

# **The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for Foreign Workers and Foreign Spouses in Taiwan: A Portrayal\***

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## **I. Introduction**

According to the UN Population Division, there were more than 175 million people who migrated to another country in 2000 (United Nations 2001). The kind of globalization in the form of people movement cross national boundaries has affected countries all over the world. Taiwan is one of the countries that have been experiencing such globalization in recent decades. During the past decade, over 360 thousand foreign spouses and millions of foreign workers have come and gone in and out of Taiwan. When people migrate from one country to another, it does not only make a difference in the total population numbers of the countries involved, it also signifies the interactions between cultures, politics, and economies (Wang 2001; Tsay 1992; Tsai and Tsay 2000). For all these reasons and more, the migration of workforce and international marriage has been a subject of much concern and debate. To render assistance to those workers and spouses migrating from foreign countries has also been a focus of social attention in Taiwan in recent years.

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In this paper, we will describe as well as analyze those NGOs as representing social concern from civil society for foreign workers and foreign spouses in Taiwan. We will first present the statistics on Taiwan's foreign workers and foreign spouses. Then we will explore the functions played by NGOs for foreign workers and foreign spouses. The development of organized NGOs for foreign workers and foreign spouses is a relatively new phenomenon. By way of discussion, we will also take issue of the policies concerning foreign spouses and workers in Taiwan.

## **II. Foreign Workers in Taiwan**

In Taiwan, the impressive economic growth of the 1970s and 1980s has greatly affected the labor structures, especially after the late 1980s, when many labor-intensive industries struggled to survive under the labor shortage. The Taiwan government also faced similar problems when the private sector engaged in major construction projects during that time when the unemployment rate was fairly low (less than 2%, Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan 2006). As a result, by the late 1980s, the demand for foreign workers - mainly in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs - became unavoidable. In October 1989, the government officially permitted foreign workers to be imported into Taiwan's labor market. According to CLA (Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan), the main purpose of introducing foreign workers into Taiwan was to take "measures to help resolve the labor shortage problems instead of changing or lowering labor conditions of local workers" (Bureau of Employment and Vocational Training, Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan 2006a). Therefore, five conditions were then proposed to examine the introduction of foreign workers. First, employment rights and interests of local workers would be protected. Second, foreign workers would be prevented from becoming covert immigrants. Third, social problems resulting from foreign workers would be minimized. Fourth, no impediment to industrial upgrading and economic development of the country would result from the

influx of foreign workers. Lastly, illegal workers would not be allowed to become on-site legal workers.

The Employment Service Act, promulgated on May 8, 1992, was then enacted for the purpose of promoting local employment, with a view to enhance social and economic development and also legally to regulate the influx of foreign workers. On this basis, the Taiwanese government imposed restrictions on employers, limiting the number of foreign workers that could be recruited, specifying the workers' terms of condition and their working duration. According to Sub-paragraph 8 to 10, Paragraph 1, Article 46, Employment Service Act and Article 3, foreign workers were only allowed to perform in the following roles: as laborers on major construction projects and in manufacturing industries, and as domestic helpers, caretakers or crew members.

In 2001, the rate of unemployment markedly increased from 2.99% to 4.57% in 2002. In 2003, it reached its peak of 5.17%, which equals to approximately 500,000 unemployed people, affecting the lives of about 1,500,000 of their family members (Hsueh and Lin 2004). What is more, the number of college and university students further increased from 314,499 in 1996 to 894,528 in 2005, an increase of 580,029 over the past ten years (Ministry of Education 2006). That is, more and more young people graduating from colleges had entered into the labor market while preferring not to work as labors. This was indeed another contributing factor to the shortage in the unskilled labor market as well as the rise of overall unemployment. The government of Taiwan was really caught in a dilemma as to whether it should permit more cost-effective foreign workers to satisfy the need of local industries, or should it reduce foreign workers in an effort to reduce the unemployment rate. Therefore, in August 2002 and again in 2004, CLA halted further importation of Indonesian workers and Vietnamese crews.

Another change in the labor scene: more and more women are joining the labor force. Their participation has increased from 35.4% (of the total

female population over 15 years old) in 1971 to 48.12% in 2005 (Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan 2006). The proportion of employed women with dependent children under the age of six has increased from 38.99% in 1982 to 43.0% in 1993 (Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan 1994), and about 52.99% in 2001 had dependent children under the age of twelve. That is, more than two million women with dependent children under the age of twelve were employed in 2001 (the total number of employed women in 2001 was 3,977,000). Thus, an increasing number of children need inexpensive non-parental care at home when their mothers are out working.

What is more, the number of single parent families has been growing due to increased unstable marital relationships. The crude divorce rate (couples per 1000 population) in Taiwan increased from 0.4% in 1966 to 2.75% (62,571 couples) in 2005 (Department of Household Registration Affairs, Ministry of the Interior 2006e). The total number of single-parent household reached 548,302 in 2004 (Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan 2004). Moreover, according to the Department of Household Registration Affairs, Ministry of the Interior (2006a), more than two million people (9.48% of total population) are over 65 years old, creating a considerably increase in demand for caretakers for the elderly. So, young children and old people that need care, which cannot be provided by the local labor force, have to turn to foreign workers.

Besides the changes in family life arising from factors such as divorce and single parenthood, industrialization and urbanization have changed family structures. Taiwanese families have experienced the effects of transformations from an agricultural to an industrial economy, a rural to an urban society - as well as a predominantly nuclear family society (Thornton, Fricke, Yang and Chang 1994). In 1996, 59.79% of Taiwanese families were nuclear (Ministry of Interior 1997). The increase of nuclear families meant that more and more parents were bringing up children without the support of their own extended families and must find alternative sources of care.

To sum up, with the increasing numbers of working mothers, single parents, old people, nuclear families and the influences of urbanization, today's Taiwan society is in greater need of domestic workers to provide care and to relieve some of the burden of working wives. Consequently, though the government of Taiwan has reduced the number of foreign industrial workers on the one hand, but also increased the number of imported domestic workers on the other. The number of foreign workers then was back to its peak, 327,396 in 2005, and 43.30% (141,752) of the total are domestic workers.

As shown in Table 1, the number of foreign workers has rapidly increased in the first few years of 1990s. In 1992, for example, the total number of foreign workers was 15,924. The following year, in 1993, the number jumped to 97,565. After 1994, the number of foreign workers increased about 30,000 annually. The number had reached the peak of 326,515 in 2000, which is more than twenty times the number in 1992. A sudden decrease to 304,605 in 2001 was because the government decided to prohibit further introduction of foreign workers in May 2001, as a result of strong protests organized local labor unions. By the end of December 2005, there were 327,396 foreign workers residing in Taiwan. The countries deploying workers to Taiwan included Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Mongolia. At the end of 2005, most foreign workers came from Thailand, accounting for 30.03% (98,322) of all foreign workers. The rest by order are: Filipinos 29.23% (95,703), Vietnamese 25.71% (84,185), and Indonesians 15.0% (49,094); only 79 foreign workers came from Mongolia and 13 from Malaysia.

Table 2 shows that by the end of 2005, 50.99% (166,928) of all foreign workers were employed in manufacturing, 43.30% (141,752) were for domestic help, 4.06% (13,306) in construction; 0.96% (3,147) were crewmen and 0.69% (2,263) were nurses.

**Table 1. Foreign Workers in Taiwan by Nationality and Sex**

End of year and month	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Grand total</b>	15,924	97,565	151,989	189,051	236,555	248,396	270,620	294,967	326,515	304,605	303,684	300,150	314,034	327,396
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	199,061	167,892	163,444	145,273	134,169	128,426	128,453	128,403
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	71,559	127,075	163,071	159,332	169,515	171,724	185,581	198,993
<b>Indonesia</b>	—	—	6020	5430	10206	14648	22058	41224	77830	91132	93212	56437	27281	49,094
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	17800	11712	12126	10336	9622	6971	4831	6350
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	4258	29512	65704	80796	83590	49466	22450	42744
<b>Malaysia</b>	—	—	2344	2071	1489	736	940	158	113	46	35	27	22	13
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	834	125	99	41	31	25	20	13
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	106	33	14	5	4	2	2	—
<b>Philippine</b>	—	—	38473	54647	83630	100295	114255	113928	98161	72779	69426	81355	91150	95,703
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	60197	37855	30100	23284	22212	23685	25504	28311
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	54058	76073	68061	49495	47214	57670	65646	67392
<b>Thailand</b>	—	—	105152	126903	141230	132717	133367	139526	142665	127732	111538	104728	105281	98,322
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	120230	118188	118563	107635	93904	86914	86477	81215
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	13137	21338	24102	20097	17634	17814	18804	17107
<b>Vietnam</b>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	131	7746	12916	29473	57603	90241	84,185
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	2556	3977	8400	10831	11610	12497
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	119	5190	8939	21073	46772	78631	71688
<b>Mongolian</b>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	59	79
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	17
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	48	62

Source: Bureau of Employment and Vocational Training, Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan (2006b).

**Table 2. Foreign Workers in Taiwan by Industry**

Industry	Unit: Person			
	End of Dec. 2005		End of Dec. 2004	
Grand total	327,396	100%	314,034	100%
Crewman	3,147	0.96%	3,089	0.98%
Manufacturing	166,928	50.99%	167,694	53.40%
Construction	13,306	4.06%	12,184	3.88%
Alien nursing workers	2,263	0.69%	2,844	0.91%
Home-maids	141,752	43.30%	128,223	40.83%

Source : Employment and Vocational Training Administration, Council of Labor Affairs, Executive Yuan (2006).

### III. Foreign Spouses in Taiwan

Though marriage immigration is not a new phenomenon in the contemporary world, foreign brides have caught the spotlight in Taiwan during the past few years. Not only has the total number of foreign brides increased, but the foreign brides' total birth rate accounts for more than 13% of the total birth number in Taiwan. During the past few years, about 11% of total married couples involved foreign spouses (not including spouses from the Mainland and H.K.), and in 2003, 20.4% of total married couples were from the Mainland and H.K. In our view, two fundamental changes in Taiwan's society are what brought foreign spouses into the picture.

First, the decreasing birth rate in Taiwan has been evident. The average fertility rate should be around 2.1 children per woman to maintain a stable population (Stalker 2006). From 1986 to 1997, the number of births in Taiwan was around 320,000 per year, a birth rate of about 1.8 per female. Then, in 1998, the year of the tiger - which Chinese like least of the zodiac animals - the number started to drop. As can be seen from Table 3, the number of births in 1998 went down to 271,450. This is 54,552 less or a drop of 16.7% than in 1997. In 2004, the number of births declined further to a new low of 216,419. The fertility rate has bottomed out at 1.18, which is lower than that of any other country in the world. How to encourage married couples to

have more babies has even become a policy talk. Therefore, as shown in Table 3, the birth rate of foreign spouses, whose children make up approximately 14% of the total number of births, has become significant balance Taiwan's declined birth rate.

**Table 3. Number of Foreign Spouses' Children in Taiwan**

Year	Number of birth in Taiwan			Number of Mainland, H.K. and foreign spouses' children	The rate of Mainland, H.K. and foreign spouses' children	Total fertility rate (‰)
	Total	Male	Female			
1995	329,581	171,118	158,463	—	—	1,775
1996	325,545	169,484	156,061	—	—	1,760
1997	326,002	170,047	155,955	—	—	1,770
1998	271,450	141,462	129,988	13,904	5.12%	1,465
1999	283,661	148,042	135,619	17,156	6.05%	1,555
2000	305,312	159,726	145,586	23,239	7.61%	1,680
2001	260,354	135,596	124,758	27,746	10.66%	1,400
2002	247,530	129,538	117,992	30,833	12.46%	1,340
2003	227,070	118,984	108,086	30,348	13.37%	1,235
2004	216,419	113,639	102,780	28,666	13.25%	1,180
2005	205,854	107,378	98,476	26,509	12.88%	—

Source: Department of Household Registration Affairs, Ministry of the Interior (2006a).

Second, the falling marriage rate has also become a trend. Table 4 shows that the rate of marriage gradually falls from 2000 and the rate of divorce rapidly increases from 1998. In 2005, 141,140 couples married and more than 60,000 couples divorced. In addition, according to Table 5, the number of foreign brides grew from 20,596 in 1998 to 48,633 in 2003. That is, the total number of marriages to foreign brides doubled from 14% in 1998 to 28% in 2005. As a result, the increase in the number of foreign spouses and their second generations, sometimes called the “new sons of Taiwan,” has become a very noticeable social phenomenon.



**Table 4. Number and Rates of Marriage and Divorce in Taiwan**

Year	Marriage		Divorce		Married with foreigner			Divorced with foreigner		
	Couple	Rate (‰)	Couple	Rate (‰)	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1996	169,424	7.90	35,875	1.67	—	—	—	—	—	—
1997	166,216	7.68	38,986	1.80	—	—	—	—	—	—
1998	145,976	6.69	43,603	2.00	10,454	8,656	1,798	613	381	232
1999	173,209	7.87	49,003	2.23	14,674	12,721	1,953	849	604	245
2000	181,642	8.19	52,670	2.37	21,338	19,062	2,276	1,600	1,156	444
2001	170,515	7.63	56,538	2.53	19,405	16,988	2,417	2,506	1,920	586
2002	172,655	7.69	61,213	2.73	20,107	17,339	2,768	2,643	2,091	552
2003	171,483	7.60	64,866	2.87	19,643	16,849	2,794	3,025	2,364	661
2004	131,453	5.80	62,796	2.77	20,338	17,567	2,771	3,541	2,832	709
2005	141,140	6.21	62,571	2.75	13,808	11,121	2,687	3,910	3,195	715

Source: Department of Household Registration Affairs, Ministry of the Interior (2006b).

According to Jian (2004), the present trend of marriage to immigrants started in the 1980's with veterans, who wanted to start a family and have children, and so sought out foreign brides. It wasn't until the 1990s when the increasing influx of Southeast-Asian originated foreign spouses emerged. The most numerous brides came from Indonesia. The other nationalities include: Filipinos, Malaysians, Vietnamese, Thai, Singaporean and Burmese. After 1996, Vietnamese brides became more dominant than other Southeast-Asian foreign spouses. According to the Department of Household Registration Affairs, as of the end of January 2006, there are 366,916 foreign spouses in Taiwan. The majority of foreign spouses (61.15%) came from Mainland China. At the same time 74,965 (20.43%) foreign spouses came from Vietnam.

**Table 5. Number of Marriage by Bridegroom, Bride and Nationality in Taiwan**

Year	Bridegroom/ Bride	Total	Taiwanese	Total of foreigner	Area of Mainland China and H.K.			Foreigner		
					Total	Mainland	H.K. area	Total	Southeast Asia	Others
1998	Bridegroom	145,976	143,667	2,309	511	382	129	1,798	—	—
	Bride	145,976	125,380	20,596	11,940	11,785	155	8,656	—	—
1999	Bridegroom	173,209	170,412	2,797	844	697	147	1,953	—	—
	Bride	173,209	143,743	29,466	16,745	16,591	154	12,721	—	—
2000	Bridegroom	181,642	178,520	3,122	846	686	160	2,276	—	—
	Bride	181,642	139,798	41,844	22,782	22,611	171	19,062	—	—
2001	Bridegroom	170,515	167,115	3,400	983	834	149	2,417	806	1,611
	Bride	170,515	127,713	42,802	25,814	25,682	132	16,988	16,706	282
2002	Bridegroom	172,655	168,289	4,366	1,598	1,436	162	2,768	1,035	1,733
	Bride	172,655	128,008	44,647	27,308	27,167	141	17,339	17,002	337
2003	Bridegroom	171,483	165,482	6,001	3,207	3,060	147	2,794	1,044	1,750
	Bride	171,483	122,850	48,633	31,784	31,625	159	16,849	16,307	542
2004	Bridegroom	131,453	128,277	3,176	405	256	149	2,771	921	1,850
	Bride	131,453	103,319	28,134	10,567	10,386	181	17,567	17,182	385
2005	Bridegroom	141,140	138,001	2,139	452	282	170	1,687	751	1,936
	Bride	141,140	115,852	25,288	14,167	13,976	191	11,121	10,703	418

Source: Department of Household Registration Affairs, Ministry of the Interior (2006c).

In 2003, an important study conducted by the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) investigated the living conditions of foreign spouses in Taiwan (Ministry of the Interior 2004). This study contradicted the popular misconceptions that foreign spouses have a lot of problems in their marriages and with their children's health and that they have a higher than average birth rate. The MOI interviewed 175,909 foreign spouses, and the results indicated that the average age of foreign brides was 27 and the average age of their husbands was 39, an average age difference of 12 years. Veterans, aborigines, handicapped or low-income earners made up 19.7% of Taiwanese counterparts, and 46.5% of foreign spouses were introduced to their Taiwanese partners by relatives. Another 35.9% first met through a marriage broker, which is also very significant. The average birth rate of foreign spouses was 1.5 and 0.3% of foreign spouses' children were handicapped or mentally impaired compared to 4.6% of Taiwanese couples' children with the same health problems. The investigation has also shown that 34.6% of foreign spouses' education was at a junior high school level, and 31.9% of foreign spouses had graduated from primary school or below. Whereas 35.9% of foreign spouses' Taiwanese partners had a senior high school education and 34.6% were educated to the level of junior high.

#### **IV. NGOs and Foreign Workers and Foreign Spouses**

The provision of services to foreign workers and spouses has become a subject of much debate, especially on some "ideological issues" such as whether foreign workers are filling employment gaps or taking jobs away from Taiwanese. Despite the debate, both foreign workers and foreign spouses do need help in their cultural and daily life, especially with language and regulations. That is where NGOs can play a role to assist the newly added ethnic group in Taiwan.

Taiwan's Civil Law recognizes two different categories of people: juridical persons and natural persons. Therefore, people could form NGOs under these two distinct categories. First, natural persons could organize

civil organizations under official Taiwan regulations. Civil organizations can then be divided into three categories: vocational, social and political groups. They also could be divided into another two categories, national or local organizations, depending on how many people are involved and where they are located. Civil organizations are under the jurisdictions of the Central Government, Ministry of Interior and the department of social affairs in every local government - except where a specific ruling otherwise permits them. In recent years, civil organizations have increased the numbers and expanded their activities. They have thus made great contributions to balance economic growth and social development.

Secondly, juridical persons could organize themselves in the form of foundations. The nonprofit foundations are divided into different categories depending on the main goals of each foundation. If the foundation was set up for social welfare purposes, it could register as a social welfare foundation. Foundations with different objectives must register with different government agencies: a social welfare foundation should register with the MOI, and an educational foundation should register with the Ministry of Education. Prospective foundations must collect a certain amount of funds as endowment before they can register as a foundation. The amount of funds required vary from a few million NT dollars up to 30 million NT dollars.

In the following sections, we will describe the emerging local NGOs set up exactly to provide services for foreign workers and foreign spouses in Taiwan.

## **V. Local NGOs for Foreign Workers in Taiwan**

In Taiwan, migrant workers can join existing local labor union, but they are not allowed to organize their own unions. However, the local labor unions are not interested in inviting these foreign workers to be their members. The foreign workers are often being blamed for the cause of high unemployment rate. The local workers often criticize that foreign workers

have taken away jobs from them. It is almost impossible for foreign workers to find the necessary resources to establish any organization to help their needs and provide legal or institutional assistance. Meanwhile, some Taiwanese social workers complained that they feel perplexed because they are sometimes blamed for helping foreign workers and not helping local workers. As a result, there are only a few local NGOs established for foreign workers in Taiwan.

Furthermore, some systematic restrictions are made to prevent foreign workers from organizing their own NGOs. According to Paragraph 4, Article 53, Employment Service Act: foreign workers do not have the right to transfer their employment freely. In addition, foreign workers must live in accommodations provided by their employers. Accordingly, foreign workers cannot travel around easily. Many strict guidelines have been developed by employers or brokers to prevent foreign workers' escaping from their work places. As a result, it is not possible for them to have the time or resource to organize their own unions or to join an existing union.

Two incidents have facilitated the development of NGOs for foreign workers in Taiwan. The first incident occurred in 2001, when all the Catholic groups in Taiwan, concerned that accommodation fees were being ordered to be deducted from migrant workers' salary, formed an affiliation named "Catholic Migrant Advocates, Taiwan." The seven groups in the advocates' affiliation made a joint statement against the above unreasonable rule: Hope Workers' Center, Rerum Novarum Center, St. Christopher's Church, Hsin Chu Migrants' Concerns Desk, Migrant Workers' Concern Desk, Stella Maris International Service Center, Missionary Society of St. Columban Jpic Office. This was the first time many Catholic groups supporting foreign workers have come to join together in a network. What's more, they were even able to put some pressure on the current policies and measures.

The second incident was in 2003, when the Taiwan International Workers' Association (TIWA) launched a signature campaign aimed specifically at the drafting of a "domestic helpers' law." In June 2003, TIWA

started circuit workshops for the law, to gather opinions and suggestions from both local and migrant domestic workers. TIWA successfully organized the Promotion Alliance for the Household Services Act (PAHSA). It was the first time that 13 groups within PAHSA of local and foreign workers sat down together to discuss one common issue. The PAHSA member organizations are: TIWA, Hope Workers' Center, Hsin Chu Migrants' Concerns Desk, Migrant Workers' Concern Desk, Stella Maris International Service Center, Missionary Society of St. Columban Jpic, Chung-Hua Migrant Workers' Concern, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan Labor Concern Center, Catholic Hsinchu Migrant Workers' Concern Desk, Catholic Social Development Committee Migrant Workers' Concern Desk, Workers' Legislation Action Committee, and the International Rose Social Services Center.

Moreover, from a historical perspective, two unions are taking the lead in helping foreign workers, the Stella Maris International Service Center and the Hope Workers' Center. They both started in the late 1980s and both of them are Catholic organizations. The Stella Maris International Service Center is located in Kaohsiung City.

Prior to the mid 1980s, many foreign workers were working illegally for Taiwan's fishing industry. The foreign crewmen lived in boats, not far away from the coast. Many incidents occurred where foreign crewmen were injured yet it was very difficult to find anyone to help. In 1984 Miss M. R. Lin became concerned for these foreign workers, and in November 1985, with support from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, she set up the Fisherman's Concerns Desk. In June 1986, a committee was organized, and, The Fisherman Services Center Committee was established in the following year in 1987. Currently, two social workers are employed to assist these foreign crewmen, and the Center has provided help to over 4000 cases annually.

The Hope Workers' Center was funded by St. Columban missionaries in 1986. Six social workers are working in the center to help foreign workers adjust to their life in Taiwan and give them advice to solve their problems. The most outstanding asset of this Center is that the social workers can speak different languages. Together, these six social workers can communicate in nearly all of the languages that the foreign workers speak. Because of this, last year the Center's counselors managed 9,904 online help calls and 9,854 telephone consultations. They also have an emergency shelter for foreign workers under the CLA bailment.

The first local NGO to work for both foreign spouses and migrant workers was the Taiwan International Workers' Association (TIWA). The members of TIWA are not workers, but they all have prior experience as labor activists and are the members of local unions. The most significant work TIWA does is to promote intercommunication between local and migrant workers to defend migrants' human rights. In 2003, two specific migrant workers' organizations, the Taiwan Indonesian Migrant Workers' Association (TIMWA) and KaSaPi (a Filipino workers' organization) were organized under the support of TIWA. TIWA also fights racism and classism within Taiwanese society by organizing cultural events such as musical and dance concerts, cooking classes, poetry contests, and photo exhibits to correct negative stereotypes that some Taiwanese might have about Southeast Asian's (Taiwan International Workers' Association 2006). These cultural events successfully demonstrated the power of culture and deeply touched the inner feelings of foreign workers and spouses. Also, these cultural events provided local people a chance to understand the foreign workers and spouses personally.

We should also mention the Taiwan Grassroots Women Workers' Center which was established in July 1988. The Taiwan Grassroots Women Workers' Center is not an officially registered NGO and is funded by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. The main goal of this Center is to provide opportunities for women factory workers and family subcontractors to

develop women workers' unions and workers' movements through the promotion of feminism. Currently, 12 consultants, two full-time organizers, 11 workers and aborigines women make up the operational staff of the organization. All of the workers and staff are volunteers. After 2002, concern for migrant workers and foreign spouses became their main objectives. Now they visit Sanshia foreign workers' detention center everyday and provide these escaped foreign workers with legal advice and court assistance. They also provide temporary shelter for migrant women and men and make some communication with the sending countries.

Overall, as can be seen from Table 6, we can categorize local NGOs for foreign workers in three ways: first, by their funding; second, by whether they are registered or not; and third, by the task they perform. So first, TIWA, TAVOI and the Chinese Development Foundation are self-financed NGOs and they are Catholic, Christian, and Muslim-funded foundations. It is interesting to detect that there is no Buddhist-funded organization on the list for foreign workers in Taiwan, despite Buddhism being so popular in Taiwan's society. Second, the 'Taiwan Grassroots Women Workers' Center is the only one not officially registered as a NGO working for foreign workers and spouses. Third, what we have found from interviews and documents is that the core service offered by most of the foreign workers NGOs is the provision of emergency shelter. All of the Catholic, Christian and Muslim-funded organizations have provided such service. Actually, emergency shelter is the only service offered to foreign workers by the Chinese Development Foundation. The main goal for the Chinese Development Foundation is to provide services for mentally impaired children.

TIWA is the organization which is the most enthusiastic about intercommunication between local and migrant workers, and it is the only organization in which the key members are experienced labor activists as well as members of local unions. TIWA is also the most active on social issues. In contrast with TIWA social work activism, most of the religious



funded organizations are led by clergy. So, if the person who was responsible for these services leaves, the organization might have to stop providing the services. Such was the case with PAHSA's International Rose Social Services Center. On the other hand, the Hope Workers' Center is an example where the services could continue because services for foreign workers were designated as one of the church's major activities.

From the above descriptions, we could provide the following overall portrayal for NGOs for foreign workers in Taiwan:

(1) According to Article 52, Employment Service Act: foreign workers are now allowed to stay in Taiwan for a maximum of six years. But before 2002, foreign workers were allowed to stay in Taiwan for a maximum of only three years. Before 2002, it was very difficult for the NGOs in Taiwan to keep well trained foreign workers as organizers. However, it might be different in the future as foreign workers stay much longer now. Taiwan's NGOs for foreign workers shall respond to this accordingly.

(2) Most of the NGOs for foreign workers in Taiwan are basically providing reactive, symptom oriented services. They often take care of those workers who are unfairly treated, in dealing with the "symptoms" of a faulty system related to foreign workers. Active NGOs are therefore established to fight against the unfair system on behalf of the mistreated foreign workers.

(3) Very few NGOs for foreign workers have cooperated with international labor unions. Therefore, they cannot receive more resources to put pressure on the government by using international experiences from other countries. Therefore, the NGOs for foreign workers in Taiwan need to develop outreach activities for international cooperation as it is impossible to solve all of the problems within Taiwan while international migration of labor is - after all - global in nature.

**Table 6. Taiwan's NGOs for Foreign Workers 2006**

	Name	Funded and established timing for foreign workers	Main goals	Participants
1	Stella Maris international Service Center	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (1985)	To provide service and help to foreign crewman.	2 social workers 2 clergy persons and volunteers
2	Hope Workers Center	St. Columban Missionaries (1986)	To advocate for foreign workers' welfare, help them to adjust to their life in Taiwan and help them to solve their problems.	6 social workers, 1 manager 1 deputy manager
3	Taiwan Grassroots Women Workers' Center	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (1988)	To provide opportunities for factory women and family subcontractors to reform the male-dominated workers' unions, and to develop women workers' unions and workers' movements through the promotion of feminism.	There are 12 consultants, two full-time organizers, 11 workers and aborigines women
4	Taiwan Association for Victims of Occupational Injuries (TAVOI)	self-financed (1992)	To organize the occupational accident victims and their families to help themselves and also each other.	Not clear
5	Taiwan International Workers' Association (TIWA)	self-financed (October 1999)	The first local NGO in Taiwan to work for the rights of both foreign spouses and migrant workers. TIWA promotes inter-communication between local and migrant workers and defend for migrants' human rights. TIWA supports migrant workers' empowerment, including helping them to organize their own independent organizations, such as the Taiwan Indonesian Workers' Association (TIWAWA) for the Indonesian workers and KaSaPi for Filipino workers.	Chairmen, general secretary and executive secretary volunteers

6	Hsinchu Catholic Diocese, Migrant Concern Desk--Vietnam Foreign Workers and Spouses Center	St. Columban Missionaries (2000)	To help foreign workers adjust to Taiwan.	2 social workers
7	Chung-Hua Center for Migrants' Concerns Center	Catholic Church	To help foreign workers adjust to Taiwan.	
8	Catholic Migrant Workers' Concern Desk	St. Columban Missionaries	To help foreign workers adjust to Taiwan.	
9	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan Labor Concern Center	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan	To help foreign workers adjust to Taiwan.	
10	Rerum Novarum Center	St. Columban Missionaries (1994)	To demonstrate the God's love and stand up for social justice. To advocate disadvantage people's basic human rights and develop community work, social action and voluntary work.	
11	Chinese Muslim Association	Muslim Association in Taiwan	To help all Muslims adjust to their life in Taiwan.	
12	Catholic Saint Church	St.Columban Missionaries		
13	ST. Paul'S Church	Catholic Church		
14	Chinese Muslim Association Kaohsiung	Muslim Association in Taiwan		
15	Chinese Development Foundation	self-financed	To provide foreign workers with an emergency shelter when they are in trouble.	

Source: Own survey.

(4) Also, rarely does any inter-organizational cooperation between existing NGOs for foreign workers in Taiwan occur. They are indeed too busy with their own job and fail to talk to each other. As a result, we do not discover any inter-organization effort among NGOs to effectively exert pressures in challenging the existing policies or measures concerning foreign workers.

(5) Finally, there is not much collaboration between academics and NGOs in Taiwan on the issue of foreign workers. No fruitful exchange has ever been made so far, and we feel strongly about the urgency to develop necessary cooperation between the two social agents.

## **VI. Local NGOs for Foreign Spouses in Taiwan**

The materials on local NGOs for foreign spouses are drawn from the following four sources. First, data was collected from the Department of Household Registration Affairs, MOI where those NGOs have been granted with the MOI's Fund for Assisting Foreign Spouses. Second, data was collected from the Children's Bureau in the same Ministry where those NGOs have been contracted with the foreign spouse's projects. Third, data was collected from the United Way of Taiwan where those NGOs have applied for the foreign spouse's projects. Forty-six NGOs were on the file and 39 agreed to provide information. In addition, information on 5 more NGOs were provided by Taiwan Fund for Children and Families and the Eden Social Welfare Foundation. That makes up a total of 44 NGOs for analysis in this section.

In January 2005, the Executive Yuan issued to collect \$3 billion NT over the next ten years for the Guidance and Care Fund for foreign spouses, in order to help Taiwan's foreign spouses. That is a sum of \$300 million NT per year (Department of Household Registration Affairs, Ministry of the Interior 2006d). Many related NGOs have then applied for this fund. As shown in Table 7, most of the foreign spouses NGOs started their services between 2003 and 2005. Only 6 NGOs launched their service projects before 2003. It is

expected there will be more NGOs to propose their projects for foreign spouses in the future. But, we can also see from Table 7 that 5 NGOs have ceased or will terminate their projects. In most cases, when interviewed, these organizations explained that the main reason why they have to stop the projects. The main reason is the shortage of skilled professionals capable of doing the job.

The NGOs listed above all stated that one major incentive behind their decision to take service for foreign spouses as their organizational goal has been the government's related policies and measures and the subsequential funds available for them to apply. Therefore, it is essential to note that government fund did play an important role to facilitate the direction and functioning of the NGOs for foreign spouses.

Several significant cases of NGOs for foreign spouses are portrayed in the following. The Loving Sisters Association's main goal was originally to organize a reading class. However, after running their first vocabulary class, the foreign spouses and the workers became close friends. Consequently, inspired by the foreign spouses and with the help of government social workers, The Loving Sisters Association for Foreign Spouses was established in 2005. Amazingly, there are already over 100 foreign spouses from six different countries participating as members of the association. The passion of the members moved the association's decision to apply for establishing a national association for all foreign spouses in Taiwan in 2006. We have seen that foreign spouses have become a very active and effective group in sharp contrast to foreign workers as they strive to support each other by organizing themselves. The same is true for the Taiwan Nanyang Sisters Association which has two branches, one in Kaohsiung County and the other in Taipei County. The initial members of the Taiwan Nanyang Sisters Association met at a foreign spouses' language class in 1995. A similar class ran 13 times, between July 1995 and January 2003 for different foreign spouses. There were 450 foreign spouses who have taken the classes and have considered setting up an association for themselves. Finally, after

nearly 8 years, they finally established an association for themselves in December 2003. The Taiwan Nanyang Sisters Association and The Loving Sisters Association are the two NGOs primarily run by foreign spouses themselves.

Eden Social Welfare Foundation has been one of the leading NGOs in Taiwan, providing services for disabled people for over 23 years. It now has 56 branches and two foreign branches with about 1000 employees. They regularly assess their services to decide in which direction they should go. In 2002, after careful evaluation, the chair of the Foundation decided that to provide services for foreign spouses met their organization's goal to care for disadvantaged people. After careful planning, the Foundation launched such a program to set up on-line help for foreign spouses in August 2002, and to date have provided over 10,000 foreign spouses with advices. In the same period, they have recruited and trained 60 volunteers especially for foreign spouses. Different projects have been initiated, providing assistance to thousands of foreign spouses. They even planned to extend their projects, in which more branches and more churches are to be involved. The Eden Social Welfare Foundation is a case in point where foreign spouses service was adopted to be a new focus for an established NGO.

Another two cases, The Pearl S. Buck Foundation and the Chinese Association for Relief and Ensuing Services, represent the third type. The main objective of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation is to help disadvantaged children, especially mixed race children. Because of this original organizational goal, the foundation decided to extend their services to reach out to foreign spouses and their families. The Chinese Association for Relief and Ensuing Services was set up to help anyone who came from Mainland China after 1950 (Chinese Association for Relief and Ensuing Services 2006). The Association was government funded at first, then in the 1990s became a self-financed association. The original goal of the Association was to help those mainlanders who fled from China to Taiwan after WWII, and now they have shift the focus of their services to those foreign spouses from China.

**Table 7. Taiwan's NGOs for Foreign Spouses 2006**

	Institutions	Service starting year	Services provided	Total cases served	Staff
1	Taiwan Nanyang Sisters Association	July 1995	To organize reading classes	450 cases	100 members, 2 full time workers, 2 part time workers
2	Loving Sisters Association	April 2005	To provide personal counseling	Over 100 members, 6 different countries	
3	The Pearl S. Buck Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan (Rep. of China)	2000	To provide care and assistance	Over 100 cases	1 social worker.
4	Lanshin Women and Children Center	2001	To render help to the victims of domestic violence	Over 100 cases and 60 cases	3 social workers
5	Lite-On Cultural Foundation	2001	To offer reading and learning classes	Over 100 cases	1 social worker
6	Palette Association	2001	To provide care to the needed individuals		
7	Good Shepherd Sisters Foundation (Kaohsiung Branch)	May 2003	To offer assistance to women and their children	about 200 cases	1 social worker, 1 supervisor
8	Good Shepherd Sisters Foundation (Taipei Branch)	2003	To offer assistance to the domestic violence victims		3 social workers.
9	Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (Yilan Branch)	2003	To provide assistance to the children	Over few hundred cases	3 social workers
10	Taiwan Children and Families Fund (Penghu Division Office)	2003	To provide assistance to the children	13 cases	2 social workers
11	Eden Social Welfare Foundation	2002	To provide direct services	Over 70 cases	2 social workers
12	Lucky Social Welfare Foundation	2003	To deliver services with government projects	Over 30 cases	3 social workers

13	Dragon Millennium Youth Foundation	2003	Apply for local government's projects	62 foreign families and 98 their children	1 social worker	2005 stop the services
14	Hon-Yu Social Welfare and Charity Foundation	2003	Apply for the Ministry of the Interior and local government's projects		1 social worker volunteers	
15	World Peace League	2003	Apply for government's projects		2 social workers	
16	YMCA of Taiwan of Tainan	2003	Apply for local government's projects		2 social workers, 1 supervisor	
17	Financial Group Legal Person Buddhism Kindly Aids The General Hospital Dalin Branch	2004	To provide services to those needed	200 foreign spouses' families 40-50 after school children	1 social workers	
18	Hsinchu County Commonweal Charity Association	2004	To offer child care	193 foreign spouses' families	2 social workers	
19	The Judicial Association Taichung County	2004	To offer legal assistance		2006 recruit social worker	
20	Nantou Living Rebuilt Association	2004	To provide services to the children	unknown	3 social workers volunteers	
21	Catholic Hualien Diocese	2004	To offer legal and social services	Over 400 cases.	1 social worker volunteers	
22	Mennonite Good Shepherd Center	2004	To provide assistance with government projects	Over 100 cases	2 social workers	2005 stop the services
23	The Methodist Church of Taiwan	2004	To offer personal assistance	314 foreign spouses' families, 462 cases	1 social worker support by other social worker	



24	Salvation Charitable Foundation	2004	To provide care and help	Over 100 cases	1 social worker support by other social worker	2006 stop the services
25	CAEIP Early Intervention Association for Children with Disabilities	2004	To offer assistance to the disabled children	unknown	1 social worker	
26	Taiwan Lifeline International for (Chiayi County Branch)	2004	To offer personal assistance	1000 cases	3 social workers	
27	Taichung County Pu-Ji Social Welfare Charity Foundation	2004	To provide personal assistance		2 social workers	Will stop the services
28	Likes doubling the Community Service Association	2005	To provide personal assistance	30 foreign spouses' families	1 social worker volunteers	
29	Chinese Social Welfare Foundation	2005	To provide personal help	20 foreign spouses' families	1 social worker	
30	World Peace League	2005	To offer personal assistance		1 social worker 2 supervisors	
31	Taiwan Lifeline International for Nantou County	2005	To grant personal help	200 cases	1 social worker 6 volunteers	
32	Joy Kind Compassion Foundation	2005	To offer personal assistance		4 social workers 1 volunteer	
33	Child Welfare League Foundation, R.O.C.for Miaoli County Branch	May 2005	To provide personal assistance	24 cases and 50 cases for summer camp	1 social worker 1 supervisor 13 volunteers	
34	Wind Dragon Education Foundation	May 2005	To provide personal assistance		1 social worker 1 supervisor	
35	Chung-Hua Voluntary Association	2005	To provide personal help		1 social worker	

36	St. Theresa Opportunity Center	2005	To provide personal assistance	1 social worker 2 teachers	Service terminated in 2005
37	World Vision Foundation				
38	Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (Chiayi Branch Office)				
39	Eden Social Welfare Foundation (Chiayi Branch)				
40	Christianity The Power Person To Develop Association				
41	Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (Hualien Branch Office)				
42	Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (Tainan Branch Office)				
43	Taiwan Fund for Children and Families (Nantou Branch Office)				
44	Chinese Association For Relief and Ensuing Services	1950	To offer assistance to foreign spouses only from China		
45	Taiwan International Workers' Association (TIWA)	1999	To provide personal assistance	1 general secretary and 1 executive secretary, volunteers	
46	Taiwan Grassroots Women Workers' Center	2002	To provide personal help	12 consultants, two full-time organizers, 11 workers and aborigine women who make up the operational staff of the organization.	

Source: Own Survey.

As can be seen from Table 8, the NGOs services for foreign spouses in Taiwan can be categorized into counseling advice services, lectures for foreign spouses, parent and child counseling, financial assistance, and providing information about foreign spouses and volunteer training. If we look back at projects created before 2005, most of them offered language teaching and life adjustment counseling. According to the MOI in 2004 "The survey of foreign and Mainland spouses' living conditions in 2003," the two most popular services requested by foreign spouses were language training and job training (Ministry of the Interior 2004).

**Table 8. NGOs Services for Foreign Spouses in Taiwan 2006**

Services provided	Family Interview	Telephone Interview
	Case Management	Case Work
	Counselling	Counselling
Advices	On Line Advice	Legal Assistance
	Legal Advice	Marriage Counselling
	Medical Information Services	Early Intervention Check
	Employment	Transferring
Lecture	Parental Education	Life Adjustment Class
	Motorcycle License	Language Class
	Computer Class	Folklore and Religious Class
	Different Acquirement Class	Indigenous Cultural Learning Class
	Educational Lecture	Life Educational Class
Parent and Child Services	Parent And Child	Group For Parent And Child
	Parent And Child Reading Class	Summer/Winter Camp
	After School Care Services	Group For Preschool Children
	Group Counseling For Children	Group For Foreign Spouses
	Parents' Meeting	Activities For Foreign Spouses
Financial Assistance	Emergency Assistance	Financial Support
Information service	Safe Guard for Youth and child	Multiple Cultural
	Domestic Violence	
Volunteer Training	Volunteer Training for foreign spouses	

Source: Own survey.

To summarize, what are being discussed about local NGOs for foreign spouses in Taiwan, the following general observations are useful. First, the majority of NGOs' projects for foreign spouses rely heavily on government financial support. Therefore, most of them provide the services which are approved by government agencies or under the regulation of the government's related policies.

Second, a few active NGOs are in fact self-organized by foreign spouses themselves that is unheard of for the case of foreign workers.

Third, most of the NGOs for foreign spouses are project oriented. Many NGOs apply for related project in order to receive financial support.

Fourth, interorganizational cooperation among NGOs for foreign spouses in Taiwan is underdeveloped. We have not found any significant cooperation between NGOs for foreign spouses even on similar issues.

Fifth, there is little exchange between local NGOs and international NGOs on international marriage as well. It is a pity for local NGOs not to learn from the international experiences as marriage migration has now become a global phenomenon.

## **VII. Concluding Remark**

We can see from the above discussions that the development of organized NGOs for foreign workers and foreign spouses has been relatively new and still underdeveloped. Quite a lot of improvements remain to be made in order to better serve these two new ethnic groups in Taiwan. It is found that the interorganizational cooperation among different local NGOs, and between Taiwan and other related international organizations are quite limited. We have exposed that the policies concerning the introduction and treatment for foreign spouses and workers in Taiwan are not very sensible, especially because the existing “brokerage system” involved might incur exploitation of foreign workers and foreign spouses.

Therefore, how to strengthen the role of those already functioning local NGOs and further facilitate their service networks with likeminded international NGOs should be an immediate concern. Likewise the advocacy role for reforming the related policies and measures for foreign workers and spouses is then expected to be strengthened among those NGOs.

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