

From zero to hero – a story of Yayuk

Not many expected, at first, that Endang Sri Wahyuni, 43 years old, from PPSW Pasoendan, a NGO dealing with women's empowerment, would be nominated as one of the best trainers of the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB). Although remaining friendly and humble, Yayuk, as she is usually called, is now talkative, expressive and communicative. Different from the silent Yayuk, who did not even say a word during the first training she attended in 2007.

"At first, we underestimated the performance of Yayuk since she just remained silent during the training. And, her total silence raised questions, not only from me but also from other master trainers, about her competence as a trainer," recalled Irham Saifuddin, the ILO staff member dealing with migrant worker related issues who was also the training facilitator.

Looking at the long standing experience she had with issues related to women's empowerment, Irham said that the master trainers and himself as the facilitator sat down together with Yayuk. "We talked openly and discussed what had made her feel unconfident in the training. She was not familiar with the entrepreneurship related issue. She also felt she could not compete with other participants who mostly came from big, national organizations."

To assist Yayuk to improve her self-confidence, the facilitators provided her with opportunities to observe other training sessions and conducted one-on-one sessions on the practical exercises. "We also provided her with technical advice before her first session facilitating the training of entrepreneurs," Irham added.

After the discussion, Yayuk began to change. She even performed impressively when she was appointed to facilitate the classes. Even, later, she was nominated as the best trainer due to her interactive, engaging ways in delivering the training materials. She continued to grow and demonstrate significant progress.

To date, she has independently conducted five training of entrepreneurs (ToE) without any financial support from the ILO. She has been successful in marketing the SIYB programme and she has even received sponsors from the district government of Sukabumi, provincial government of West Java and international donor agencies like the Ford Foundation. She also participated in a Training of Master Trainers programme, hosted by ILO Jakarta, in 2010. She is now waiting to obtain the master trainer certification and is appointed as a co-trainer of the SIYB training.

She continues to grow by starting her own business. In 2009, she transformed the business idea that she developed during her training days into a reality: "Pondok Mie Batok", a noodle business located in Sukabumi, West Java. "The noodles were invented, based on my concerns to preserve our environment and to maintain our health. So I created noodles that are environmentally friendly, no chemicals or preservatives," she said, adding that her innovation has been recognized and recorded by the Indonesian Intellectual and Property Rights (HKI).

Through her business, she secures Rp 30-40 million per month enabling her to employ seven employees. Her employees are former migrant workers or wives of migrant workers. She has also opened a branch which is in Bekasi, nearby Jakarta area. "SIYB is easy to apply, very simple and inspiring. Even if you have no business experience at all, the SIYB can help you realize your dreams. I am living proof of that, as I never imagined myself as an entrepreneur, let alone a business consultant," she added.

The SIYB training was delivered by the ILO through its Combating Forced Labour and Trafficking of Indonesian Migrant Workers Project. Funded by the Government of Norway, the Project aims to strengthen the protection of migrant workers against trafficking and forced labour practices and empower them financially in order to provide financial alternatives to hazardous overseas labour conditions and migration practices. The Project aims to sustainably build capacity in national and local Government partners, as well as non-governmental stakeholders to achieve these purposes.

Yayuk is also currently elected as the new Director of PPSW Pasoendan. Her first programme as the Director is to establish a specific division that will serve as a Business Development Service Provider (BDSP). "By establishing a BDSP, we can improve our services to marginalized communities. We also have an opportunity to sell entrepreneurship services commercially to business entities that are already well-established. This definitely can serve as the organization's income generation," said Yayuk. (*)