

11 November 2022, Hong Kong

PathFinders Launches "No Child Left Behind: A Mother's Love Knows No Borders" Virtual Exhibition in Collaboration with Xyza Cruz Bacani

*A Tribute to Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong for
Creating Brighter Futures for Children for 49 Years*

PathFinders is incredibly proud to present "**No Child Left Behind: A Mother's Love Knows No Borders**" virtual exhibition, featuring heartwarming stories and images about how MDW mothers and the children they leave behind in their home countries endeavour to connect with each other despite the distance. The exhibition was thoughtfully curated from the submissions of PathFinders' recent "49" image competition in collaboration with award-winning photographer Xyza Cruz Bacani. With next year marking the 50th anniversary of MDWs' having migrated to Hong Kong, this timely tribute shows that a mother's love knows no borders.

"Many of Hong Kong's 340,000 MDWs are mothers from the Philippines and Indonesia who made the very difficult decision to leave children behind in order to work overseas and create brighter futures for them – as well as the children they care for in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, despite their sacrifices, the precious contribution of MDWs has long been undervalued in our society," said Catherine Gurtin, CEO of PathFinders. "Through our ongoing *#WorkingMomsHK* campaign, we pay tribute to MDWs as mothers, while also seeking to increase the community's understanding, care and appreciation for them."

Running from today until 31 December 2022, the "**No Child Left Behind: A Mother's Love Knows No Borders**" virtual exhibition can be accessed by the public via <https://bit.ly/3WTM64m>. The exhibition aims to bring to the public eye the unparalleled strength, resilience and determination of MDW mothers who live thousands of miles away from their children. Amongst the 49 images, 48 were curated from the competition and exhibited alongside a photograph by Xyza Cruz Bacani.

Exhibition image highlights:



Waiting for Ibu (Mom) to Come Home
by Alinggar Alfat Akbar (10 years old)

24 July 2015 was the last day I celebrated my birthday with my Ibu (mom) before she went to Hong Kong to work.

I have been without my mother for 7 years. I know Ibu wants to be beside

me and wish me a happy birthday.

Hopefully next year Alinggar can eat birthday cake again with you, Ibu. Alinggar loves you, Ibu.



Bridging Hearts
by Evelyn Genisan

These are my treasures! An old school way of expression, and a great amount of effort to show love and gratitude. They are the best gifts I receive from my kids on special occasions. Whenever I depart from home, they also insert a note or an envelope in my bag. I usually find it at the airport or days after my arrival. It always brings tears to my eyes and fills my heart with love.



A Mother's Heart
by Tess Belgado

This was taken 12 years ago during my first vacation in the Philippines. Behind my smile was pain. I pushed myself to hide the pain. I packed their hugs and kisses and took them with me, as they said, "Mama, you're leaving us again..." Even though it has been difficult, I have managed to become a mother and a father for their future.

"All the images we collected are simply striking, each revealing a unique, heart-wrenching separation story of migrant mothers and their children. Behind each smile lies a story of struggle and heartbreak. As a left-behind child myself, I can still feel the unceasing pain and trauma when looking at these images and remembering how I felt growing up without my mother by my side," said Xyza Cruz Bacani. "Hong Kong has a special place in my heart. My mother works there. I worked there. It is my home. Being able to share my own experience to inspire the MDW community in the city means so much to me. For all MDW mothers, connect regularly and meaningfully with your children. They need your love as much as you need theirs."

Separation of mothers and children due to migration can be painful. Yet no child can truly be left behind in their home countries when their mothers' presence can be tangibly felt through regular calls or video calls. Employers' care and support is vital to ensure their MDWs take adequate short breaks during their long work days to stay connected with their children, and have the time to recharge and optimise their productivity. Meanwhile, for migrant mothers, it is particularly important to have the support of carefully selected guardians who are responsible, loving and like-minded so they can rest assured that their children are safe, healthy and well cared for even though they live miles apart.

"There's so much we can all do to show our care and support for MDWs. If you employ an MDW who has children, please encourage her to have regular, heart-to-heart connections with her children. Support their connection by providing your employee with short breaks to interact with her children. This small gesture will truly make a meaningful difference!" added Catherine Gurtin.

Alongside their exhibition, PathFinders' 14th Anniversary and Children's Day fundraising appeal **No Child Left Behind** seeks to raise urgently-needed funds to protect children born to migrant mothers in Hong Kong.

Since 2008, PathFinders has helped over 9,800 migrant mothers and children facing crisis to find a path to a brighter future. Every year 500 children and their migrant mothers seek their specialist care and protection. The last few years have been difficult for so many in Hong Kong, but especially for MDWs who have faced their own unique challenges and been excluded from pandemic relief measures. For the PathFinders team it's been even harder than usual to help expectant and migrant mothers navigate their crisis and ensure no child is left behind.

Donations will plug urgent funding gaps for critical services and programmes, to ensure no child is born without an identity, deprived of shelter, education or unable to access healthcare. Thanks to a group of private donors, the first HK\$269,000 of donations will be matched! Support PathFinders' No Child Left Behind campaign at www.give.asia/nochildleftbehind

About PathFinders

PathFinders believes every child deserves a fair start in life. PathFinders is the only Hong Kong charity dedicated to supporting the unique vulnerabilities of children born to migrant mothers. Since 2008, PathFinders has supported over 9,800 mothers and children to find a path to a brighter future. To find out more about PathFinders visit www.pathfinders.org.hk.

Photos (including 10 winning photos and photograph by Xyza Cruz Bacani):

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LnjUGVBmnTc4Lids7jStbzGQ_kb653WR?usp=sharing