



The Effectiveness of the
“WE Stand”
Programme for Female Migrant
Workers and Ethnic Minority
Women:
A Research Report

Leung Lai Ching and RainLily

April 2015



**The Effectiveness of the “WE Stand Programme for
Female Migrant Workers and Ethnic Minority Women”:
A Research Report**

「凝・動」外籍傭工及少數族裔婦女計劃服務成效：
研究報告

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Publisher : RainLily
出版 風雨蘭

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Date of Publish : April 2015
出版日期 2015 年 4 月

ISBN : 978-988-131133-1-7
國際書號

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Executive summary

In Hong Kong, there are 320,988 migrant workers (MW) and 451,183 people of ethnic minority origin (EM). Many researchers have pointed out the prevalence and seriousness of the problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault towards MWs, which often remains unreported by the victims to the police. Although little work has been done to understand the sexual violence experiences of EM women in Hong Kong, the trauma and negative impact on mental health that sexual violence can cause is well-documented.

In view of the seriousness of the problem, and the lack of specialized rape crisis services in Hong Kong (particularly one that is catered toward working with MWs and EW women), RainLily started a project entitled “WE Stand Programme for Female Migrant Workers and Ethnic Minority Women” to support survivors of sexual violence from 1 February 2012.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the WE Stand programme services, so as to understand its strengths, and through the feedback from service users and frontline workers, to arrive at recommendations for service improvement. This study focuses on two components of the programme, namely, “24 hour one-stop crisis intervention and counselling” and “educational workshops”. The voices of service users and RainLily’s social workers were included in the study.

The findings of the study show that survivors are likely to face a range of problems after being sexually assaulted, such as emotional problems, financial problems, relationship problems, decision making in pregnancy, and problems encountered in the police reporting procedure. The WE Stand programme provides survivors with accompaniment services, legal support, tangible support, interpretation, and referral to other support services such as emergency shelters and psychiatric treatment. The services received positive feedback from the respondents. Respondents showed positive changes after the intervention.

From the perspective of RainLily’s social workers, emotional support/counselling, accompaniment and tangible support were the common needs of sexual assault survivors. They generally agreed that their intervention was meaningful in that it brought about positive changes in service users, and was welcomed by the police. However, the social workers encountered some difficulties in working with MW and EM survivors, including cultural and religious differences, issues with interpretation service, inconsistencies and lengthy procedures in police reporting.

The WE Stand programme's educational workshops aim to increase participants' knowledge about sexual violence, clarify rape myths, and increase participants' sense self-efficacy and confidence in taking action to protect themselves. The respondents of this study reported that the workshops met their expectations. In three focus group interviews, MWs, EM women and girls gave positive feedback about the programme. After attending the workshops, their level of awareness and knowledge of the sexual violence had increased, and they had gained more gender awareness and self-confidence. However, they suggested having more sessions in which to practice and consolidate what they have learnt in the workshops.

From the perspective of the RainLily workers, EMs and MWs possessed very little prior knowledge about sexual violence and victims' rights. The need for gender sensitivity and cultural sensitivity while providing intervention was also emphasised. The RainLily workers also expressed that they encountered some difficulties in working with this target group, for example, the lack of formal protocol or guidelines for intervention, inadequate support from migrant worker employment agencies, long working hours of MWs, and family responsibilities of EM women.

The following recommendations are made to the WE Stand Programme for the future development of services: 1) To develop a peer counsellor programme, 2) To provide training to interpreters and other professionals, 3) To suggest improvements in police handling procedures, 4) To provide in-service training for RainLily workers, 5) To promote sex education in schools and in the public, 6) To advocate for policy change and 7) To strengthen service coordination.

研究摘要

香港至今約有 320,988 名外籍家庭傭工(外傭)及 451,183 名少數族裔人士。不少研究指出，外傭及少數族裔面對嚴重的性騷擾及性侵犯後鮮有舉報。雖然針對少數族裔面對性暴力的研究不多，但有不少紀錄證明性暴力對倖存者的精神健康造成的負面影響。

基於上述問題的嚴重性，以及本港欠缺對外傭及少數族裔女性的強暴危機處理專責服務，故風雨蘭於 2012 年 2 月 1 日起開展一項名為「凝·動」外籍傭工及少數族裔婦女計劃(簡稱「凝·動」計劃)，為外傭及少數族裔的性暴力倖存者提供支援。

是項研究的目的旨在評估「凝·動」計劃的服務成效及強項。此研究主要針對「24 小時一站式危機介入及輔導服務」及「教育工作坊」兩部份。服務使用者及風雨蘭社工的意見亦歸納在內。透過服務使用者及前線工作人員的對服務的意見和評價，提出改善服務的建議。

研究發現，性暴力倖存者受到性侵犯後均面對各種問題，包括情緒、財政、關係建立、懷孕決定，以及報案時受到不公平對待等問題。「凝·動」計劃為倖存者提供外展陪同、法律支援、實物支援及翻譯服務，亦包括緊急庇護服務及心理治療等轉介服務。這些支援均得到受訪者的正面評價，認為有關的服務為他們帶來正面的改變。

風雨蘭的社工認為，情緒支援/輔導、外展陪同及實物支援都是性暴力倖存者的共同需要。他們相信介入工作是有意義的，能為服務對象帶來正面的轉變，同時他們的服務亦得到警方支持。然而，社工們為倖存者提供服務時遇到不少困難，包括文化及宗教上的差異、語言翻譯的誤差、警方處理個案時的非貫徹性手法和冗長的報案程序等。

至於「凝·動」計劃的教育工作坊，此項服務旨在增加參加者對性暴力的知識、釐清強暴的迷思、增加參加者反性暴力及自我保護的信心。受訪者表示工作坊符合他們的期望。三個焦點小組訪談的資料顯示，受訪者對工作坊均有正面評價，

認為參加工作坊後，她們對性暴力的認知、性別意識及自信心均有所提升。不過，她們期望可增加工作坊的節數，以實習及鞏固她們所學的知識。

風雨蘭社工亦指出，外傭及少數族裔女性普遍欠缺性暴力及倖存者權益的知識，因此，社工需要提升她們的性別及文化意識，而當中並遇到不少困難，包括欠缺有系統的介入程序指引、外傭中介公司支援不足、外傭的長工時及少數族裔婦女的家庭責任等。

是次研究提出以下的建議：1) 發展朋輩輔導計劃；2) 為翻譯員及其他外傭/少數族裔機構提供培訓服務；3) 建議警方改善處理個案的程序；4) 為風雨蘭社工提供在職培訓，提高他們對少數族裔女性的認識；5) 在學校及社區推行全面性教育；6) 加強政策倡議的工作；7) 加強「凝·動」計劃及其他外傭及少數族裔機構間的聯繫。

I. Background of the study

1.1 Sexual assault experiences of female migrant workers and ethnic minority women in Hong Kong

Migrant workers

In 2013, it was reported that there were 320,988 migrant workers (MWs) in Hong Kong of which 51% and 46% were from the Philippines and Indonesia respectively, followed by Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and other nationalities (Immigration Department, 2013). Females accounted for 98.5% of foreign domestic helpers, while males were 1.5%. More than half of the MWs were aged between 25-34 years, and most of them had resided in Hong Kong for a length of between one and four years (Census and Statistics Department, 2011a).

Sexual harassment and sexual assault against MWs often remains unreported by the victims. As highlighted by the Equal Opportunities Commission (2014), 6.5% of foreign domestic workers (mainly Filipino and Indonesian) have reported being sexually harassed in the workplace, or at a work-related event in the preceding 12 months (and this figure, of course, does not even include those incidents which remain unreported). The forms of sexual harassment experienced by MWs included oral/textual/electronic messages (44%), non-verbal sex cues (17%), hostile environment, i.e. working in conditions in which they were in fear of, or under threat of, sexual violence (17%) and physical contact (14%). According to the survey, the most common alleged harassers were male employers (33%), female employers (29%), followed by persons living in the same household (20%), friends/relatives of employers (6%), and others (12%) such as “grandfather” and “employer’s staff” (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2014).

The EOC study also showed that of the respondents who had encountered sexual harassment, 77% took action such as reporting to police or seeking help from the Consulate General and workers’ groups/associations/religious groups. However, 23% of the respondents did nothing, mainly because they were in fear of losing their jobs. Another finding of the survey was that 64% of the respondents had not received any information on preventing sexual harassment. Only 47% of the Indonesian workers and 29% of the Filipino workers indicated that they had access to such information (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2014).

Another study conducted by the Mission for Migrant Workers (MFMW) in 2013 echoes the findings of EOC’s study. The study showed that 6% of the respondents experienced sexual abuse ranging from sexual innuendos/slurs, touching or fondling of

body parts, to rape in the residence of their employers. It is believed these abuses are largely unreported (Mission for Migrant Workers, 2013).

Another research conducted by Amnesty International revealed the reasons why MWs who are at risk of being sexual abused are unwilling to report police. First, the vast majority of Indonesian migrant workers had their documents kept by either their employer or the placement agency in Hong Kong, and about 30% of the respondents were not allowed to leave the employer's house. This implies that the MWs were neither at liberty to contact external sources for information to enhance their knowledge about sexual abuse, nor could they seek help if incidents happened. Second, should MWs leave their job or have their contract terminated, they normally have to pay the full recruitment fee again. Respondents reported if they complain about being treated badly, they risked being accused of not being a good worker, and having their contract terminated, or the placement agency would manipulate the situation in order to collect a new recruitment fee. The fear of contract termination after reporting has compelled Indonesian migrants to suffer in silence in abusive and exploitative jobs. Third, the "Two-Week Rule" acts as a barrier to reporting. If a migrant domestic worker leaves an abusive situation and is not re-employed within two weeks, she will be deported from Hong Kong, hence making the practicalities of going against an abusive employer a difficult and costly task. The only alternative is to apply for a visa extension at a cost of HK\$160 (US\$20) for 14 days, which does not allow her to work. It also takes nearly two months to take a case to the Labour Tribunal. During this time, the victim would face the cost of renewing her visa every 14 days, and have to pay for her own accommodation, food and other expenses – all without any income (Amnesty International, 2013).

Ethnic minorities

In 2011, there were 451,183 people of ethnic minorities constituting 6.4% of the total population in Hong Kong. The majority of the ethnic groups were Asians (other than Chinese), which included Indonesians (29.6%), and Filipinos (29.5%), Indians (6.3%), Pakistanis (4.0%), Nepalese (3.7%), Japanese (2.8%), Thais (2.5%), other Asians (1.6%), Koreans (1.2%) and others (0.3%). The median ages for males and females of ethnic minorities were 35.6 years and 33.4 respectively. The sex ratio of ethnic minorities was 295 males per 1000 females. Among the ethnic minorities, a great majority of them (86.7%) were born outside Hong Kong while 13.3% were born in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2011b).

Little work has been done to understand the sexual violence experiences of ethnic minority women in Hong Kong. Tonsing's study (2010) was the only research study about the domestic violence experiences among South Asian women in Hong Kong. However, the sexual violence experiences of ethnic minority women in Hong Kong

remain unknown.

Sexual violence against women is well-known to cause serious trauma to, and adversely affect mental health of the victims. As Chung et al. (2009) pointed out, the trauma experienced by sexual assault survivors is the interlocking experience of societal traumas such as racism, sexism and poverty. Both the cultural and legal status of EMs increase vulnerability for abuse, and create barriers to seeking help (Raj and Silverman, 2002). Tonsing (2014) pointed out that the help-seeking behaviors of ethnic minority women is influenced by immigration-related factors such as language barriers, uncertain legal status, immigration laws, availability and accessibility to resources and economic support.

In view of the seriousness of the problem, and the lack of specialized rape crisis services for MWs and EM women in Hong Kong, RainLily started a project entitled “WE Stand Programme for Female Migrant Workers and Ethnic Minority Women” to support survivors of sexual violence from 1 February 2012.

1.2 Background information of the programme:

The “WE Stand Programme for Female Migrant Workers (MW) and Ethnic Minority Women (EM)” (hereafter WE Stand Programme) consists of five major service areas: 1) 24 hour one-stop crisis intervention and counseling; 2) Educational workshops; 3) Professional training for EM and MW service provider workers; 4) Hotline volunteers training and 5) Hotline services. The targets of services 1, 2 and 5 are female migrant workers and ethnic minority women residing in Hong Kong.

1.2.1 24-hour one-stop crisis intervention and counselling

The crisis intervention and counselling services of the WE Stand programme aim to provide not only timely support to MW and EM sexual violence survivors in police reporting, but also to provide relevant medical, social and community resources for facilitating their recovery. A total number of 18 EM and 37 MW have been serviced since established.

Service users	Total
Ethnic minority women	18
Female migrant workers	37
Total	55

Services provided by WE Stand include counseling/emotional support, medical check-ups and treatment, accompanying survivors to report to the police and attend court hearings, as well as access to free, professional legal advice. The counseling service also extends to survivors' family members and/or significant others. In addition, tangible support such as finding shelters, financial assistance and food will be offered to those who are in need.

1.2.2 Community education workshops & groups

The aim of conducting educational workshops is to raise the awareness and knowledge of MWs, EM women and EM girls on sexual violence, and to encourage them to seek help if such an incident arises.

The workshops create a space for participants to talk about their understanding and experiences of sexual violence, rape myths, relationships, identity, and gender roles, within the framework of cultural differences and perspectives. The education component provides participants with clear information about the definition/s and prevalence of sexual violence, relevant laws and legal rights of survivors, self-protection skills, as well as Information about mainstream services, such as police and medical procedures. From 1 February 2012 to 31 August 2014, a total of 42 workshops were conducted which had involved 1,545 participants.

	Workshops	Sessions	Participants
Ethnic minority women	14	23	295
Ethnic minority girls	6	19	106
Female migrant workers	22	33	1144
Total	42	75	1545

1.2.3 Professional trainings for service providers

The WE Stand programme provides training to police, medical personnel, social workers, interpreters and other helping professionals in order to facilitate their knowledge and skills in handling sexual violence cases.

The training components include best practice in handling sexual violence cases, case management of sexual violence survivors, psychological impact and needs of sexual violence survivors, law and procedures related to sexual violence, management of sexual harassment in the workplace, and clarification of myths related to sexual violence.

1.2.4 Hotline volunteers' training

WE Stand provides training to the volunteers who staff the RainLily hotline. The training covers topics such as self-reflection on sexual violence and rape myths, crisis intervention, psychological and physical impact on survivors, relevant ordinances and legal procedures, and basic counseling skills. The training is conducted in the format of talks and workshops, a training camp and hotline placement.

1.2.5 Hotline service

The hotline service is open to both the general public and sexual violence victims for enquiries and emotional support for issues related to sexual violence. Moreover, information on legal procedures, medical and social support services is available. The RainLily hotline operates 69 hours per week, from Monday to Friday (9:00-22:00), Saturdays (9:00-13:00) and public holidays (except Sunday).

The WE Stand programme was initially granted funding for a 3-year period, and the continuation of the programme is subject to review. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided by WE Stand, so as to understand the strengths of RainLily in providing services to MW and EM sexual assault survivors. Through the feedback from service users and frontline workers, this study also aims to arrive at recommendations to improve its services. Due to resource limitations, the focus will be on only two service components of the WE Stand programme: 1) “24 hour one stop crisis intervention and counseling” to the survivors and 2) “educational workshops” in the community. This project is a collaborative research between City University of Hong Kong and RainLily conducted between February 2014 and January 2015.

II. Objectives of the study

This study aims to collect data to understand the effectiveness of the services provided to female migrant workers (MW) and ethnic minorities (EM) under the “WE Stand programme”, in order to improve the services in Hong Kong. The study has four specific objectives:

- To explore the needs and problems of EM and MW survivors after sexual assault incidents
- To identify the changes in service users after receiving the services from the WE Stand Programme
- To examine the factors that leading to the changes in service users
- To understand the satisfaction level of service users of the WE Stand programme

III. Methods of the study

This study adopted a qualitative research method to collect the views of service users and the RainLily workers who have been involved in the delivery of the WE Stand Programme. Two types of interviews were conducted: in-depth interviews and focus group interviews.

3.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the views of service users on the quality of service, and the impact of the 24 hour one-stop crisis intervention and counselling services on them. A semi-structured interview guideline was prepared for interview.

In total, 8 service users, including 5 MWs and 3 EMs were interviewed. Their ages ranged from 19-54 years. 3 of them were Muslim, 3 of them were Christian, and 1 was Catholic. Education levels ranged from primary to university. 2 of respondents were born in Hong Kong, and the rest have resided in Hong Kong for between 2 to 20 years.

Counseling and accompaniment services were the most common services that this set of respondents received from RainLily (Please refer to appendix I for the types of services they received). Each interview lasted for 1 hour to 1 ½ hours. Half of the interviews needed interpretation due to the limited English or Cantonese language ability of the respondents.

3.2 Focus group interviews

In total, three focus group interviews were conducted for this sample of participants of WE Stand programme's educational workshops. One focus group interview was also conducted for RainLily's social workers.

The purpose of the educational workshop participants' focus groups were to collect feedback to understand participants' views on the services received, and the impact that the workshops had on them. Pre and post questionnaires were distributed to participants before the interviews in order to facilitate the focus group discussions. The 3 groups were:

- A. EM women: 3 respondents aged from 33 to 35 years, all were Muslim and of Pakistani origin. They had lived in Hong Kong for periods of between 15-17 years. One of them had primary education level, and one had never received any formal education. Both of these respondents required interpretation. The third respondent had university level education and was able to communicate in

English. They were participants of the workshop organized by RainLily named “Health & Beauty Class”.

- B. EM girls: 2 female, secondary form 4 students joined the interview. Both were born in Hong Kong; one was of Indian ethnicity, and the other was of Pakistani-Indonesian ethnicity. They identified themselves as Muslim and Catholic respectively. Both respondents spoke fluent English. They were participants of the workshop organized by RainLily named “Girlfriends”.
- C. MWs: 5 respondents aged between 31-43 years, all of whom were Indonesian except for one Sri Lankan. They had lived in Hong Kong for periods of between 4 months – 5 years. 3 of them were Muslims, and 2 Christians. 3 of them had junior high education level, 1 had primary level and 1 attended high school. They were participants of the workshop named “Migrant Worker’s Group”.

A second follow up interview session was conducted for this focus group for the purposes of gathering more data. However, due to the relocation of some of the respondents, only two of the original group attended the second interview session. Interpretation was required due to the limited English or Cantonese language ability of the respondents.

- D. RainLily workers: 2 focus groups were conducted for RainLily workers. Among the respondents, there was one programme worker, and 5 registered social workers who had served at RainLily for 1.5 years to 8 years.

All interviews were taped and transcribed for systematic analysis. Pseudonyms were used throughout the report.

1.3. Limitations

There are a number of limitations in this study. First, the data collected by convenience sampling method. We do not intend to generalize the findings to MW and EM survivors in Hong Kong. Second, English is not the native language of most of the respondents, hence it must be taken into consideration that the data collected only represents what could be understood and expressed by the respondents according to their English language ability. Third, for those interviews with interpretation, the accuracy of data may be affected by the perception and understanding of the interpreter.

IV. Findings

The following section is a thematic analysis of the findings from the in-depth interviews and focus group interviews conducted on MW and EM service users. The aim was to understand respondents' views on the "24 hour one-stop crisis intervention & counseling" and "educational workshops" that they had participated in. The findings from the RainLily workers' focus group interviews are also discussed.

4.1 24 hours one stop crisis intervention & counseling Services: Service users' perspectives

4.1.1 Needs and problems of survivors after the sexual assault incidents

4.1.1.1 Emotional problems

Emotional distress is the most common problem experienced by survivors of sexual assault. They reported having feelings of loneliness and being under pressure:

I didn't want to talk. I lived alone in the shelter. I didn't want to go outside, always stay in the shelter, I always crying. (Eva, MW)

I felt being locked up inside and uncomfortable, high pressure and could not find the way out. (Candy, EM)

Emotional distress was also related to respondents' fear that news of their assault might be spread around her community, and back to her family

...worried that there would have many news reporters in the court..... they would disclose my name, most of my friends would know what had happened to me, particularly my [Islam] church. Because my church wants me to be the role model, if they know my incident, I 'don't know how to face it. (Alice, MW)

Respondents shared that they experienced a strong sense of self-blame, as Brenda and Candy stated:

I was very sad, I was disappointed, and at the same time I was angry with myself. I blame myself. I thought it was my fault. (Brenda, EM)

I have the responsibilities. If I was not stupid, I would not trust that guy, I would

not have such experience. (Candy, EM)

Respondents also described suffering from sleep disturbances and appetite loss:

I once wake up in the middle of the night, wake up and cry, and it would take me a long time to get back to sleep. And my appetite before, I did not eat so much. I was very thin, considering I was pregnant I was also thin. (Brenda, EM)

I need to take sleeping pills because of the frequent nightmares. (Doris, EM)

4.1.1.2 Financial problems

Financial problems are commonly encountered by survivors - especially MWs – as a result of the abuse. For example, if a MW reports to the police that she has been assaulted by her employer, it is highly likely that not only would her employment contract terminated immediately, but she would also have to find alternative accommodation. This would mean she has no income to pay for an extension on her visa. Reporting the incident can have an adverse impact on the survivor's means to cover daily needs, and her ability to stay in Hong Kong.

Because she [the social worker] said, [moving to] the boarding house must be paid, but I don't have the money at that time. (Eva, MW)

She [the social worker] gives me some money, the most important thing is money at that time. (Fanny, MW)

4.1.1.3 Relationship problems

Sexual assault survivors often experience social isolation and difficulty with trusting others after the incident. Respondents described the lack of support they received from those around them. Brenda shared that she became reluctant to make friends after the incident, and more reliant on her family:

No one came to me after the incident...I did not want to make friends anymore. I like to make new friends before, I was very happy, but now I realize it's not good for me to have so many friends. Yes, I don't want to trust anyone. So I choose to ... just stay with the family. (Brenda, EM)

Similarly, Gina became withdrawn:

I had changed very obviously. I had good friend and talkative before. After the incident, I become quiet. (Gina, MW)

4.1.1.4 Decision making in pregnancy

Another problem faced by survivors after being raped is the possibility of pregnancy. In this study, one of the respondents was faced with the dilemma of whether to terminate her pregnancy. Being a Catholic, she experienced a moral conflict between having an abortion (which she believed was unacceptable in her religion), or going through with the pregnancy and giving birth to a child that was a result of rape.

We are Catholic, we...we choose doing what is right [about giving birth of the baby], even if we really don't want to. We just do what's right. (Brenda, EM)

4.1.1.5 Problems encountered in reporting

Survivors reported feeling helpless when they went through the procedures of police reporting and legal consultation. In this study, over half of the respondents shared that they experienced second victimization and re-traumatisation during the process of reporting to the police. They also reported feeling that they were not trusted, and/or that their voice was not heard by the police. Candy and Helen recounted their experiences as follows:

Maybe they [the police] were racist, I was not feeling heard. (Candy, EM)

The attitude of the police was no good. It seemed to me that they didn't trust me, the police said, "Indonesians did that for money". They didn't trust the incident [was sexual assault]. (Helen, MW)

Some of the respondents felt they were put under pressure to recall specific details of the assault when they felt unable to do so, and were required to repeat their story over and over, causing them to re-live the trauma each time. Doris and Fanny stated:

Police asked me many times but I couldn't recall clearly. They were like, forcing me, but I really couldn't remember. (Doris, EM)

Because he [the police] always [wanted me to] repeat the incident. I was crying. I was totally down. (Fanny, MW)

For those who could not express in either English or Cantonese, the police arranged an interpreter. However, the interpretation service was regarded as unsatisfactory:

The interpretation offered by them [the police] is unclear sometimes. (Alice, MW)

Eva shared that although interpretation was provided, the language spoken by the interpreter was in fact a different dialect to what she requested:

[I did not have] interpreter before... because it's not in my language, it's the different language, and [I] went to the police station [but] cannot understand all, then at times, I don't know what happen for me. I don't know what happened; my voice is difficult to come out. (Eva, MW)

4.1.2 Services provided to survivors

4.1.2.1 Counselling service

RainLily's post-incident counselling service is offered to survivors to facilitate their recovery from the profound trauma and emotional distress of being sexually assaulted. Respondents reported that they gained a great deal of emotional support, and had learnt some useful skills in handling their emotions from the counselling services.

I told her [the social worker] that I took sleeping pill and had nightmares. Then she taught me how to take a deep breath and calm down after the nightmares. (Doris, EM)

She [the social worker] told me to talk more, do not think too much. If I want to cry, find a place to cry so as to release the emotion. I keep doing this until now and it is helpful. She also suggests me writing daily, like diary. Write something that I couldn't resolve, just write it down and release it. (Gina, MW)

I'm so happy because she [counselor] always advised me. Then my emotion is like, come out, because she always advised me, "Don't worry, I can help you [and] accompany [you]" like that. I was crying, [the social worker] said: "It's okay, don't worry. It's not only you. Another victim like that, so many, but it's okay. I take care of you, I accompany with you. (Eva, MW)

The therapeutic relationship in counselling also helped survivors to rebuild relationships with significant others. For example, Brenda recounted that her

relationship with her mother became stronger after being raped, because through counselling, she gained courage to reach out to her mother, who subsequently took care of her new born baby:

My mother and I found the way to connect, because of her [the social worker].(Brenda, EM)

4.1.2.2 Accompaniment services

The steps and formal procedures that follow a survivor's decision to report her assault to the police are long and numerous. Survivors are unlikely to have relevant knowledge and experience of knowing how to handle the process. They might feel powerless in such a situation. In this case, the accompaniment service provided by RainLily's social workers is desperately needed because it is not simply companionship, but also an empowering process. Social workers will act to ensure the protection survivors' rights and dignity throughout the many procedures:

The social worker accompanied me to go to the police station. I didn't like the police because of his/her attitude and I told the social worker. The social worker explained to me the responsibilities of the police. (Doris, EM)

She [the social worker] is helpful. I had my points, but I couldn't speak for myself when I was under pressure. The social worker helped me to voice out and she knew how to help me. I wouldn't voice out if she was not there. (Candy, EM)

RainLily's social workers also accompany survivors to immigration, consulate and medical appointments at a time when survivors feel most vulnerable and desperate. To stand by the side of survivors is a healing process.

[The social worker] gives advice and I always talk to her...I go to immigration, she is there. I go to the police, she is there. I go to the Philippine consulate, she is there.(Fanny, MW)

She [the social worker] was there, or meeting me when we had to go to the hospital and underwent the medical examination to see if I have any infection... She was there to hold my hands, and I began to trust her. (Brenda, EM)

She [the social worker] accompanied me every time when I revisited doctors. It made me feeling good. Before, I thought I was alone when I was sick. And now, I know I'm not alone anymore. (Doris, EM)

4.1.2.3 Legal support

For the respondents who had to go through legal proceedings after reporting, RainLily provided them with free legal advice and support, which enhanced their capacity in the process.

She [the social worker] introduced me the legal information, and said to me that if I am correct, don't be afraid. [She encouraged me] to speak up. (Alice, MW)

She [the social worker] is always there for me, yes. And she is the one who is talking to the lawyer if I don't understand. (Fanny, MW)

One of the respondents, Gina, mentioned that her RainLily social worker brought her to court a week before her own court date as preparation. It was very impressive to her:

RainLily colleague brought me to the court to hear a rape case to have some preparations so that I wouldn't be nervous in the court. (Gina, MW)

4.1.2.4 Tangible support

For those survivors with financial difficulties, RainLily also provided some tangible support, including covering the cost of visa renewals, food coupons, baby clothes, meals and travel allowances.

She [the social worker] applied the food bank for us, very big helps for us because I don't have work for 6 months. She helped me applying food bank...sometimes powder soup, baby soup, like that. She says, "Okay, what you need, tell me. (Eva, MW)

The support is enough, such as taxi, bus, meals and all expenses were offered by RainLily. I did not need to give any. (Gina, MW).

4.1.2.5 Interpretation

The provision of language interpretation is a very important part of facilitating survivors to be able to express themselves, the details of the incident, and also to help them to understand their situation such as reporting procedures, legal knowledge and health conditions. RainLily will arrange interpretation services for survivors whenever it is needed.

Maybe my Chinese is not good enough. I can listen but I spoke less [with RainLily interpretation service], I felt better. (Doris, EM)

4.1.2.6 Referral services

In cases where survivors may suffer from serious mental health symptoms after the sexual assault, RainLily can help her to access psychiatric treatment: .

After taking the pills given by them [psychiatrist], I was able to report to the police...the clinical psychologist was referred by them [RainLily]. (Candy, EM)

4.1.3 Feedback on the services

4.1.3.1 Effectiveness of social work intervention

All the respondents in this study gave very positive feedback about the services they received. They highly appreciated the emotional support, financial support and accompaniment services offered by the WE Stand programme. Respondents agreed that the services provided helped them to gain emotional stability, and they felt the genuine care and concern of the workers.

The social worker accompanied me and comforted me. That helped to stabilize my emotion quickly. (Alice, MW)

I can't imagine what would happen without RainLily because I was like a mess at that time. (Alice, MW)

I'm very satisfied with the service here. If we didn't meet with RainLily - that I think it will be very difficult for me and my mum. Yes, maybe we will be very sad, may be in blue or don't talk to each other. Yes, without her [the social worker], we wouldn't know a lot of things. (Brenda, EM)

I know I'm not alone anymore. (Doris, EM)

Of course it is helpful. I dared not to tell anyone. After telling [to RainLily], I felt at least someone knows my incident. (Candy, EM)

Respondents reflected that RainLily's workers were approachable and caring. This helped to build up good rapport and a sense of trust between survivors and their RainLily workers.

I see her [the RainLily worker] as a very close friend. If you ask me, “if you have any friends?” - yes, she is one of my friends. Yes, she didn’t come to me like a very formal social worker. Because what I have encountered before, when a social worker comes, they would be very formal with you, they will just ask you direct questions, and then after that, tomorrow they don’t ever... they don’t call you back or ask you how you are. But she was very like a friend, she was very casual, she talks eh... very nicely, and tomorrow she’ll ask you how are your feeling. (Brenda, EM)

Another finding of this study was that the gender of professionals matters in working with sexual assault survivors. As reported by survivors Eva and Candy, they felt safe and comfortable to have the support from a female social worker and a female lawyer in the intervention processes.

...before I didn’t know how to express. I didn’t know how to push out...she [the RainLily worker] is a girl, not a man, so I can talk to her freely. Before, I be scared...but I feel happy she is always talking with me. (Eva, MW)

I didn’t want to talk to a male lawyer so I paid a female lawyer [to give legal advice]. I would suggest RainLily having female lawyers and accompany the survivors to go to police station. Because my situation is tricky and I didn’t have legal knowledge. I will feel safer. (Candy, EM)

An important part of the therapeutic process is to help survivors regain a sense of empowerment over their own lives. This is achieved partly through respecting the ability of survivors to make their own choices at each stage, as Brenda recounted:

...she would open lots of options, because I was pregnant at that time. She told me that “you don’t need to keep the baby, if you don’t want, it’s ok. But I just want to show you options. (Brenda, EM)

Although the feedback form service users was very positive overall, one respondent reflected a dissatisfaction that arose out of a misunderstanding over how evidence is treated during police reporting procedures. For example, it was necessary for Doris’s mobile phone to be retained for a long period of time by the police, to be used as evidence in her case. However, she felt frustrated that she could not get her mobile back and thought that the RainLily worker did nothing to help her get it back sooner:

I don't trust her [the RainLily worker]. Although I trusted her that police would give me back my stuff at the beginning, I didn't trust after I went back home. (Doris, EM)

4.1.3.2 Personal change

The findings of this study show that respondents experienced positive change with RainLily's effective social work intervention. For example, Helen and Fanny reported reduced negative emotion and more positive affect. Fanny further expressed that she felt empowered by the information and support provided by RainLily, while Brenda had gained more strength to stand on her own feet.

90% of my stress had been released because the [RainLily] social worker did a lot. (Helen, MW)

I become happy now because I know the legal advice that she [the RainLily worker] supported, that she gave me, explained it to me. I'm happier now that I know everything now. (Fanny, MW)

When she [the RainLily worker] taught me that, I...just the girl eh... who just had this incident, she told me that I was brave. Yeah, and later on I believe that I am brave. She told me that if another person had to undergo all these things, and even had to have a baby, then maybe she couldn't take it emotionally, but I was able to stabilize myself then. I was able to stand up my own feet. And I believe it, yes. (Brenda, EM)

4.1.3.3 Service promotion

The feedback from respondents revealed that there is room for improvement in terms of making RainLily's services known to the general public. All of them reported that they were not previously aware of RainLily's services, and 7 of them had no concept of what a "social worker" was before the sexual assault incident. 6 out of 8 respondents were referred to RainLily by other professions such as police and medical practitioners.

I didn't know RainLily much at the beginning. I was referred to the RainLily by the police. Police asked me if I need a social worker. (Gina, MW)

4.2 24-hour one stop crisis intervention & counseling services: Social workers' perspectives

4.2.1 Perceived needs of service users

In the focus group interviews, RainLily social workers/case workers identified a number of needs and problems common to EM and MW sexual assault survivors: (1) emotional support/counseling; (2) accompaniment; and (3) tangible support.

As reported by one of the case workers, survivors felt lonely and isolated after the incident, and therefore emotional support is essential in the first contact:

Migrant workers don't have many friends who are trustworthy. Much gossip spreads around their communities. But when they come to us and know we will keep everything confidential, they are much more willing to share...Sometimes they find it hard to face their real emotions. Although we can't help them to change the external world in the counseling room, the 1 or 2 hours in session lets them be themselves. (Mary)

Another social worker reflected that the accompaniment services help to create a feeling of safety and security for the survivor, as well as having someone present in a professional capacity to stand up for her rights.

We accompany the survivors to make reports to police, medical check-ups, forensic examinations...we feel their anxieties and worries...we will discuss among teammates to do some advocacy for their rights. (Carol)

Besides emotional support, tangible support such as helping them to extend visa, or finding a shelter is also considered by case workers as a vital need, especially for MWs.

MWs need more tangible support. If the incident happened at her employer's house, we help them to move out and arrange visa extension and deal with contract problems. (Annie)

If the survivors were assaulted by her employer, we have to arrange a shelter for them. (Bella)

4.2.2 Effectiveness of social work intervention

RainLily's social workers agreed that their intervention was meaningful, and they believed that it brought about positive change in service users. For example, case worker Annie explains:

I think having someone to accompany you after encountering such [sexual violence] issue will make you feel calm and better. We'll explain them what will happen next and why, and this informs them of what's going on. (Annie)

The accompaniment services to the survivors are viewed by Bella as welcomed by police:

They [the police] want us to witness that they didn't bully the survivors...so while if cases of EM or MW, we're more welcome our stay anytime with her [the survivor]. They [the police] prefer talking to us, and then let us talk to the survivors instead. (Bella)

4.2.3 Difficulties encountered

During the interviews, the RainLily workers highlighted some of the difficulties that they encountered in working with MW and EM survivors. The major concerns were: (1) cultural differences of survivors; (2) religious background of survivors; (3) reliability of interpretation service; (4) inconsistencies in police handling of cases; and (5) lengthy procedure of filing police reports.

A case worker Bella found that survivors were strongly influenced by their own culture, however, she did not feel that she had sufficient knowledge of their culture, which made it difficult to facilitate the high-level elements of recovery (such as reframing, self-acceptance, forgiveness) .

The difficulty is that we don't know the culture well...Their community views sex and virginity differently. I learnt that in theory, but it is difficult to translate in practice in the counselling process. (Bella)

Religious background is another factor that influences the perception of survivors on their role as women. It appeared that some survivors had accepted that they are subordinate to men. Bella expressed her frustration in the interview:

The survivor felt hopeless. She was a virgin before, but after the incident, she felt that she no longer deserved to have a marriage and family. I don't know the best approach to deal with this problem which is embedded with religious teaching. I know a bit about Christianity, but nothing about Islam. I found it challenging.I don't know how to intervene. I don't know how to respond to their bible [religious scriptures], which teaches subordination of women under men. (Bella)

The lack of experience and sensitivity of interpreters in working with sexual violence survivors may cause confusion in the helping process. Case workers explained that interpreters sometimes may add their own viewpoints when doing interpretation. Another concern was that as the interpreters are not trained as social workers, they may not follow the principle of keeping confidentiality.

Sometimes the presence of interpreter is better than none because we can't understand their language or the client isn't able to express herself. Interpreters are important, but they are not professionally trained [to deal with sexual violence cases]. They may add their own comments and judgments. (Mary)

Case workers expressed their doubts over the handling procedures and attitudes of some police officers. Case workers have encountered a lack of standardized handling procedures, in some cases even "negotiating" with police on a case by case basis. However, most of the case workers expressed that they had confidence in dealing with police, and will fight for the rights of survivors if they found irregularity in their handling.

We understand the police procedures well. Sometimes they ask the survivor many unrelated things, such as their previous sexual experiences. We know they can't do that ... it depends on who is taking the case. For example, a client was worried that her incident would be told to her family, so we reminded the police. Later on,

a new police team was assigned to handle the case and it appeared as though the message [not telling family] had not been passed to the new team. (Annie)

The case workers agreed that based on previous encounters, it seemed that some police officers might have biases against EM or MW women, and tended to distrust what they said:

There are many myths among police. For example, they will easily assume that the MWs who accuse their employer of rape are doing so because of money or other intentions. (Tammy)

More than once, I heard police say that Indonesian maids always lie. (Tammy)

Although the case workers were able to handle the cases promptly, they expressed that the many hours that have to be spent on each case can be exhausting and challenging for both themselves and the survivor. This highlights the need for services specific to dealing with MW and EM sexual violence cases, and more resource allocation is needed:

Some procedures can take a very long time. The survivor goes to hospital, report to police, and struggles in reporting to police, maybe because she has a long story and her case is serious. They would then refer the case to the serious crime unit for recording statement. It can take twenty hours or more. If the survivor needs interpretation, it may involve 3 languages, which can eventually take 30 hours. (Freda)

4.3 Educational workshops: Service users' perspectives

As prevention of sexual violence is one of the main goals of the “WE Stand programme”, RainLily channels much of its resources towards running educational workshops for MW and EM women (EMW) and girls (EMG). In this study, we interviewed some of the participants of three of these workshops: “Health & Beauty”, “Girlfriends” and “Migrant Workers Group”. All three groups aimed to deliver comprehensive knowledge about sexual violence, clarify rape myths, and increase the confidence of participants in taking action to protect themselves.

4.3.1 Participants' expectations of the workshops

The MWs expressed that they expected to learn more about sexual violence when they joined the “Migrant Workers' Group”:

I want to know more [about] sexual violence in Hong Kong (Zoe, MW)

I say that it is important to being more understand the experience and understand the issues. (Yolanda, MW)

For the EM girls (EMG) who joined the workshop “Girlfriends”, they expected that they would learn “self-defense” as promoted by their teachers.

We were actually interested in self-defense. We thought about self-defense only. (Ada, EMG)

However, the EM women (EMW) were not so clear about the purpose of the group. As one of the EM women Elaine reported, she joined the “Health & Beauty” workshop because she wanted to increase her knowledge on health, and also to learn Cantonese.

I want to join such program like check breast cancer because I am not aware how to check the breast. And the second thing is I want to learn Cantonese as I have already talked to [the programme worker] about this. Also, we are housewives and don't really get time to exercise. So there were such programs arranged to us so we decide to come regularly to join and we want to continue to have such program. (Elaine, EMW)

4.3.2 Feedback on the workshops

4.3.2.1 Effectiveness of the intervention

In general, all 3 focus groups gave positive feedback on the workshops that they had participated in. As an EM girl, Sally, reported, she felt that her knowledge about sexual violence had increased, not only on an individual level, but also on a macro level, such as becoming aware of social justice, and issues in the legal system.

...it is informative. At first, maybe you just expect that it is about self-defense, to keep yourself safe, but then the end, we learnt more than just than that. We got more knowledgeable about the law and everything in general. (Sally, EMG)

Furthermore, another girl Ada thought that she gained a better understanding of the problems in the existing legal system in protecting sexual violence survivors:

We may expect police maybe do more, but from what we learnt, some of them, they just treat it like normal case which is actually unfair for the victims. (Ada, EMG)

Some EM women enjoyed the opportunity to learn Cantonese and healthy diet. Although this was not the main purpose of the group, it helped to expand the social circle of EM women and increased their confidence to mix with other people in the community:

I am very confident to speak [Cantonese]. I couldn't speak before and now I even go to the doctor and can speak. [Interview: You can speak Cantonese now?] Yes, English and Cantonese, maybe not very fluent. So that we want RainLily to continue such program that we can learn more. (Elaine, EMW)

Before I want to learn more about diet. I used to not eating all day, only to drink water, but then she [the programme worker] told the side effect of eating and dieting like that. And I really feel helpful on this. (Elaine, EMW)

It seemed that language was not a major barrier affecting the effectiveness of the workshops; the EM girls were proficient in English and for the EM women and MWs, interpretation was provided. As Emma and Elaine reported in the interview, the worker spoke slowly and explained patiently in English, and pictures were used as teaching aids:

She [the programme worker] can speak English in a way that we can understand, such as she won't speak a sentence, she can speak word by word so they can understand. Also, she used to show more pictures to them. (Elaine, EMW)

We used to ask if we don't understand...she [the programme worker] could explain very well. She is very nice. (Emma, EMW)

4.3.2.2 Personal changes

All respondents reflected that they experienced a certain level of change after attending the workshops. Four levels of positive change were noted: (1) increased awareness of the wider issues related to sexual violence; (2) increased knowledge about sexual violence; (3) more gender awareness; and (4) more self-confidence to protect themselves.

Both EM women and girls expressed that they become more aware of sexual violence issues in Hong Kong, which they had never thought of before:

Difficult [talking about sex or sexual violence] because we think that it shouldn't happen. But then we also feel good because at least somebody was here to share how to react to such situations because we have never heard about that and now at least somebody here to tell the situation. (Elaine, EMW)

In my mind, I think before [used to think] we are very safe in HK. You can't face something like that here. After joining the program, we know it also happens here. Before I think it only happens in India. We now also heard it happens in HK. (Elva, EMW)

One of the respondents expressed that she gained more awareness about sexual harassment issues, and had learnt how to protect herself:

We know how to protect ourselves especially in public transport because we also experienced [this] before when I was in Causeway Bay, and sometimes to protect my breast and because, you can use hands or handbag to protect your body. It's important. (Yolanda, MW)

EM girls expressed that they gained more legal knowledge on sexual violence. As Ada stated:

And what really happened to those victims, or after being reported, like I heard that some of them it happened at childhood, you can still report after like 10 years, sometimes case is actually successful. (Ada, EMG)

Both EM women and girls showed great interest in sharing what they learnt from the

WE Stand programme with their peers. There is a high opportunity to form a peer support network in the future development.

I know more about the knowledge; also teach our friends or teenagers. It is helpful. (Elva, EMW)

We are, our age, like 18 or above. I think they should join to volunteer to the services. Maybe we could do something. (Sally, EMG)

Another MW learned more about the definition of marital rape from the workshops:

I asked her [the programme worker] what the difference is if you are raped by husband. Can it happen raped by our husband? Because he is our husband, he is my husband. Can it be happened? [the programme worker] says it's a good question as sometimes like according to most of women they don't know if...They are not sure whether it is safe or not. (Willis, MW)

Both EM Women and EM Girls found the workshops beneficial in that they had the chance to talk about sex and sexual violence as a group. The workshop provided a unique discussion platform to talk about social taboos and presented a space for them to challenge the idea of the passive role of women in their own community.

...learn more information about that [knowledge of sexual violence]. But our culture is different. Because in my country, women is not really willing to defense herself as men expected. But at least, we got information and thought never happened to anyone. But now we know how to defense. (Elaine, EMW)

In the focus group interview, EM girls disagreed with some of the rape myths, such as “When a girl goes into a room alone with a boy, it does not mean that she wants to have sex with the boy”:

If you really into sexy, if he really attracted by the sexy and he would try to get those sexy girls with the sexy clothes. But that guy is just into rape, he just won't care what she looks like or what she wearing, he just wanna go for it. (Ada, EMG)

Some MWs also expressed they had clear ideas about sexual harassment, and that they would stop the harasser:

Stop him, to ask the guy to stop talking and stop making joke about and related to sex. If he repeats, she will not be friend, ok. (Zoe, MW)

The self-confidence of the EM women participants increased through the programme. Their family members praised the women's positive changes, such as more confidence in going out alone to places they did not know before:

Before we join the program, my husband has to take the leave and go to see doctor with me. But now I am able to go out alone, but also with the children. Although we cannot speak the language fully, we can let other people to understand it. Before we went out with my husband always and felt scared. (Elaine, EMW)

...husband said that we're more confident now, and can get visa by ourselves. (Elaine, EMW)

A MW reported that she had more confidence in dealing with a sexual harassment situation after attending the workshop:

After attending this programme and there was a man trying to approach me and asked me: can I have your number, and I just stared at the man, like stared with angry. So the may know, I was not [what] he wants. (Yolanda, MW)

4.3.2.3 Suggestions for improvements of the service

To improve the service, the EM women suggested having more sessions to practice and reinforce what they learnt in the workshops. They explained that they were still unsure if they could fight back if sexual harassment situation happened:

It's easy to talk and say I can do that [fighting back]. But if it really happens, I don't know. (Elva, EMW)

So this is the first time we learnt something like this, so we need more practice to actually do this if it really happens. (Ada, EMG)

Respondents also suggested more service promotion should be done:

Yes, I haven't heard of RainLily until this programme. I also thought they would go to some social worker, I don't know if they actually have programme for us. (Sally, EMG)

The EM girls expressed that they felt that the educational workshops should also be

provided for male students, as sexual violence is not only women's issue:

I think we can include guys. Not only women to know, I think if a guy knows it, when they grow up, they won't go to the wrong path. I think teaching them at their young age can help, to set the line. (Sally, EMG)

4.4 Educational workshops: Workers' perspectives

4.4.1 Perception of the needs of service users

In the interview, some programme workers highlighted that EM and MW women had very little prior knowledge about sexual violence, or the rights of victims. Therefore, educational workshops are a platform for them to gain information, as well as share their views on these issues, and give mutual support to each other:

They may not know much about the definition of sexual violence, so our project starts giving the information. (Mary)

Based on the clients' needs and their autonomy, we will let them know their rights...they may not be clear about the definition of sexual violence. We educate them and then talk about rights; let them know what can they do when face sexual violence. (Tammy)

4.4.1.1 Gender sensitivity

Providing gender education is an important aspect in educational workshops. Participants not only learn to protect themselves, but also gain awareness of the gender stereotyping and oppression that is experienced by women in society. This increased awareness serves to enable participants to build up their own strength in facing violence situations:

We start from feminist perspective. We do empowerment work, and let them know their rights, deconstruct the social stigma...We are talking about not only how to protect themselves, but also their right to do something about it, such as their right to dress how they like, or freedom do the things they love, which does not harm others. We are not only talking about fighting for rights, but also female autonomy. (Tammy)

4.4.1.2 Cultural sensitivity

Cultural differences were found between the RainLily workers and EM/MW workers in other organisations, as Annie recalled:

There are cultural differences. For example, they [workers of a shelter] did not see the importance of keeping confidentiality, but we will take it seriously... we

referred our client to stay in their shelter. The client told us that the workers there publicly talked about her problem and sexual assault experiences, and even wrote down her case and let others read it. The client reflected that's not ok for her. We talked to the worker afterwards, but they viewed it as normal and said, "It was just an incident of sexual violence" (Annie)

4.4.2 Difficulties encountered

The programme workers expressed that they approached working on this programme as a "trial and error" process because they did not have any formal protocol or guidelines specifically for EM/MW cases; they relied mainly on prior practice wisdom.

We learnt from practice. For example, some agencies did not allow us to talk about this [sexual related issues] but we tested the water gradually and found that some things can be talked, but not openly of course. This is the accumulated experiences. (Tammy)

Foreign worker employment agencies tend to downplay sexual violence issues, and prefer to focus their training on cooking, beauty, health, fitness:.

The MW agent worried that if we are allowed to talk about this [sexual violence] talk, no one will go to the agent and join their activities anymore. (Mary)

We got the message from the MW agent. They said we can't talk about sexual violence. We have to talk about domestic violence first, then talk about sex education, but not sexual violence. We need to talk about many other things before talking about sexual violence. (Tammy)

Some MW employment agencies deliberately withheld sexual violence information which was meant to be provided to MWs, so that they would not have a chance to understand the services provided to them:

When the MWs arrive in HK, I pack a lot of information, a booklet, together with their passport will be provided to them by the immigration. But we know that the booklet was confiscated by the MW agent. (Carol)

However, unlike MW employment agencies, MW unions were found to be more willing to have RainLily offer workshops to MWs to protect their rights:

The MW union will contact us and directly ask: we receive your programme leaflet. Can you talk about sexual harassment at workplace to our members?...it maybe due to the actual situation that MW is facing at their workplace. (Carol)

A common difficulty observed by programme workers was the limited availability of domestic helpers to meet RainLily due to their work arrangements.

MWs only have 1 day off which is not fixed any day, sometimes off on Saturday, sometimes off on Sunday, or even work during weekend if requested. (Freda)

One programme workers mentioned that the participation of EM women was often influenced by their family responsibilities. They were late, or had leave the class early because of the family matters:

Family values are important among ethnic minorities. They have tight cohesion. Once, an EM woman said that she had to leave all of a sudden at the workshop because her friend comes to her. She must welcome her friend warmly by making a good meal. She told the social worker on that day. Although they have passion to join, their time does not allow. (Mary)

V. Analysis

5.1 Needs and problems faced by sexual violence survivors

The findings of this study show that MW and EM survivors experienced at least three common problems after sexual assault incidents.

First, emotional problems were common to all the EM and MW respondents. The emotional distress experienced was related to isolation, anxiety, and self-blame. Survivors may also face relationship problems, which increase social isolation. Emotional distress may, in some cases, be attributed in part to survivors having to struggle with the conflict of whether to go through with a pregnancy that came as a result of being raped, particularly in the context of religious beliefs.

Second, survivors, especially MWs, may face financial problems. This is particularly pertinent to cases in which the perpetrator was the survivor's employer. Making a police report in such circumstances would lead to termination of employment and income.

Third, nearly all of the respondents experienced second victimization and re-traumatisation during the police reporting process. The lack of a trauma-informed approach from police officers gave rise to survivors feeling "forced" and pressured to recall specific details of their assault over and over again, causing them to re-live the trauma of the incident (re-traumatisation). Respondents reported feeling victimized by the reluctance of some police officers to believe their stories, and even receiving some racist remarks from them.

For the respondents who were provided with interpretation service by the police, there was a general consensus that the interpretation lacked clarity; at times, leaving the survivor to feel confused and uninformed about what was going on. The accuracy of the police statement is called into question, given respondents' reports of not understanding what the interpreter had said, and also feeling that they could not get their voice across.

The problems faced by MW and EM sexual assault survivors are multi-faceted. As this study reveals, these women are marginalized psychologically, economically and

racially; and the findings of this study are merely a cursory view of the depth and complexity of the situation. It is evident that support services for MW and EM victims of sexual violence are desperately needed in Hong Kong.

5.2 Capacity building in helping processes

The WE Stand programme aims to raise the knowledge and awareness of MW and EM women and girls about sexual violence to encourage them to seek help when such incidents arise, and also to provide crisis intervention services to sexual violence victims.

The services provided by WE Stand to sexual assault survivors include 24 hour one-stop crisis intervention and counseling. Tangible support such as access to shelters, financial assistance and food is offered to those who are in need.

The respondents of this study shared the positive impact of receiving WE Stand programme services, for example, increased emotional stability, strengthening of social networks through the counselling and encouragement of RainLily's workers, provision of relief to financial problems, and increased understanding of legal rights in reporting to the police.

Various types of educational workshops are provided, with a focus on prevention, to inform, enhance and equip participants with the knowledge and skills to deal with sexual violence. This is an important empowering work in the community, which directly increases the capacity of community members to tackle sexual violence.

For the respondents who had participated in WE Stand programme workshops, their level awareness and knowledge of sexual violence and the wider related issues (such as the legal system) was enhanced and increased. Participants' gender and cultural sensitivity was elevated through discussions and activities around gender roles, different cultural perspectives and rape myths. This served to increase participants' capacity to provide mutual support.

The self-confidence of participants to seek help and/or protect themselves was boosted through learning practical self-defense skills, as well receiving information on relevant support services, and engaging in discussions about how to respond to sexual violence in different situations.

Secondary benefits of joining educational workshops also emerged; an increased sense of social inclusion and mutual support in the community was gained through participation in joint activities and the provision of a platform to talk about sexual

violence.

5.3 Gender issues in practice

Sexual violence is a gender issue. Rape myths which serve to perpetuate ideas such as male dominance, victim-blaming, and hence displacement of responsibility from the perpetrator onto the victim, are prevalent in society. For example, it is commonly believed that the way a woman dresses or where she goes can attract sexual attacks.

The self-blaming and shame experienced by survivors are a reflection of their deep sense of powerlessness. The educational programmes and counselling services provided by WE Stand addresses these issues, and seeks to clarify rape myths, challenge male-superiority attitudes, increase empathy and support for victims, and to break the silence of sexual assault survivors.

The concept of empowerment is emphasized by the social workers of RainLily in their interventions. Survivors are not treated as passive clients, but as persons with strengths to control their own life. At the same time, RainLily's workers also enable service users to recognize the unequal power relations between men and women within the framework of sexual violence. Being sexual assaulted is not a misfortune of an individual, but a structural problem that is embedded in a gendered society.

One of the goals of the programme is that service users will change from a passive to an active role; from powerless to being empowered. In the helping process, RainLily believes that social workers should be aware of power issues and build up egalitarian relationships with services users in order to develop a non-discriminatory practice.

5.4 Cultural issues in practice

Sex remains a taboo in most Asian countries. MW and EM women and girls seldom talk about sex within family and educational contexts. They generally have little knowledge about sexual violence, and may not be able to understand what had happened to them or take action to protect themselves.

EM and MW survivors are likely to face strong pressure from their kinship network and community as their social circle in Hong Kong is small and insular. Often, news and rumors spread quickly. Survivors are unwilling to disclose experiences of sexual

violence to their friends and family for fear of being doubted or ostracized by their community due to the prevalence of rape myths and victim-blaming attitudes. These factors contribute to survivors' reluctance to seek help from social services or report to the police.

Many EM and MW women and girls have religious backgrounds such as Islam, Catholicism or Christianity, which emphasize sexual purity, and having one sexual partner for life. Also, abortion is a contentious issue for Catholics. Such facets of culture can sometimes be a barrier to the survivor's psychological recovery. Survivors of rape may be faced with further internal conflict and external pressure in either decision to terminate the pregnancy or to keep the baby.

Language barriers create difficulties in police reporting, and receiving social services. Survivors cannot express freely if not in their own language. This can lead to miscommunication and affect the effectiveness of the services. Interpretation provided by external service providers may not be helpful because of the lack of relevant gender sensitivity and sexual violence knowledge and training of interpreters.

5.5 Service coordination

The findings of this study show that inter-disciplinary coordination of services is an important factor in the helping process. The respondents interviewed in this study were all referred to RainLily by either hospitals or by police. Most reported that they had never heard of RainLily and its services before the incident. That said, the referral system between RainLily and hospitals and police stations is well established, and the services and images of the RainLily are well known to them.

The data collected reveals that RainLily's services need to have more promotion in the general public, especially to ethnic minorities, so that they will become aware of where they can go for help.

The collaboration between different professionals is not only limited to service promotion and case referral. The presence of RainLily's workers in the police reporting process has some advantages. For example, RainLily workers provide much-needed emotional support to survivors, and ease the tensions between the police and survivors in the reporting processes. This may help to shorten the reporting time and improve the quality of service.

5.6 Policy initiatives

The current immigration policy is not favorable to MW sexual abuse survivors because they are required to return to their home countries within 14 days if employment has been terminated, and new employment has not been found. Hence intensive services, such as emotional support and accompanying legal procedures need to be provided in a very short period of time. However, sexual assault survivors need a much longer period of time to recover from the trauma. The existing immigration policy has definitely affected the effectiveness of counselling service.

In addition, MW survivors will have financial difficulties if they do not have regular income after the termination of their employment contract. The current immigration policy has an adverse effect on the motivation of MW sexual assault survivors to report cases of sexual abuse to the police.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, we have the following recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the WE Stand programme.

6.1 To develop a peer counsellor programme

Cultural and language problems are two of the key barriers to providing effective services EM and MWs in Hong Kong. It is suggested that the incorporation of peer counsellors will be helpful to support RainLily's workers in the helping processes.

The WE Stand programme may consider training a group of volunteer peer counsellors who are of ethnic background to assist RainLily workers in their work with MW or EM women and girls. The training for peer counsellors can include not only basic counseling skills and sexual violence knowledge, but also the best practice principles such as keeping confidentiality and non-judgmental attitudes. Peer counsellors will be a good support for WE Stand programme participants as they share same languages and culture. This would also be a way to empower EM women to be a voice and solution to the problem of sexual violence in their own communities

6.2 To provide training to interpreters and other professionals

The findings of this study show that the interpretation services received by the MW or EM sexual assault survivors could be improved. Provision of interpretation is very important in the reporting process as it can affect the outcome of the whole trial. Interpreters' cultural and gender sensitivity needs to be developed, as does the working principles of keeping confidentiality and non-judgmental attitudes.

We suggest that RainLily should consider providing training to interpreters so as to improve their services. It is also important to negotiate with interpretation companies to develop some working principles and guidelines for interpreters in doing interpretation for EM and MW sexual violence cases.

Besides training interpreters, it is also important to provide training to other professionals such as medical practitioners and lawyers. As we know, a sexual assault case may involve complicated court procedures and medical examination. The cultural and gender sensitivity training for these professionals will enhance their effectiveness in handling sexual violence cases.

6.3 To suggest improvements in police handling procedures

Most of the respondents in the study expressed that they had bad experiences of reporting to the police. Some police officers were not sympathetic to the situations of MW and EM survivors, mainly due to their lack of knowledge on sexual violence, or sometimes even stereotyping and racist attitudes.

To improve the situation, the police should receive trauma-informed training on sexual violence, so as to improve their handling of such cases. At the same time, we suggest that the police may consider the setting up of a Sexual Offences Investigation Unit. This specialised team can be modelled after the “Sapphire Unit”, a unit dedicated to the investigation of sexual crimes in London. The Sapphire Unit places great emphasis on not only bringing offenders to justice, but on the care and support of survivors of the sex crimes.

6.4 To provide in-service training for RainLily workers

As mentioned by the RainLily workers in the interviews, they lack adequate knowledge of the culture and religion of EM and MW service users, which may cause difficulties in their practices. To improve the service, regular in-service training on working with ethnic minorities will help to develop culturally sensitive practices, and ensure more effective and efficient use of resources.

6.5 To promote sex education in schools and in the public

This study shows that MW and EM women and girls have insufficient sex and gender education, so that they might not understand the definition of sexual violence and how to react in such situations. In this case, a comprehensive community education programme which includes rape myths, gender roles, legal rights and social services for the sexual assaults survivors is desperately needed for ethnic minorities. Apart from the community education, it is also important to develop sex education in the formal curriculum for girls and boys of different ethnic backgrounds.

6.6 To advocate for policy change

As pointed in the study, the existing immigration policy has an adverse effect on the help-seeking behaviours of MW sexual assault survivors. It is suggested that a longer grace period should be offered to these women instead of the current two-week stay, in order to allow them to find new employment and get an approved work visa after the sexual assault. Moreover, sexual assault survivors need a longer time for recovery after the traumatic experience. A two-week period is definitely not enough for going through in-depth counselling and dealing with complicated legal procedures. In

addition, to waive the costs of visa extensions for MW survivors will help to relieve part of their financial pressures.

6.7 To strengthen service coordination

Continued collaboration with other EM/MW groups, establishing an expedient and smooth referral system, and increasing the promotion of RainLily's services will increase the number of women and girls reached by the WE Stand programme. Provision of professional training about sexual, legal procedures and rights of victims to EM/MW organization workers will benefit the communities because they share the same language and culture, which will make it easier to assimilate the knowledge and help. Indeed, peer support is always perceived as effective.

Summary of recommendations

The findings of the study show that the WE Stand programme has been effective in helping MW and EM sexual assault survivors in many ways over the last two years. However, there is still a room for improvement. For example, to develop a peer counsellor programme, to provide training for interpreters and other professionals, and to advocate for policy change.

As the WE Stand programme is a pilot project which has only received initial funding for a period of 3 years, we hope that it can be continued and gain support from the funding agency. Besides the WE Stand Programme, the government or other funding bodies should also provide funding to support the services for MW and EM women who suffered from sexual violence in the community as the existing service provisions are far from adequate.

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Appendix I – Services received by Individual Interviews Respondents

Respondent	background	Services Received						
		Counsel- ing	Accompany	Tangible	Legal Advice	Family Relations	Referral	Interpreter Required
Alice	MW	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Brenda	EM	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Candy	EM	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Doris	EM	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Eva	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Fanny	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Gina	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Helen	MW	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Appendix II: Introduction of RainLily



RainLily is Hong Kong's first one-stop rape crisis center for female victims of sexual violence.

Set up by the Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women in 2000, RainLily offers sexual violence victims a one-stop service around the clock, including pregnancy prevention, sexually transmitted diseases screening and treatment, forensic medical examination, psychological support and legal process support (statement-taking and court hearing).

RainLily's one-stop service centres in Kowloon and New Territories are designed to enable all related services and procedures to be carried out in one safe location. The aim of our one-stop service is to protect victims from re-traumatization by minimizing the need to make multiple journeys to multiple departments, to repeat the details of the incident multiple times

RainLily symbolizes the resilience of a woman. The violence done against her will not diminish her value and self-worth. Victims of sexual violence embody power and hope. RainLily joins her to walk that journey together.

One-stop Specialized Service

1. RainLily Hotline – 2375 5322
Our team of social workers and trained female volunteers man the hotline service
2. Safe Chat – safechat@rainlily.org.hk
Our online help-seeking platform for victims, all information is treated with strict confidentiality.
3. 24-hour Support Service
We provide 24-hour support and crisis intervention to victims referred by the police, hospitals, social service agencies and other professionals.

4. **Case Management and In-depth Counselling**
Our counsellors will follow through each case providing emotional support, psychological assessment, and individual counselling services to the victims. Referral to clinical psychologists for assessment can also be arranged, if needed.
5. **One-stop Police Reporting Procedures**
Should the victim wish to do so, RainLily can assist her to report the case to the police, and will arrange for police statements to be taken in one of RainLily's one-stop centres. We also coordinate related procedures for forensic and medical examinations.
6. **Immediate and Follow-up Medical Support**
We provide immediate medical treatment, post-incident contraception and preventative treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, and follow-up medical service.
7. **Process Support Service**
We provide emotional support and will accompany victims throughout the processes of statement taking, forensic and medical examination, and court hearings.
8. **Therapeutic Groups**
We provide group therapy, which can help victims to rebuild their lives in a mutually supportive environment.
9. **Support to Frontline Workers**
We provide professional consultation, training and coaching for frontline workers involved in working with victims of sexual violence.

Information of RainLily

Address: P.O. Box 74120, Kowloon Central Post Office, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Tel: 2392 2569

Website: www.rainlily.org.hk

Email: enquiry@rainlily.org.hk





關注婦女性暴力協會於 2000 年成立全港首間性暴力危機中心「風雨蘭」。風雨蘭免費提供輔導、醫療、法律資訊及其他適切支援，以協助全港遭受性暴力的女性重建自尊自信。

風雨蘭在九龍和新界均設有一站式危機中心，結合各服務及相關程序於中心內進行，避免受害者周旋於不同部門之間，重複講述被害經驗，加深創傷。

危機中心取名「風雨蘭」，在於其生命力強，多於雨後開花。一般人的印象中，被強暴女性有如飽受狂風暴雨蹂躪的花朵，但外表柔弱的風雨蘭卻能夠經歷風雨，並在風雨過後的草坪上燦爛迎風。風雨蘭正正反映女性堅韌的生命力，我們相信強暴無損女性的自我價值，她們仍然充滿力量和希望，積極面對人生。

服務內容

1. 風雨蘭熱線 –2375 5322
由社工及受訓女性義工接聽。
2. Safe Chat – safechat@rainlily.org.hk
網上平台供受害人求助，一切資料絕對保密。
3. 24 小時性暴力支援：
24 小時接受警方、醫院及社會服務專業轉介，為當事人提供即時危機支援。
4. 專業輔導
由有經驗的專業輔導員提供個案跟進、情緒及心理輔導，並為有需要的個案提供臨床心理評估。
5. 協調報警程序
為被強姦的受害者報警，安排在中心內落口供，並協調醫療、採證等相關專業支援。

6. 即時及事後醫療支援

為受害者提供即時診治及預防性治療，包括：事後避孕，性病檢驗及事後醫療跟進。

7. 外展陪同

陪同當事人一起面對相關程序，包括：落口供、法醫檢查、醫療檢查及上庭等。

8. 治療小組

透過同路人支持的治療小組，協助受害人重建新生。

9. 前線同工專業支援

為性暴力支援專業提供諮商及培訓。

風雨蘭資訊

地址：香港九龍中央郵政局郵政信箱 74120 號

電話：2392 2569

網址：www.rainlily.org.hk

電郵：enquiry@rainlily.org.hk



08-03-2015 成報 (報章新聞) 風雨蘭：警方常忽略受害者心理 港聞 A06
http://www.singpao.com/xw/gat/201503/t20150308_550614.html

風雨蘭：警方常忽略受害者心理

【本報港聞部報道】女性的權益雖有所提升，但有不少女性仍淪為性暴力下的犧牲者。為性暴力受害人提供支援服務的組織「風雨蘭」，自2012年展開了為期三年的「凝·動」外籍傭工及少數族裔婦女計劃調查研究，結果發現，警方在處理外傭及少數族裔婦女性暴力時未有足夠的敏感度，以致忽略受害人的感受。

警方只是不停地發問

風雨蘭的「凝·動」外籍傭工及少數族裔婦女計劃調查研究，以個人深入會面以及焦點小組討論形式，了解她們對有關計劃的意見，三個焦點小組分別為少數族裔婦女、少數族裔少女及外籍傭工，而她們的年齡介乎19至54歲。其中一位

曾接受風雨蘭服務的印尼籍外傭Apple(化名)在錄影片段中表示，她2011年來港工作，不幸2013年遭遇強姦，她即日報警求助，表示當時心情「好緊張、好驚恐及壓力很大。」Apple批評警方只是不停地發問，未有顧及她當時心情及處境，她又稱，若警方能給予適當的休息時間，讓她慢慢憶述事發的經過會較理想。

風雨蘭總幹事王秀容表示，外籍傭工及少數族裔婦女遇到性暴力的情況不容忽視，由於她們不諳香港的法律，語言不通，又害怕失去工作，因此需要獲得更多支援。她建議，警方應改善處理個案的程序，體恤受害人的心理狀況，勿強迫受害人不斷憶述事件的過程；另外為翻譯員和其他外籍傭工及



■王秀容認為，坊間缺乏為外籍傭工及少數族裔婦女提供的預防性暴力及相關服務的資源。

少數族裔機構提供培訓服務，增加她們對反暴力的意識；以及增加社福界與外傭及少數族裔機構的服務聯繫，了解外傭及少數族裔的需要。

報章剪報：

08-03-2015 蘋果日報 (報章新聞) 外傭遭性侵報警反被炒 港聞 A14

<http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20150308/19067939>

外傭遭性侵報警反被炒

【本報訊】支援遭受性暴力婦女的團體風雨蘭，過去三年進行「凝·動」計劃，為外傭及少數族裔婦女提供輔導及預防性暴力教育，發現不少受害人因為不熟司法、宗教或文化差異，而不敢求助。

風雨蘭總幹事王秀容指出，機構於二〇一二年至二〇一五年接收了六百多宗受性侵（包括強姦及非禮）個案，百分之十為外傭及少數族裔婦女。她相信個案數字僅冰山一角，不少受害人不求助。

不熟司法少求助

城大應用社會科學副教授梁麗清與八位服務使用者進行過深入訪談或焦點小組討論。她指外傭或少數族裔婦女遇上性侵犯，感到被孤立、情緒低落及自責情況比一般受害者更嚴重，因文化上不習慣談論性，加上社交圈子窄，故不傾向對朋友傾訴；一旦不幸因姦成孕，基於宗教信仰（多信奉天主教或伊斯蘭教），她們較難接受墮胎。

梁稱經濟能力低亦影響求助意欲，有人因受侵犯而報警，後遭解僱。現行政策規定，外傭一旦離職須於兩周內離港，也不利輔導。她又指，有關受害者報警時遇上態度輕率的警員，且繙譯質素參差；中介公司沒有向外傭提供相關資訊，甚至有人故意抽起由入境處提供的預防性暴力單張。

記者會上播出一名印傭Apple(化名)的訪談錄影片段。Apple是伊斯蘭教徒，二〇一三年遭陌生人強姦，即日報警，形容警員態度催迫，感到不被體諒。風雨蘭服務主任伍穎琳指Apple情緒十分低落，一度萌生自殺念頭，且不認識本港司法程序，如以為一旦被告罪成，自己要賠償其家人的經濟損失；又以為庭上由她與加害者直接對質等。

■記者朱雋穎



■風雨蘭服務主任伍穎琳指有印傭受性侵，一度萌生自殺念頭。

其他報章報導：

08-03-2015 東方日報 (報章新聞) 外籍苦主報案傷上加傷 港聞 A2
http://orientaldaily.on.cc/cnt/news/20150308/00176_014.html?pubdate=20150308

08-03-2015 太陽報 (報章新聞) 風雨蘭促改善外傭報案程序 港聞 A9
http://the-sun.on.cc/cnt/news/20150308/00407_044.html

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we are extremely grateful to the respondents who took the time to participate in the study. Without their participation and feedback, this study would not have been possible.

We would like to extend a special thanks to all agencies and organizations for their help in the data collection, and for the many helpful comments and suggestions they provided. We are especially grateful to the following organizations participating in our project: Christian Action and Rosary Hill School.

The team gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Fu Tak Iam Foundation for providing the funding of the WE Stand programme.

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