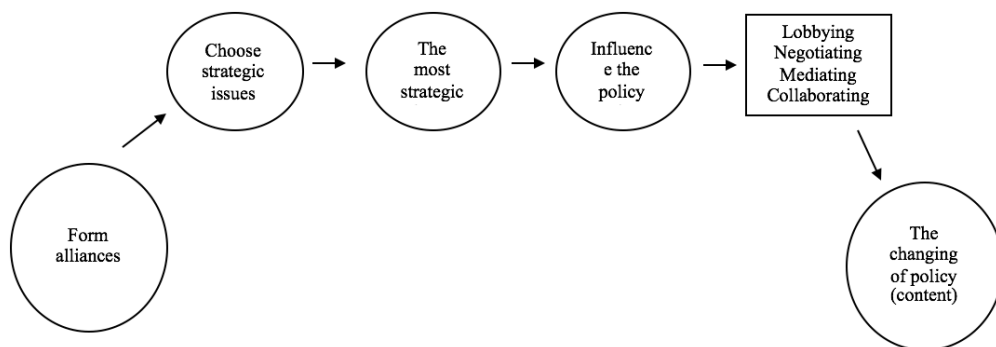


## CHAPTER IV

### ADVOCACY EFFORTS OF HOME AND PARTNERS

Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes – including public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions – that directly affect people’s current lives (Azizah, 2013). In other words, advocacy is an effort aims to recreate or change the public policy in order to be more specific with the needs or importance of the people who want changes. In basic means, the main purpose of advocacy is the emergence of policy-changing. In this case, the Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics shows the effort to accomplish its advocacy achievement with its partner towards the policy-changing in terms of the Indonesian foreign domestic worker in Singapore. Through lobbying, negotiating, mediating, and collaborating, then the goal of advocacy which is the policy changing towards the problem will be achieved. In order to understand the issue and to create a change in its policy, the advocacy process of HOME and its partner is explained in detailed through the model below.



Model of Integrated Advocacy (Azizah, 2013).

In relation with the policy changing process as the main content, in responding to this case, the advocacy process was going through the process which explained by the advocacy step by step in the table explained in the theoretical framework. Firstly, is the core ring formation which forming the main core ring as the victim of the advocacy which is the Indonesian domestic worker in Singapore. This very first step will be followed by choosing the strategic issue that the Indonesian domestic worker faced during their work in Singapore. Choosing the strategic issue means analyzing the issue or problem that the Indonesian domestic workers are experienced the most. Thus, HOME and partners are the main actor of advocacy in conducting several research regarding the issue of the workers.

Besides that, the advocacy step will be conducting through the target planning and its strategy in relating with the advocacy issues. In fact, the main target and its strategy are straightly goes to the both states government as the stakeholders and its policy makers. This step is conducting due to the fact that by having such planning and strategy, then the NGO will be clearly having its insight to revise, add, and even recommend its policy to be changed through the stakeholders.

The next step will be processing data and collecting information which means the NGO are required to collect and gather all the information needed in order to advocate the victim in this advocacy activity. This collecting information and its data aims to understand and analyze the amount of current victim and its case that will be solved and advocated. Gathering alliances will be one of the important step in this advocacy process since the real meaning of advocacy itself is helping the real one who is in need and this advocacy activity will be maximize

done with the help of some actors not only one actor. Thus, gathering alliances is important as to receive and get more additional support and its funding where possible to maximize the role of its NGO.

The next step will be offering counter plan and change the public policy which will be elaborated deeply through the next model of advocacy in the next model. Offering counter plan means the NGOs offer its plan and recommendation towards the next policy or previous policy that officially regulated or protect the workers to meet the needs of the workers. Through the counter plan offer, there will be some policy changing. In explaining this case more, there will be more specific model in explaining on how the policy are change. Thus, below this paragraph, there will be deep explanation and analysis in the changing of policy as the main context or purpose of advocacy activity.

#### **A. Lobbying with the Indonesia and Singapore Stakeholders**

As a part of the advocacy in changing the policy related to the core issue which is the domestic workers, HOME as the main advocacy actor plays an important role in handling the first step which is lobbying. Lobbying means an effort to influence government decisions, legislation, or the other part of the policy-making process in this modern democracies (CleanGovBiz, 2012). The main purpose of doing the lobby to the stakeholders of both countries involved is to improve the government decisions regarding to the issue by providing valuable insight and data. Good lobbying means getting involved at the very earliest stage of policy formulation which also means getting into think tanks to champion the ideas or feed in to the policy reviews (Zetter, 2008). In this case, HOME and other

advocacy partners in Indonesia such as *Viva Wanita* lobbied the both countries' stakeholder to ratify the convention which is related to the problem and issue faced by the Indonesian foreign domestic workers in Singapore.

Firstly, in the participation of Singapore government officials in the Universal Periodic Review about human rights in January 2016, HOME has lobbied several foreign governments to ask questions and give recommendations to address the human rights violations of migrant workers. As we know that Singapore as one of the major destination countries, therefore there must be several measurements needed to protect the rights of migrant workers which it is can be done by state and non-state actors to uphold the international labor standards for a more sustainable future. In this case, HOME continues to call for a foreign domestic worker to be covered under the Employment Act and urge the State to ratify the landmark ILO Convention C189 which contains of the basic labor rights to the workers (Wham, HOME, 2016). This basic rights include statutory holidays, paid leave, medical and annual leave in which those things still continue to be denied in Singapore. Responding to this case, HOME has reviewed some UPR which conducted with some countries and surprisingly more than hundred countries participate to give some recommendations to the Singapore government in which more than thirty countries gave recommendations concerning migrant workers. More specifically, HOME also recommend the Singapore government to:

1. Strengthen protection and to address issues related to the exploitation of migrant workers and mistreatment issues faced the workers.

2. Strengthen the protection of trafficked victims and raise its awareness of trafficking in persons and devote more resources to tackling this problem more particularly.
3. Take steps to prevent employers in hand over the passport of the domestic workers and work permit cards of the workers while they work.
4. Increase access to affordable health services to be easier and more accessible for the migrant workers.
5. Include the domestic worker's protection in the Employment Act.
6. Address and pay more particular attention regarding the issue of high recruitment and training fees in which the worker has to pay before their placement times.
7. Protect the migrant workers' right to pursue claims and access to justice while preventing the forced repatriation of migrant workers to their home countries and their origin.
8. Allow migrant workers to change employers without having complicated processes.
9. Address the issue of poor housing conditions the domestic workers faced.
10. Last but not least, the main purpose of this lobbying part to the Singapore government is to ratify the Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families as one of the UN

Convention and the Convention' of ILO which called the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (C189).

Discussing about ratifying a convention, however, there are several conventions that the Singapore's Government has not yet ratified regarding the issue of the domestic workers. Despite those unratified conventions, the Singapore's government argued that although the government has not ratified International treaties such as mentioned above, the substance of Singapore's laws is generally in compliance with the standards stipulate by these international treaties. Those declared disclaimer motivate HOME to lobby the government to ratify the convention if only the Singapore's laws are generally in compliance with international standards as the government claims, then HOME argues that it should not have any problem in ratifying the UN Convention for migrant workers and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (Wham, 2016). However, it is a kind of bizarre option chosen by Singapore's Government for not ratifying the ILO Convention for Domestic Workers while ILO and Singapore Ministry of Manpower have signed a partnership agreement to improve labor and workplace practices in which the partnership agreement has been entering the two-year partnership agreement. Thus, HOME argues that by ratifying these treaties, it will however show Singapore's commitment to uphold the migrant worker' rights. Upon those arguments above, HOME urges the government to do so.

More specifically, the Singapore is a party and has agreed to the following relevant conventions – even has yet ratified some of them: the Convention on

the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Singapore also has already become a member of International Labor Organization (ILO) and has ratified twenty of the organization’ conventions. Despite the twenty conventions ratified, there are still some conventions – even the core that Singapore has yet to ratify. The table below shows which convention that the Singapore has not yet aim to ratify in further.

Table 4.2  
ILO Convention (HOME, 2015).

CONVENTION	CURRENT STATUS
ILO Conventions C87	Not Ratified
ILO Conventions C105	Not Ratified
ILO Conventions C111	Not Ratified
ILO Migration for Employment Convention C97	Not Ratified
ILO Migrant Workers Convention C143	Not Ratified
ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers C189	Not Ratified

Another important thing to lobby is that HOME encourages the government to include the FDWs’ protection to the Employment Act of Ministry of Manpower, mostly related to the case of lacking a day off and rest days for the domestic workers. Although the Act applies equally to migrants

and locals, there is still a significant number of migrant workers who reported that they still work in exploitative hours. 12-16 hours work days, 7 days a week are commonly reported by migrant employees, meanwhile the local workers are paid more than the foreign workers for performing the same jobs in which HOME found it as unfair condition. In addition, the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act (EFMA) does not provide adequate protection to migrant workers who are arbitrarily dismissed and repatriated by their employers (Wham, 2016). HOME also found that EFMA discriminates against migrant women because it forbids them for being pregnant while they are in Singapore. HOME has handled cases of women who are compelled to abort their fetuses for fear of losing their jobs in Singapore.

## **B. Negotiating with the Indonesia and Singapore Stakeholders**

Negotiation is a basic human activity in which it also means a process that clearly undertake in everyday activities to manage relationships between two parties. In some case of negotiations, the stakeholders are not that high and do not have to pre-plan the process and outcome, even in some cases, the stakes are high and have to prepare, plan, and negotiate more carefully (Ghauri, 2003). On the other hand, negotiation refers to a win-win negotiation where both or all parties that involved can end up with equally beneficial or attractive outcomes. It is more likely related to a problem-solving approach, where both parties involved perceive negotiation as a process to find a solution or decision to a common problem (Ghauri, 2003).



Negotiation works as a part of the advocacy process conducted by HOME and partners, in which it stands as a tool to recommend the stakeholders from both states, Indonesia and Singapore, in changing or providing recommendation in some policies related to the rights of foreign domestic workers in Singapore. Some part of negotiations that HOME and partners conduct are mostly upon the prior of departure and the arrival of the workers while working in Singapore. Regarding with this matter, there are two other advocacies actors in Singapore beside HOME that conduct some research and give some recommendation to the Singapore stakeholder's and one local NGO from Indonesia, *Viva Wanita* collaborate with HOME gives some recommendation to the Indonesian Government.

#### **1. HOME recommendation to Singapore's Government**

Indonesian foreign domestic workers are under the protection of Employment Foreign Manpower Act which does protect several issues in detailed. There is an exception of Migrant Domestic Workers in the protection under the law in which not included in the Employment Act of MOM Singapore. However, the State-under-review claimed which means to protect low-skilled migrant workers under the EFMA in which it provides more proper and particular accommodation, timely payment and sufficient food and rest. Thus, the existing frameworks meant to protect the low-skilled migrant workers are theoretically sound but lacking in practical application. However, through several recommendations from HOME, Singapore government support the following recommendation in the Universal Periodic Review in 2011 below:

- a. Ensure universal access to health services and continue efforts in providing health care.
- b. Protect the rights and improve the working conditions of migrant domestic workers and promote the well-being of their human rights
- c. Strengthen the efforts to protect the rights of migrant workers
- d. Strengthen cooperation is required with countries of origin of the domestic workers so that it can support a better protection from exploitation
- e. Improve and review some legislation to the further step of the protection in term of the dignity and safety of the foreign workers.
- f. Contribute to the efforts of neighboring countries to combat the human trafficking which means to decrease or tackle this issue.

In conducting negotiations, HOME provides some insight and data regarding the issue faced by Indonesian Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore. The problem or issue faced by Indonesian Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore provided by IOM are summarized below.

Table 4.3

Problems Faced by Indonesian Domestic Workers in Singapore (IOM, 2010).

<b>Problem Faced by Domestic Workers</b>	
1.	No holidays
2.	High workload
3.	Insufficient rest break
4.	Not permitted to leave the house and freedom of association – not allowed to pray
5.	Wage below standard
6.	Working in more than one location
7.	Humiliation in words and action
8.	Physical violence
9.	Insufficient food
10.	Illness

In responding to the problems above, HOME reviewed some policies that the government has made and its unratified convention by the stakeholders. There were ten problems appeared through the data above. The first common problem the workers faced is the lack of day off and sufficient rest that the workers deserve. In summarizing the problem, no holidays, high workload, and insufficient rest break are considered as the main problems in insufficient rest days and day off.

Some recommendations and reviews have been made to the Singapore stakeholder relating to the day off and sufficient break. HOME has reviewed some recommendation concerning the domestic worker's rights for their day off. In fact, migrant domestic workers are not protected by the Employment Act which provides

for basic labor conditions, and more importantly the domestic workers in Singapore work under the unregulated hours and are not entitled to official sick leave, overtime pay and even public holidays. The foreign domestic workers in Singapore are out from all the regulations law made the Employment Act. Although the law stipulates the domestic workers to a rest day or compensation in-lieu, there is still no genuine choice available for the workers. In fact, the government leaves it to the workers to negotiate with the employers and not putting it in some policies under the Employment Act regulation. HOME has received many complaints from workers who only have few hours off on their rest days and tend to face pressure from employers to work seven days a week and having no day off. If the worker wanted a day off, they will face a risk of losing their job. Thus, responding to this case, HOME has created several recommendations which includes:

1. Ratify the ILO Convention C105 and review labor protections of Migrant Domestic Workers with the purpose to ensure that they are offered days off.
2. Ratify the ILO's Convention on Domestic Workers C189 and bring the foreign domestic workers under the protection of the Employment Act and not separated by other regulations.
3. Proactively and pay more particular attention to investigate employers who violate and deny the regulations of Employment Act standards and prosecute the employers accordingly.

Secondly, another problem that appeared is related to wage. It is inevitably proved that some discrimination still appeared in the sector of migrant workers. In

fact, many domestic workers still faced wage discrimination and also late payment. It is also sometimes lead to the salary deduction that the employers apply to the domestic worker. Thus, in response to overcome the related discrimination and problems, HOME created a review to the Government UPR in case of Wage Discrimination. HOME recommended the Singapore Government to review the real practice of wage discrimination by nationality and take possible actions to address the issue. Besides that, related to the advocacy process of lobbying step, which happen to the ratification the ILO Convention C111 relating with the wage problem.

Freedom of association and permission of house-leaving is become the next problem. In fact, most of the foreign domestic workers are required to live with their employers in which this requirement makes them prone to confinement, isolation, and other abuse problems such as physical and sexual abuse without any opportunities to emerge a freedom of movement. In addition, the foreign domestic workers' freedom of association also lacked of its movement knowing the fact that there are still some types of intimidation and coercion used including locking workers up and taking away their mobile phones that makes them unable to seek help. Other things happened is that despite the fact that the EFMA has already forbid employment agencies and employers for holding on to the domestic workers' identity documents such as passport, the employment agencies and employers disobey the rule and tend to confiscate and retain the workers' travel identity documents which infringes their freedom of movement. Therefore, HOME created some review and recommendation to the Singapore Government as follows:

1. The government should review the possibility of allowing domestic workers to live out from the employer's home or live separately
2. Proactively investigate and prosecute the employers, agent, and other parties for confining workers
3. Educate employers and agents to create an understanding for a better protection and rights of migrant workers in terms of holding their own passports and identify the documents.

Despite the lack of freedom movement's and its association, HOME found that domestic workers find it hard to do their practice of religion, expression, association, and peaceful assembly. In fact, by not having a mandatory day off, domestic workers are unable to attend or to practice any religious worship. Some also reported to HOME that their employers forbid them to pray and fast. Thus, HOME also create a recommendation to the Singapore government as summarized below:

1. Ensure worker's freedom to practice a religion and ensure that the worker do the religious activities without any fears of repatriation and reprisal.
2. Ensure that a domestic worker's freedom of expression and association, the government should pay more attention to these actions.
3. Ratify the ILO C87 and allow the workers to have the ability to form their own unions.

In addition, common problems that happen are abuse experienced by the foreign domestic workers. Foreign domestic workers come to Singapore to find a

better job to support their families back home still suffer abuse during their stay and work in Singapore. The Singapore's local news summarized a horror story of abuse experience by Indonesian Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore (Rashith, 2015), among others are:

1. In 2015, Indonesian domestic worker named Solichah faced abuse and got slapping and threatening from 2011 to 2013
2. In 2010, Juwarti, Indonesian domestic worker faced abuse once she made a mistake in taking care of their employer's children. The employers pushed her head against the edge of a toilet doorway and even kicked her private parts
3. In 2009, Lilis Sriyatun got physical abuse from her employer in using a bamboo to hit her back and using a heated metal spoon and pressed it against her arm. Lilis also often got kicked by the employer's husband on kicking her back and even her stomach.
4. In 2013, Neni Lestari got hit by her employer for doing a mistake. Her employer hit her and stamped her chest few times.
5. In 2012, Mustainah Munari, her employer hurt her legs using hot iron to hurt her legs and poured hot water on her head. Ironically, her employer also hit her with showerhead until it broke, banged her head against the walls, and even beat her with a clothes hanger and slapper her.
6. Other case in 2012, Tardem was abused four times in a day. She was reprimanded by her employer for not closing the main door in the flat

they lived. Her employer slapped her face and kick her without any humanity feeling.

Responding the case above, those all horror stories faced by Indonesian foreign domestic workers in Singapore showed that they were treated inhuman. Although, there are still many Indonesian foreign domestic workers abuses which are going unreported, it is undeniable that domestic workers now accept less deserving respect and dignity (Rashith, 2015). Thus, HOME functions as a reminder and as a concern towards this abuse issue and makes a recommendation to the Singapore's stakeholder to pay more attention to this issue.

## **2. HOME and *Viva Wanita* recommendation to Indonesian' Government**

HOME works in close partnership with *Viva Wanita* which is based in Batam, Riau Island, Indonesia. *Viva Wanita* established to provide a shelter for the victim of trafficked survivors and migrant returnees. HOME and *Viva Wanita* wrote a report and its recommendation. HOME and *Viva Wanita* reported the discrimination and inequality experienced by female Indonesian domestic workers in Singapore and the trafficking of Indonesian women into domestic servitude in Singapore and into sexual exploitation in Batam.

In fact, HOME and *Viva Wanita* appreciated to note the ratification by Indonesia on the Migrant Workers Convention in April 2012. Indonesia was the only one beside the Philippines who ratified the convention. Thus, in other ways HOME and *Viva Wanita* encouraged the Indonesian government to take urgent steps to:



- a. Incorporate its obligations under the Migrant Worker Convention into domestic law
- b. Encourage other ASEAN member nations to sign and ratify the convention
- c. Use its obligations under the convention as a basis for discussion and negotiations with the migrant destination countries such as Singapore, it is expected that a good condition for Indonesian domestic workers should be improved.

In additional, knowing the fact about the deaths of 8 Indonesian migrant domestic workers in Singapore in 2012 who fell from high-rise apartments, HOME and *Viva Wanita* cooperate with Indonesian government for employment agencies to include a clause in all contracts forbid the domestic workers cleaning outside of windows or hanging laundry from high apartments. Through this negotiation process, Indonesia government urged the Singapore government to tighten its laws and announce that domestic workers are no longer allowed to clean the outside windows. More specific recommendation by HOME and *Viva Wanita* to the Indonesian Government are elaborated below:

- a. Formulate a comprehensive gender-sensitive and right-based policy on the basis of equality and non-discrimination to regulate and administer all process aspects during recruitment, training, employment and return of migrant domestic workers, facilitate access to have opportunities to work abroad, promote safe migration and to ensure the protection of women migrant workers' rights.

- b. Establish mechanism to protect women against reprisals by recruiters, agents, and/or employers upon their return to Indonesia including its action taken related with the unpaid recruitment fees.
- c. Conduct and support quantitative and qualitative research, data collection and analysis to identify the problems and its needs faced by Indonesian foreign domestic workers in every phase of the migration process in order to promote the rights of women migrant workers and formulate relevant policies.
- d. Develop and deliver pre-departure information and training programs which provide independent recruiters and agents which will inform prospective women migrant workers about their rights and options available and informed clearly if they experience any form of exploitation or ill-treatment at the hands of their recruiters, agents, employers.
- e. Ensure the adequacy and availability of diplomatic and consular protection provided by the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore to Indonesian foreign domestic workers, including provision of interpreters, medical care, counselling, legal aid and shelter where necessary.

Most of the recommendation provided by HOME and *Viva Wanita* are the ones related with the prior to departure and the problems related in which normally the Indonesian should take a role in concerning this case.

### **3. TWC2 recommendation to Indonesian' and Singapore's Government**

Transient Workers Too make the following recommendations to the Singapore Government as critical measures necessary to fulfill their obligation to

ensure the migrant domestic workers equal rights. First and foremost is to ratify and apply the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families as well as the ILO Convention 189 and its supplementary recommendation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. Besides that, TWC2 basically has the same recommendation like HOME since both are the partners for each other advocacy actor. Thus, TWC2 recommend the Singapore Government to give a mandatory day off for the domestic workers. TWC2 argues that a mandatory day off for all workers including domestic workers must be enshrined in law in Singapore.

Knowing the fact that most of FDWs in Singapore is lack of freedom movement as well as faced by the Indonesian FDWs, TWC2 also recommended the stakeholder of Singapore to make a legal protection for the freedom of movement which means the prohibition of wrongful confinement in the Penal Code must be enforced to prevent employers from locking workers inside their residences. The 2007 Passport Act must also be enforced. More importantly, as many data and research provided the current condition of Foreign Domestic Workers condition in facing abuse and other mistreatment, there are still many unreported cases and unknown cases that is unpublished. Therefore, TWC2 also recommend the government to regularly provide statistical data which permit and inform the public of the status of migrant domestic workers in Singapore.

On the other hand, as a part of advocacy activity, TWC2 conducted an interview with Indonesia FDWs and showed a report which lead TWC2 to create a

recommendation for both states stakeholders in paying more attention towards the issues of Indonesian FDWs. TWC2 recommends the Government of Indonesia to:

- a. Ensure that citizens consider going to work abroad are given complete and clear information about what costs they may legitimately be expected to bear, including precise details of charges made by official bodies and approximations for the charges that agencies are legally entitled to make and that constitute “standard practice”. The information should be made available through an official website and local government offices (Transient Workers Count Too, 2008).
- b. Require training centers to give greater attention in providing information on the conditions that the workers will face in the receiving country. There should be instruction on their rights and how to defend them (Transient Workers Count Too, 2008).

Related to the TWC2 interview, TWC2 also created recommendations to the Government of Singapore, in which it is highlighted:

- a. Require employment agencies to supply all worker’s clients with a statement of their original charges, which will include those carried over from the Indonesian partner agencies and those made by the Singapore agencies or official bodies. Combines the steps recommended to the Indonesian government, this will help bring transparency to the recruitment process and help to counter the excessive charges to workers (Transient Workers Count Too, 2008).

- b. Require employers should be required to pay the recruitment costs of the domestic workers they hire and be strictly prohibited from recovering the money from the workers through salary deductions. Workers would then be paid their salaries in full from the first month of their employment without any other consideration of deducting it (Transient Workers Count Too, 2008).

#### **4. AWARE recommendation to Employment Act of Ministry of Manpower Singapore.**

AWARE is one of the associations in Singapore which concerns to the case and issue of foreign domestic workers in Singapore. AWARE is one of the advocacy partners of HOME beside TWC2 and *Viva Wanita*. As one of the advocacy processes, AWARE proposed amendments to the Employment Act mainly for the hours of work, rest days, and annual leave. AWARE recommended that the Employment Act and all related employment legislation must cover all workers and employees in Singapore regardless the position and salary earned. The exclusion of domestic workers from the Act should be abolished as well as the existing distinction between employees and workmen should also be removed (AWARE, 2013).

#### **C. Mediating with the Employers, Workers, and Stakeholders**

Mediation is increasingly being used to resolve disputes in many areas of life. It is one of the processes and alternative ways which involves a neutral third party bringing two sides together to reach a mutual agreement. Policy-makers and organizations increasingly recognize that mediation. Moreover, in mediation,

employment tribunals do not resolve systemic problems at work that may underlie an individual dispute. Mediation is more likely to enable the employer to get beneath the problem and make changes to working practices that can benefit employees and the organization more generally in the long term. In another hand, mediation can help to address issues around and helping to prevent long-term absence.

Discussing about mediation, the mediation session goes once the problem appear in term of the role of agency in following the placement and relation dispute between employer and employee. The foreign domestic workers in Singapore are all recruited from the Singapore local agent to be placed in the employers and find the employers to hire them. Thus, as an agency they should pay their responsibility towards the workers they have recruited. Most agencies run this role as businesses in which the agencies might find it preferable to cease to have any role or responsibility towards the employers or foreign workers once the workers are placed in employment (Transient Workers Count Too, 2010). Meanwhile, many foreign domestic workers are running away from their employers to their agents which this showed the problem that the workers experienced with their employers. Although in the employment agencies license conditions has written to be concern and watch the current condition of the workers during their placement, there are still a basic problem which somehow does not require active ongoing monitoring for each branch.

Therefore, as the advocacy actor, TWC2 propose solution and conduct mediating session between employers, foreign workers, and the agents to solve this

problem. TWC2 requires the agencies in Singapore to be required to perform spot checks on the workers they place to their employers. In-person visits to the employers' premises and direct talk with the workers in accordance with the absence of the employer since checking the workers through phone call does not give enough information and the real condition as well. Agents should record their observations in details and notify any breaches happened. Thus, TWC2 mediate with the worker, agent, and employer in order to require them to have a balance and unbiased manner (Transient Workers Count Too, 2010). This mediation conducted because basically formalizing the role of the agent in the post-placement is not unprecedented in the industry. Making the agents more aware and realize to formalize their duty is one of the goal in this mediating session.

#### **A. Collaborating with the Local NGOs from Indonesia and Singapore.**

According to Keck and Sikkink (1999), transnational advocacy networks means framing the issues to make it comprehensible and get the audiences' attention as the target, to attract and encourage its action and make it fit with the institutional venues (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). In doing the advocacy, it needs advocacy actors in the amount needed as to support the goals of the advocacy itself. As it is explained to attract the attention of others, there are also several processes that need to be done. Humanitarian Organization for Migration and advocacy partners in Singapore, TWC2 and AWARE collaborate together to in formalizing the process. Keck and Sikkink have developed several kinds of tactic in maximizing it. These include:

1. Information politics which means the ability to provide usable information quickly and credibly that has the most impact (Keck & Sikkink, Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics, 1999)
2. Symbolic politics which means the ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation or claim for an audience that is frequently far away (Keck & Sikkink, 1999).
3. Leverage politics which means the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where the weaker members of the network are unlikely to have influence (Keck & Sikkink, 1999).
4. Accountability politics which means the effort to oblige more powerful actors to act on vaguer policies or principles they formally endorsed (Keck & Sikkink, 1999).

Information politics binds network members together and brings its effectiveness to influence and attract the audience in conducting this advocacy activity. Non-state actors gain influence by serving as alternative sources of information in which means the information is not only provided through the fact but also testimonies – stories told by the person in charge in which their lives has been affected. As the advocacy actor, HOME provides a digital platform consist of website in which the domestic workers are the current writer to write and express all of their stories. MyVoice at HOME aims to give a voice to the voiceless – foreign domestic workers in Singapore. Other way to provide information is writing a research and report as part of the advocacy role done by HOME and partners.



HOME and TWC2 often conduct interview sessions with the domestic workers and provide some questionnaire to research and observe regarding their current condition. Thus, this first step is important to be done as part of collaboration of the advocacy actors.

The next part is symbolic politics which the evidence of the creation of International Migrant Day on 18th December and the emergence of International Domestic Workers Day in 16th June. The purpose of the establishment of both celebrations is to make the audience and the society know and raise its awareness regarding the issue that the victim experienced. Besides that, HOME and TWC2 also conduct a campaign to raise the people – especially employers to provide a mandatory day off for their domestic workers. A platform of website and direct campaign has been done by HOME and TWC2 since 2003.

The next step is the leverage politics in calling upon the powerful actors to effect the policy, the researcher of TWC2 informed that TWC2 greatly formalized their role as NGOs by creating advocacy goal of a mandatory day off for migrant domestic worker in Singapore as the public agenda (Wee, 2016). Over the past 10 years, HOME and TWC2 have forged new frames of understanding the rights of migrant domestic workers and realizing a responsibility towards them. Advocacy for a mandatory day off for the foreign domestic workers came up in 2008 along with the collaboration of HOME, TWC2 and UNIFEM Singapore (Wee, 2016). Through several campaign conducted, in 1st January 2013 then the policy came into force for all migrant workers to receive a day off.

Last but not least, the collaboration of all the advocacy actors in maximizing the advocacy efforts is giving big impact in the advocacy process. As for instance, below is highlighted timeline for day off policy recommendation to the government.

Table 4.4  
Timeline (Wee, 2016).

Year	Action
2003	TWC2 launches a “Sundays Off” campaign for foreign domestic workers in Singapore
January 2005	MOM introduces stringent entry criteria for migrant domestic workers
June 2005	Association of Employment Agencies Singapore raises proposal for all domestic workers should have four days per month as a part of standard employment contract
December 2005	Human Rights Watch publishes “Maid to Order: Ending Abuses Against Migrant Domestic Workers in Singapore, then MOM claiming HRW has grossly exaggerated and misrepresented the situation of abuse in Singapore in the interview tih BBC Radio
July 2006	Standard employment contract is unveiled by the Association of Employment Agencies but the usage is not made compulsory
May 2008	TWC2, HOME, and UNIFEM Singapore launches a yearlong “day off” campaign
June 2010	Singapore’s status on the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons report was downgraded
2011	The Strait Times publishes a series of articles examining the employment conditions of migrant domestic workers in Singapore, culminating in a final commentary on 23 June 2011 calling for the legislation of mandatory rest days:
16th June 2011	The ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers was adopted (C189) but Singapore was abstains from voting
19th June 2011	The Minister of State for Community Development, Youth, and Sports urges Singapore to consider legislation.
22nd June 2011	MOM announces that it will review the call to give migrant domestic workers a day off or compensation in-lieu, and begins the consultation process with employers, agencies, and NGOs
August 2011	Media report claims that the Indonesian government is conducting a comprehensive evaluation of destination countries’ policies.
October 2011	Proposal to mandate a day off is announced in Parliament
January 2012	Indonesian government announces that it intends to stop sending its nationals to work as domestic workers in 2017
2 March 2012	MOM announces weekly rest day policy
1 January 2013	The policy comes into force for all migrant domestic workers.

Moreover, MOM highlighted that migrant domestic workers can now utilize their days off to acquire new skills by participating in training programs provided by NGOs. In addition, foreign domestic workers can sign up for a range of courses, including financial education classes, and as well as entrepreneurship training. However, these trainings can either enhance their effectiveness as domestic workers needing more specialized knowledge or empower them to avail themselves of future opportunity they may have after they completed their contracts. In other words, the day off policy was pitched as a mean for foreign domestic workers to equip themselves with skills and competencies that may position them better to take path towards social mobility.