

Society in new push as fundraiser shelved

By GREG FOUNTAIN

A SOCIETY set up to defend the rights of Bahrain's migrant workers is looking to plug a BD30,000 hole in its finances after abandoning plans for an annual fundraiser.

Volunteers at the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) are so busy handling the casework of hundreds of people they help every year that they had no time to organise the Crystal Ball Charity Dinner Dance.

The last event in November 2012 raised more than BD30,000 for the society, but it is now looking for less labour-intensive ways to raise cash – such as corporate sponsorship or regular, recurring private donations.

"Funding is one of our main issues because the only way of getting a good chunk (of money) is by having a big fundraiser – and if the same people run around trying to organise that while running the society at the same time, it's too huge a task," ex-

Activists hit out at 'immoral' contracts

RIGHTS activists have hit out at "immoral" contracts that leave low-paid expatriates owing thousands of dinars if they want to quit their job.

The Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) says it regularly comes into contact with distressed workers, who have been taken to court over money owed to their employers.

"When a person comes here to work, he is invariably made to sign a contract which he never sees a copy of," society chairwoman Marietta

Dias told the *GDN*.

"We've had cases in the past where if the employee leaves within two years, they owe the employer BD1,000.

"This is for someone earning less than BD150 a month – that should never have been in the contract."

Ms Dias described it as "morally wrong" for employers to make such demands of their employees, but pointed out that the fault could lay with old contract templates that have not yet been revised.

"How could you allow people to sign a contract where they promise to pay back money?"

"And then when the staff complain the employer gets in trouble as well, but he has perhaps been using that contract for years.

"We have tons of contracts like this and what happens is that person is put in the detention centre for six months or 10 months and he is never appraised of his situation – and the court case against him is that he owes

BD1,000 or BD10,000.

"All that time it takes for the court cases and the law is such that the employee can't work legally. From all angles, it is working against the worker."

Employees wishing to resign before their two-year contract is complete are likely to be held liable by their employers for any costs incurred in their hiring.

The *GDN* has reported numerous times in recent years on the plight of workers who claim not to have been paid for weeks or months.



■ Ms Dias

plained MWPS chairwoman Marietta Dias.

"So we are always looking for donations, but we are all volunteers so we keep our expenses to the bare minimum."

MWPS general secretary Beverley Hamadeh said the society had considered approaching large companies seeking pledges under corporate social responsibility programmes.

"What we would really like is for some top companies to guarantee us

an annual donation, which we don't have to keep asking for," she said.

She added the society had almost been a "victim of its own success" since being founded in 2005, because growing awareness of its work had not been matched by an increase in people willing to help.

"The number of committed volunteers has not grown by the same proportion as the number of people who need support,"



■ Ms Hamadeh

she explained.

"Which just means a greater workload for the same amount, or slightly more."

The MWPS helps expatriate workers achieve their basic human rights in accordance with internationally recognised standards.

Since 2005 it has provided shelter to more than 1,300 abused or exploited female workers, as well as arranging medical treatment, paying visa fees and buying

airline tickets for repatriation.

The society provides expatriate workers with translators and is actively engaged in all follow-up work related to their cases including frequent visits to police stations; manpower agencies; the Labour Ministry; Labour Market Regulatory Authority embassies; the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs offices; hospitals; the Public Prosecution and the courts.

To donate money or volunteer, visit the society website at www.mwpsbahrain.com.

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www.nbad.com

Statement of financial position as at 31 December

	2013 BHD'000	2012 BHD'000
Assets		
Cash and balances with the central bank	2,187	2,477
Due from banks and financial institutions	7,800	14,300
Loans and advances to customers	36,960	37,712
Held-to-maturity investments	11,286	10,989
Due from other offices of the Head Office	66,897	46,196
Property and equipment	2,873	2,833
Other assets	198	110
Total assets	128,201	114,617
Liabilities		
Due to banks and financial institutions	37,811	39,854
Deposits from customers	61,529	41,778
Due to other offices of the Head Office	20,969	23,471
Other liabilities	407	1,869
Total liabilities	120,716	106,972
Head Office funds		
Capital	4,217	4,217
Unremitted profit	3,268	3,428
Total Head Office funds	7,485	7,645
Total liabilities and Head Office funds	128,201	114,617
Commitments and contingent liabilities	48,245	52,271

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December

	2013 BHD'000	2012 BHD'000
Interest income	1,860	2,328
Interest expense	(467)	(571)
Net interest income	1,393	1,757
Net fee and commission income	219	240
Gain on foreign exchange transactions	69	95
Investments Income	83	34
Total operating income	1,764	2,126
Staff costs	(893)	(496)
Premises costs	(221)	(119)
Depreciation	(52)	(44)
Allocation of expenses from Head Office	(323)	(83)
Other operating expenses	(424)	(311)
Operating expenses	(1,913)	(1,053)
(Loss)/Profit before net impairments charge	(149)	1,073
Net impairment charge	(11)	(1)
(Loss)/Profit for the year	(160)	1,072
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive (loss)/income for the year	(160)	1,072

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 December

	2013 BHD'000	2012 BHD'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
(Loss)/Profit for the year	(160)	1,072
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	52	44
Provision for impairment of loans and advances	11	1
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Balances with central bank	(60)	(61)
Loans and advances to customers	740	6,287
Due from other offices of the Head Office	-	135
Other assets	(88)	190
Deposits from banks	(2,043)	2,134
Due to customers	19,751	6,390
Due to other offices of the Head Office	(2,502)	(537)
Other liabilities	(1,462)	1,547
Cash flows generated from operating activities	14,336	17,202
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of premises and equipment, net of disposals	(91)	(135)
Net cash used in investing activities	(91)	(135)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	14,148	17,067
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	72,615	55,548
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December	86,763	72,615

The above statements have been extracted from the annual financial statements of National Bank of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain Branch (licensed by CBB as Retail Bank) for the year ended 31 December 2013 which were approved for issue by the management on 23 March 2013 and audited by KPMG Fakhro who issued an unqualified audit report dated 23 March 2013.