kong Permanent Resident, had been in jail and she had since lost contact with him. As a result, although her two children are both established Hong Kong residents, Widya is not, and after losing contact with her husband, her dependent visa status was tenuous. Given that Widya was not in Hong Kong legally, she was also not legally authorized to work here. Widya found various employments underground, and had to work long and odd hours to make ends meet. Widya was working so much that she could not take care of her children during the day or even take her children to school. The unfortunate result was that at age six, her younger child was left without adult supervision during the day, and at age seven, her oldest child had never been to school. PathFinders worked with a daytime childcare center to offer free childcare for Widya. PathFinders then contacted a local government family services center to push Widya to take her older child to school. Widya agreed to work with the family services center to find kindergartens that both children could go to. While the original key issue for PathFinders was ensuring that both children receive care and schooling, PathFinders is now helping Widya receive a dependent visa. We have connected her to a pro bono lawyer and are currently providing assistance and emotional support.

Siblings Harta and Eka

Harta is a 2 year old boy. He has a little sister Eka who has just turned one.

Both the siblings have Hong Kong birth certificates but they do not have passports, or a legal visa status. Their mum Setia recently passed away after being in a coma due to suspected drug abuse. Their dad will be in prison for the next three years and is unwilling to release the children up for adoption.

Harta and Eka are currently in a foster home together but Harta, active and rebellious, is no longer wanted by the foster family. His social worker is looking into other foster homes, trying to keep the siblings together.

PathFinders is working together with government departments to come up with alternative options. Their mum's family in Indonesia is financially incapable of caring for them, so PathFinders is in discussion with their father's family in Nepal, where Harta and Eka's grandparents are willing and able to raise them.

However, their dad is insistent that his two children remain in Hong Kong. Favouring a male child, his preference is to keep Harta in temporary care and release Eka up for adoption. PathFinders is currently trying to make necessary arrangements in the best interests of the two siblings while continuing to liaise with the grandparents.

FEATURED MEDIA

English

[Guardian - Hong Kong Maids Became Caught in "Humanitarian Tsunami"](#)

[TIME Magazine - Living Without An Identity](#)

[Hong Kong Free Press - Photo-Documentary, Helping Babies of Migrant Mothers](#)

[Wall Street Journal - Hong Kong's Pregnant Domestic Workers](#)

Chinese

[BBC - Hong Kong Foreign Domestic Helpers: The Price of Getting Pregnant and Having a Child, the Journey in Attempting to Remain in Hong Kong](#)

[HK01 - A Woman's Journey - From overseas worker to vulnerable mother](#)

[HK01 - Photo-documentary following the life of JJ and baby Alice](#)

Bahasa

[Apa Kabar - Pregnancy & Birth Registration](#)

[Suara - An over-stayer mother surrenders for the sake of her child](#)

BOOKS AND FURTHER READING

“Born Out of Place: Migrant Mothers and the Politics of International Labor” by Nicole Constable, Yale-NUS (Published by University of California Press, 2014)

<https://www.amazon.com/Born-Out-Place-Politics-International/dp/0520282027>

Chapter 12 - ‘Pathfinders: Supporting Pregnant Domestic Migrant Workers’ Access To Justice In Hong Kong’ by Kay Mcardle in “Gender, Violence and the State in Asia” (Published by Routledge, 2016)

<https://www.routledge.com/Gender-Violence-and-the-State-in-Asia/Barrow-Chia/p/book/9781138101722>

“Hong Kong: Children’s right to asylum”, by Kay McArdle and Vivian Cheung for June 2018 World Congress of Constitutional Law (WCCL)

<http://www.pathfinders.org.hk/public/wp-content/uploads/PF-Paper-Submission-to-2018-June-IACL-congress-FINAL.pdf>

PathFinders’ Policy submissions to the U.N. & Hong Kong Legislative Council: <http://www.pathfinders.org.hk/public/resources/pathfinders-material>