

**Publication: ST Online**

**Date: 23 February 2026**

**Headline: 'Living the dream': Why a young lawyer chooses to serve migrant workers full-time**

**'Living the dream': Why a young lawyer chooses to serve migrant workers full-time**



Christine Tan

Published Feb 23, 2026, 05:00 AM

Updated Feb 23, 2026, 05:05 AM

SINGAPORE – Growing up, Ms Nur Shukrina Salam's world was never far from the migrant worker community.

She regularly saw the workers volunteering at mosques during Hari Raya, and heard her father's stories about those he had befriended around their estate who were not receiving their salaries.

While studying law at Singapore Management University in 2020, Ms Shukrina and three schoolmates created a free online salary calculator that also guides migrant workers through employment disputes.

Now, the 27-year-old is the only full-time lawyer at the Migrant Workers' Law Centre @ MWC (MWLC), Singapore's only legal clinic that opens five days a week for the migrant worker community.

Set up by the Migrant Workers' Centre and law charity Pro Bono SG, the centre in Serangoon Road provides free consultations on employment issues, criminal cases and other legal matters.

**Publication: ST Online**

**Date: 23 February 2026**

**Headline: 'Living the dream': Why a young lawyer chooses to serve migrant workers full-time**



In a February interview with The Straits Times at MWLC, Ms Shukrina said she felt a calling from a young age to help society's underserved.

"If there are not enough people helping them (migrant workers), then I lend my skills and resources to where they are required most," she said.

Ms Shukrina has been at MWLC since it opened in April 2025, taking a pay cut to join Pro Bono SG after working as a legal associate at a private law firm. The charity's full-time lawyers draw a monthly income and do not charge clients for their services.

"Since I graduated from law school, I've set the expectation with my family that I'm not going to be a rich lawyer, and that's okay," said Ms Shukrina, who also has a Master of Laws from Duke University.

Candidly, Ms Shukrina let on that her father worries about her career progression and reminds her that she needs money for her own future.

But Ms Shukrina, who is getting married in 2026, does not compare herself with her peers – some of whom are judges or work with senior counsel.

"I'm getting paid to do what I love. In fact, when I got this job, I told a couple of close friends that I really feel I'm living the dream," she said with a smile.

'Sons, fathers, husbands'

**Publication: ST Online**

**Date: 23 February 2026**

**Headline: 'Living the dream': Why a young lawyer chooses to serve migrant workers full-time**

Ms Shukrina has three to four consultations each day with migrant workers, except on Wednesdays when she sets aside time to work on cases. About one-third speak English, and she works with an interpreter for the rest.

Common inquiries from workers include employment issues and legal representation for criminal cases.

One memorable case involved securing a discharge not amounting to an acquittal for an Indonesian domestic worker who had been charged with helping a friend remit funds illegally. Ms Shukrina wrote to the prosecution that the domestic worker did not know the act was wrong, had not done it for profit and had cooperated with the police.

A discharge not amounting to an acquittal means the accused will not be punished but can still be prosecuted for the same crime if new evidence emerges later.

Ms Shukrina has also witnessed tragedy, such as when an Indian healthcare worker needed help to process an insurance payout for his wife, who died shortly after giving birth. Their baby was only six months old. During the consultation, the man wept out of grief and concern for his child's future.

Though MWLC does not directly handle such cases, Ms Shukrina explained what the man could expect during the payout process and referred him to a directory of lawyers who could assist him.

"He was able to move forward and at least get some direction; before that, he completely had no idea what to do," she said.



**Publication: ST Online**

**Date: 23 February 2026**

**Headline: 'Living the dream': Why a young lawyer chooses to serve migrant workers full-time**

Her work extends beyond MWLC to wherever the workers are, as she also meets them via video calls.

Once, an Indian driver confided to her about his unpaid salaries and possibly getting a job transfer, while seated in his company's parked lorry. Suddenly, his colleague approached the lorry and asked what he was doing.

"I just had to mute myself, turn off my video and be quiet, because he clearly didn't want his colleague to know he was doing a legal consult," said Ms Shukrina.

The driver hastily left the vehicle. When the conversation resumed, she gave him general legal guidance, and he was able to proceed on his own.

Almost a year into the job, Ms Shukrina's enthusiasm has not waned. She hopes to spread awareness of MWLC's services to more migrant workers.

When asked what she hoped Singaporeans would know about migrant workers, she said: "Beyond the work they do here, they are individuals. They are sons, fathers, husbands. As much as there may be cultural differences... it's important to treat them like any other human being."