



“We need to expose homeworkers issues”

TESTIMONIAL

Fransisco Bangun

Head of Protection and
Employment Division, Man-
power and Transmigration
Office of North Sumatera
Province



“
Homework is in the informal economy. If the local government can issue a regulation related to the informal economy, homework could and should be included. This looks more feasible.
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Mr. Bangun is one of the 22 participants of a study tour to Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a membership-based organization, in Ahmedabad, India, organized by the ILO-MAMPU Project in collaboration with SEWA from 16 to 25 September 2014. ILO-MAMPU is a project aiming to improve women's access to employment and decent work in Indonesia, funded by the Government of Australia.

Mr. Bangun was inspired and impressed by SEWA, which brought many positive changes to the lives

of self-employed and home-based women workers as a result of strategic advocacy over the last 4 decades. The organization now has almost 2 million members and provides links and services to its members on skills training, housing, insurance, radio, scientific journals and global network, among others. The organization also offers legal support to its members facing legal issues in their work.

Mr. Bangun realizes that homeworkers in Indonesia are unrecognized, scattered and not organized, a contrast to what he saw in India. It is in his opinion that getting homeworkers organized will bring strong advantage in recognizing their existence and advocating for their rights as workers. First and foremost, however, is to expose homeworkers and homeworkers' issues. ***“To be honest, homeworkers' issues are currently not a priority (of the government), but (looking at their working conditions) we need to ‘blow-up’ the issues. We really need to inform people about this,”*** Mr. Bangun persisted.

Mr. Bangun learned about the existence of homeworkers only after being introduced and involved in the ILO-MAMPU Project in 2013. Homeworkers are precarious, vulnerable and marginalized workers. The definition of homeworkers in ILO Convention No. 177¹

¹ ILO Convention on Home Work, 1996, No. 177, defines a homeworkers to be: “a person who carries out work in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer; for remuneration which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provided the equipment, materials or other inputs used.”



embraces the three common elements of an employment relationship under Indonesian labour law: defined work, remuneration and a degree of subordination. However, homeworkers are not recognized or explicitly defined by national laws or regulations, leaving them with no legal and social protection in Indonesia.



Mr. Bangun continued with how developing a local regulation for homeworkers can be achieved. ***“Homework is in the informal economy. If the local government can issue a regulation related to the informal economy, homework could and should be included. This looks***

He expressed the commitment of the Manpower and Transmigration Office of North Sumatera to acknowledge and protect homeworkers by developing a local regulation, which would take around 3 years until 2018. In absence of national laws for homeworkers, he realized that developing local regulation was possible. ***“Take an example of the Local Regulation No.5/2004 of North Sumatera Province that acknowledges the Worst Forms of Child Labour and bans the practice. We issued this a few years before the national law, with technical assistance and support from the ILO.”***

more feasible. Aceh province, for example, has a local regulation for the informal sector,” he explained. He further expressed, ***“We need data on homeworkers and homeworkers’ issues. We foresee that data gathering will be the focus in 2015. We then bring these data to the parliament as our basis. We also need ILO expertise and technical assistance during the process, as was the case with the child labour regulation. ”***

Mr. Bangun closed his testimonial by expressing that many obstacles are to be expected, but highlighting that homeworkers will be recognized if the government, employers, workers and other stakeholders are committed. 🌟

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Hirania Wiryasti dan Novita Hendrina

Proyek ILO-MAMPU
Medan, Sumatera Utara,
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“We should develop local regulation to protect the homeworkers”

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The main challenge in developing regulation at the local level is the absence of national laws that explicitly regulate homeworkers.

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Totok Nurhandajanto, SH, MM

*Head of Industrial Relations
Division, Disnakertransduk of
East Java Province*

Mr. Nurhandajanto, Head of Industrial Relations of Manpower, Transmigration and Population Office East Java Province, is among the 22 participants who participated in a study tour to Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a membership-based organization, in Ahmedabad, India. The study tour was organized by the ILO MAMPU Project in collaboration with SEWA from 16 to 25 September 2014. ILO MAMPU is a project aiming to improve women's access to employment and decent work, funded by the Government of Australia.

During the study tour, Mr. Nurhandajanto was amazed with the achievements of SEWA that started with volunteers to reach and organize women home-based workers 4 decades ago, and now has almost 2 million members in several provinces of India.

Mr. Nurhandajanto recognized similar conditions between India and Indonesia pertaining to homeworkers, where they faced various challenges including low wages, limited occupational safety and health protection, limited social security and long hours work. SEWA organizes homeworkers, links them to government social protection and welfare programs, and advocates their rights as workers to the government. Learning all of these

challenges and achievements by SEWA over the past 40 years, Mr. Nurhandajanto promised to himself to utilize his capacity as a civil servant to raise public awareness on homeworkers' issue, particularly in East Java province.

Homeworkers are precarious, vulnerable and marginalized workers. The definition of homeworkers in ILO Convention No. 177¹ embraces the three common elements of an employment relationship under Indonesian labour law: defined work, remuneration and a degree of subordination. However, homeworkers are not recognized or explicitly defined by national laws or regulations, leaving them with no legal and social protection in Indonesia.

“Before I became involved in the ILO MAMPU Project, I was not aware of the existence of homeworkers. Being involved in the Project and participating in the study tour, I learned about homeworkers and their working conditions,

¹ ILO Convention on Home Work, 1996, No. 177, defines a homeworkers to be: “a person who carries out work in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer; for remuneration which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provided the equipment, materials or other inputs used.”



and also what we could do to recognize them as workers through regulations,” said Mr. Nurhandajanto.

In addition to being the Head of Industrial Relations of the Manpower Office, Mr. Nurhandajanto is the Head of Committee of Cooperation Body (Lembaga Kerja Sama – LKS) of the Tripartite (government, employers and workers) mechanism in East Java Province. Realizing the importance of developing regulations to acknowledge and protect homeworkers, he is utilizing the Cooperation Body to hold discussions on the need to protect homeworkers by also engaging relevant local NGOs supporting homeworkers. Mr. Nurhandajanto shared that the Body has not reached agreement on the need for regulations,

and explained, **“The main challenge in developing regulation at the local level is the absence of national laws that explicitly regulate homeworkers.”** On the other hand, he has seen cases where local regulations were developed without the existence of national laws. **“It highly depends on the commitment of the government and legislature in order to respond to the social condition. Learning from India, I am concerned that homework is becoming more prevalent in Indonesia. The number of homeworkers may be increasing but they are invisible and unprotected. We hope East Java could initiate regulation although it would not be easy. But if we start from small steps, I believe we will see some changes,”** he concluded. 🌸

Documented by
Lilis Suryani

ILO-MAMPU Project
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Utilizing knowledge and experience for a better work

A story from Yogyakarta Municipality, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta



“
I am happy to learn about new topics through this group, such as about gender, human rights and work quality.
”

Mrs. Siti Zamzanah (58) lives in Notoprajan village, Ngampilan, Yogyakarta city with her two adult children, a son in-law and two grandchildren in a house that belongs to her upon her husband's passing in 2002. After graduating from senior high school in mid 70s, she started to work different kinds of work. By the time she met her husband in the late 70s, she had already experienced part-time and full-time, formal and informal works, mostly in the garment industry. She continued working full-time in a sewing/fashion house after getting married, but when their youngest child was becoming a teenager, sometimes in 1998, she felt she needed to dedicate more time and attention to her family. She left her full-time job and took on a homework of making button holes on clothes and sewing the buttons. As a first step, Mrs. Zamzanah borrowed money from a local cooperative to buy herself a sewing machine and materials (threads, needles, etc). She then got in touch with middlepersons whom she knew from fellow homeworkers and her last full-time job.

Mrs. Zamzanah has been making button holes and sewing buttons for 16 years now. She generally enjoys her life – spending time with family and

working from home – but she is not fully satisfied with her work. She is paid IDR200 (USD1.8cents) per button hole and IDR450 (USD4cents) per button hole & putting on the button. She is able to make approximately IDR1,000,000 (USD90) in a month, which she must allocate to buy more sewing materials and paid for electricity and maintenance of her sewing machine. Her children and in-law work different jobs, but also in informal sector and on part-time basis. Their combined income is just sufficient for the family to meet their basic needs. They cannot afford social protection programs such as Jamkesmas and BPJS, but they are not considered as “poor” either by the government,



which otherwise will provide them with the protections for free.

In 2008, Mrs. Zamzanah joined home-based workers groups organized by Yasanti, a local NGO working in DI.Yogyakarta and Central Java and is one of Implementing Partners of the ILO/MAMPU – Access to Employment and Decent Work for Women Project funded by the Government of Australia. She has since actively involved in group discussions and activities.

“I am happy to learn about new topics through this group, such as about gender, human rights and work quality,” she said. She has, for instance, utilized her knowledge to improve her product quality. ***“Previously, I measured the distance between two button holes by using my fingers or just made an approximation. After I learned about work quality, I understand that I must offer good quality products. Since then, I bought a measure tape and pencil; and measure the distance with centimeters. The distance between any two holes is now uniform.”***

Mrs. Zamzanah shared that never once did her middlepersons offered a wage increase. In the 16 years of doing the same work, her hole and button price has slowly increased only from IDR150 (1.4cents) to IDR450. This increase is possible only because she asked for it. She highlighted that she always supports her request for an increase with



facts of price increase in the materials or electricity. Mrs. Zamzanah learned this by herself, way before she joined Yasanti groups. Now, she is happy to share her approach with other members of the group. ***“I am glad that all of us can share each other’s experiences and support each other in this group. That way, hopefully all of us can have a better work condition.”*** 🌸

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Hirania Wiryasti

ILO-MAMPU Project
Yogyakarta Municipality, DIY,
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“I want Homeworkers to be acknowledged as workers”

A story from Ungaran, Semarang District, Central Java

Mrs. Ida Fitriany has learned a lot about homeworkers issues since joining Yasanti's programme with ILO MAMPU Project. She now knows that homeworkers are workers and have the rights as other workers and she wants to keep voicing these rights.

Ms. Fitriany (47 years old) lives in a village in Ungaran, Semarang District with her husband and two children aged 12 (a girl) and 15 (a boy). Her husband of almost 17 years works as a seasonal worker on event organizing, working blue collar jobs when an event organizer calls for him. Mrs. Fitriany receives some hundred thousand Rupiah from her husband when he is paid for his job, but she never knows the full amount that her husband is paid for and she never asks.

Mrs. Fitriany herself has been working as a homemaker since early 2000. She cut out dangling or messy threads from finished clothes and is paid a very small amount of IDR80 (USD0.006cent) per piece. She receives her work order in packets, each of which containing 10 clothes. She can complete 10 packets (100 pieces of clothes) per day, which means she earns IDR8,000 per day (USD0.67). If she works 30 days per months, she can make IDR240,000 (USD20) at the end of the month; if not, she makes less. Further, this homework comes to her only between December and May the next year, as that is the period when many garment companies export their products.

Mrs. Fitriany receives work order, retrieve the clothes and submit completed work to a middlewoman who lives within walking distance from her house. She knows also the name of the company she is working for up the chain, but she refuses for the name to be stated here out of fear of repercussion such as losing her job.

To earn more income for her family, Mrs. Fitriany also open a *warung* (kiosk) at her house, selling



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mostly groceries. The kiosk used to make IDR300,000 per day when there were not many kiosks in her neighborhood. Now, the kiosk only makes IDR100,000 per day. Mrs. Fitriany also sells clothes that she bought from other places and she allows customers to pay in credits. The income varies depending on whether or not customers pay the credits in time. With all of these work and her husband's work, Mrs. Fitriany knows that the family income is above the minimum regional wage, yet she does not participate in the government's social security programme such as BPJS because she does not know how to access one. She also sends her children to schools in which the tuition is paid by the government. This helps her family to have enough money to eat and to save so that her children can access higher education in the future.

Mrs. Fitriany's fellow homeworkers considered her as a quite successful small entrepreneur and thus, trusted her to become the leader of their group, "Perempuan Mandiri (Independent Women)". The group has 32 members and been involved with women empowerment activities since 2010, facilitated by Yasanti. Yasanti is a local NGO working in DI.Yogyakarta and Central Java and since 2014 has become one of the Implementing Partners of the ILO MAMPU – Access to

Employment and Decent Work for Women Project funded by the Government of Australia.

Since Yasanti has become the Implementing Partner of the ILO/MAMPU Project, Mrs. Fitriany said, ***"I have participated in training of occupational safety and health, gender training and involved in development of education modules for homeworkers. I also participate in monthly meetings, where we talk about our problems as homeworkers and try to find solutions."*** Mrs. Fitriany further expressed that she has learned a lot about homeworkers issues through Yasanti. With a hint of hesitation, she said,

"I want homeworkers to be acknowledged as workers. I want our rights as workers to be acknowledged and I want written contract between us and our employers."

Asked why she hesitated, Mrs. Fitriany explained that she's afraid that their employer will stop giving them work if they are too vocal. But asked whether she would continue to be involved in homeworkers' issues, she firmly said, ***"Oh, definitely."*** We need more brave women like Mrs. Fitriany and we need to voice her rights as a homeworker. 🌸

Documented by
Hirania Wiryasti

ILO-MAMPU Project
Ungaran, Semarang District, Central Java,
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Juliani: “Moving forward is my current life principle”

A story from Deli Serdang, North Sumatera

September 2014 would be a monumental, unforgettable month for Juliani, a 31-year-old home worker from Deli Serdang, North Sumatera. For the first time, she and several other home workers had courage to demand a raise. Also, these home workers have started to work together to improve their working conditions.

Juliani is now a different woman. Three months ago, she did not even know that what she has been doing for eight years from home is considered as work called home work. The terms of home workers is used to refer to industrial

outworkers who carry out paid work from their homes, for firms/business or their intermediaries, typically on a piece-rate basis. Because home work is performed within the home, and often in isolation from other workers and the local community, home work tends to be invisible to the public eye despite their contribution to the economy.

Juliani has been sewing baby seats from her home for a nearby company, receiving 7,000 rupiah per dozen. The company provides necessary materials (fabric, foam and fringes fabric), and in addition to



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the sewing machine, she prepares her own equipment like needles, yarns and scissors.

On average, she can sew up to seven dozens per day, obtaining a monthly income ranged from Rp. 400,000 to Rp. 1.5 million depending on the orders. Her income has been a significant addition to her household income combined with her husband. Her husband, Sudiono, works as a casual construction worker and receives Rp. 600,000 to Rp. 2 million per month.

“I never had the courage to talk to my employer about my problems before. But I feel I have more knowledge and courage now, thanks to the trainings I received from Bitra,” she exclaimed.

Bitra, a civil society organization, is one of Implementing Partners of the ILO/MAMPU – Access to Employment and Decent Work for Women Project funded by the Government of Australia. Aya Matsuura, the Chief Technical Adviser of the ILO-MAMPU Project, said that home workers who are mostly women are particularly vulnerable because they lack adequate legal protection and work in



isolation with weak bargaining power. They are engaged through informal arrangements without written contracts, and often receive less than the minimum wage, work very long hours, and have no security of employment. The use of certain equipment and materials which may be hazardous can expose not only the worker but family members including children to various safety and health risks.

After joining the organization, Juliani has actively participated in the trainings organized by Bitra. She learned about, among others, her rights as workers, relevant labour laws, gender equality, social protection and how to communicate and negotiate better. ***"At the beginning, I was so overwhelmed and afraid of losing my job, so I even thought of leaving the organization. But my mentors persuaded me to stay and to continue improving myself."*** With more knowledge about their rights as workers, Juliani and her fellow workers felt confident to approach their employers, demanding a raise. ***"The collectors as the representatives of the company were upset with our demand. They did not want to discuss it,"*** said Juliani.

Yet, she refused to give up. She then personally talked to the collectors again in a sensible manner, explaining that the demanded raise was to cover the increased costs for transportation and materials. ***"Applying what I have learned from the trainings, I asked them to consider our demand since we have never asked for a raise,"*** she added. In the end, her courage yielded a result. She was told that the company would increase the rate to 8,000 rupiah per dozen, not only for her but also for all members of her group. ***"We are all so excited with this good news."***

Juliani is now a changed woman. She is inspired to be a strong, smart and brave woman. She also set up personal goals to continuously strengthen her skills, get better income and improve her working conditions. She even talked to her husband about equality and how she appreciated her husband contribution to the house works and her contribution to their household's economy. ***"Moving forward is my current life principle,"*** stated Juliani. 🌸

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Novita Hendrina

ILO-MAMPU Project
Deli Serdang, North Sumatera,
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Working as a homeworkers and three other jobs to support family

A story from Malang, East Java

Uswatun Hasanah, 42 years old, is working three to four jobs at a time. She opens a *warung* in front of her house, sells chicken noodles and gasoline for motorcycles; works as a tailor, receiving orders from neighbors and customers; works as home worker, sewing embroidery that will later be sewn to shoes; and provides catering services upon request, usually during feast holidays. Her husband works as a truck driver, but only drive when there are goods to deliver. Mrs. Hasanah, her husband and their two daughters of 17 and 13 years old live in a modest house in Kedung Rejo village, Pakis sub-district, Malang district.

From a total of five jobs that Mrs. Hasanah and her husband do, the family income is around IDR 1,500,000 per month. This is below the district's minimum wage of IDR 1,635,000 and barely sufficient to support their family. The daughters are in school, but other primary needs must be put aside. The family does not participate in any social protection programs, including BJPS Kesehatan, the praised government's revamped health protection scheme. The minimum subscription fee of IDR 25,000/month/person is better used for food and school, said Ms. Hasanah when asked why she did not access the BPJS.

Working as a home worker, Mrs. Hasanah complete 20-30 pairs of embroidery in a month. Her employer will drop the threads in the beginning of every month and retrieve completed work at the end

of every month. With a fee of IDR8,000 (75 cents) per pair, she will be paid IDR160,000-240,000 upon submission. If a submitted pair does not fulfill the required standard, she will have to replace with a new one without additional threads provided. Mrs. Hasanah and other women who do the same work have never been provided with any kind of training

by their employers. They are, from the beginning, expected to already have the skills on embroidery.

Mrs. Hasanah is a member of homeworkers group organized by Mitra Wanita Pekerja Rumahan Indonesia (MWPRI), a local NGO who organizes women homeworkers in East Java and is one of Implementing Partners of the ILO/ MAMPU – Access to Employment and Decent Work for Women Project funded by the Government of Australia.

She has been working as a homemaker in garment industry for 8 years. In the first 6 years, she made embroidery for Muslim veils and was paid IDR12,000 (USD 1,1) per piece. Unfortunately this work was stopped by the employer. Since 2012, she makes embroidery for shoes at a lower fee. In the 1st year, she was paid IDR6,000 (USD55cents) per pair. **Entering the 2nd year,**

Mrs. Hasanah negotiated with her employer on a higher fee. "I am the one who asked for a raise, from IDR6,000 to IDR10,000, explaining that prices in general have risen and I worked for some years already. At first she (the employer) said no, but then we discussed. She finally agreed to raise the fee to IDR8,000



(USD72.7cents) per pair... I did this myself. I know I was being brave. Mrs. Hasanah was brave enough to do this with encouragement and support from MWPRI, from which she learned that negotiating is possible when presented with justifications and explanations.

In addition to agreeing to a raise, her employer was also willing to loan Mrs. Hasanah IDR2million (US\$200) as a start-up capital for her *warung*, without interest and time limit, but as long as she maintains the embroidery work. The idea of opening a small business came to her after participating in entrepreneurship course organized by MWPRI.

"The money from making embroidery is not sufficient (to support my family), so I had to do something else. I participated in MWPRI's entrepreneurship class and thought that I could sell something. I



am lucky that my employer is a good person. I asked her for a loan and she was willing to give it to me. Now, I sell chicken noodles and gasoline. Well, I do not make much from the warung, but the money made from this warung is used to give my children some pocket money. Mrs. Hasanah may indeed be lucky to have an accommodative and understanding employer, a rare condition among homeworkers.

Mrs. Hasanah is a woman of many goals and continuous efforts. She hopes to send her oldest daughter to a university in Jakarta where the tuition is free, but the living costs are expensive. She also wishes to make and sell her own line of shoes in the future, not just supplying the embroidery.

In the process, Mrs. Hasanah will maintain to be actively involved in organizing and capacity building activities organized by MWPRI. 🌸

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Hirania Wiryasti

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