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Into the Unknown

Exploitation of Nepalese migrant domestic
workers in Lebanon

Anti-Slavery International
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All photos from KAFA are of migrant domestic workers currently working in Lebanon.

Cover photo: Block of flats in Beirut, typical workplace for migrant domestic workers
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GEFONT (General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions) is the first registered, largest and most representative trade union confederation in Nepal. GEFONT is a founding member of the International Trade Union Confederation. For more information see: www.gefont.org



KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation was established in 2005 and is a Lebanese non-profit, non-confessional civil society organisation committed to the achievement of gender equality and non-discrimination, and the advancement of the human rights of women and children. KAFA works on: violence against women, exploitation and trafficking in women, and socio-legal counselling to victims of violence. For more information see: www.kafa.org.lb



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Executive Summary

Hundreds of thousands of migrants are currently working in the Middle East in situations that can amount to forced labour and slavery. This is a direct consequence of the systems currently in place in these countries, as well as policies and practices in their home countries, including in South Asia and further afield.

Research by Anti-Slavery International, KAFA - (Enough) Violence & Exploitation in Lebanon- and GEFONT - the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions - has identified that domestic workers from Nepal seeking legal and decent work in Lebanon are one such group who are suffering from this type of exploitation.

Domestic work includes a range of tasks carried out in private homes including cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, taking care of children or the elderly, running errands and sometimes looking after an employer's small business. Domestic workers can live in their employer's home or independently from them, but working within the home is the single most important determinant in defining a domestic worker. Migrant domestic workers are workers who have migrated to other cities or villages, either internationally or within their own countries' borders to find employment. Thousands of women and girls migrate every day to find work as domestic workers and provide for their families.

In Lebanon alone, there is currently an estimated 200,000 migrant domestic workers. The abuse and exploitation they suffer is well documented. Until 2012, Lebanon was the top country of destination for female migrant workers.

The plight of Nepalese migrant domestic workers is rooted in a continuum of vulnerabilities starting from their recruitment in their rural villages and lasting until they start work in a home in the Lebanese capital city and beyond. At every stage of the migration process and employment, they risk being abused and exploited. Many are trafficked for forced labour, with some employers forbidding them from leaving the house,

confiscating their passports and using violence or threats of violence to control and force them to work, often without pay. Others fall into bonded labour as a result of the transportation and recruitment costs, as well as the commission fees charged by the agent and/or broker and incurred in taking up a job abroad. They are put in this situation as a result of inadequate policies, discrimination, lack of preparedness, isolation, and an absence of coordinated efforts to protect them. Each one of these factors can lead to serious labour and human rights violations; when combined, as they are for migrant domestic workers including for Nepalese in Lebanon, they create the conditions within which abuse and exploitation can flourish.

In 2012, Anti-Slavery International launched a project looking at the situation of migrant domestic workers from Nepal, prior to and after they migrate to Lebanon. The work is implemented in partnership with KAFA in Lebanon and GEFONT in Nepal. The activities build on research undertaken in these two countries as well as India examining the legislation, policy and practice of the migration cycle in origin and destination countries, with particular reference to its impact on female migrant domestic workers. The research concluded that the combination of gender discrimination in policies, lack of relevant and accessible training pre-departure, lack of protection or little or no regulation of recruitment agencies, as well as discriminatory policies in the countries of destination, mostly through the kafala - or sponsorship system - all result in a failure to protect female migrant domestic workers.

The research also showed that the vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation suffered by migrant domestic workers are inter-related and inter-dependent; for example, even if women received appropriate pre-departure training, they would remain vulnerable to exploitation if the ban currently preventing women under 30 from migrating to Lebanon remained. Therefore, it will be only be possible to improve their situation by addressing, concurrently, the continuum of vulnerabilities to which they are subjected prior to, during and after migrating and by making them agents of change for themselves and others in

similar situations.

In Nepal, a model has been developed to bring relevant and adequate pre-departure information to potential female migrants in the two districts of Jhapa and Morang in a format they can easily rely on. The information is relayed by members of the community called Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV) who have been trained on issues of safe migration, especially for women migrating for domestic work. As members of the community, these FCHV will have a better knowledge of the situation of women in these areas and will be more likely to gain their trust. Providing adequate pre-departure information to prospective migrant domestic workers is a crucial step in making migration safer for women. If they are informed of the legal steps to migration, of the realities and potential dangers linked to working abroad as a domestic workers, women are more likely to make informed decisions about their migratory plans.

In Lebanon, the project also supports the development of the Nepali community of migrant domestic workers, who came together under the NARI group. The objective is to scale up and replicate this model across communities, based on lessons learnt from the Nepalese experience. As illustrated in the report, in addition to building stronger and better prepared communities of domestic workers, these interventions are also crucial to informing and strengthening the partnership's campaign for policy and practice reforms.

The project's approach to integrating pre-departure training with post-destination community building also potentially offers a highly replicable model which could be of value to many source countries, regardless of whether they have bans in place such as in Nepal.

The report presents in more details the interventions developed by the partnership, the lessons learnt to date from implementing them, as well as the impact to date. It also makes a number of recommendations for policy changes in both countries, based on the experience of migrant domestic workers and the research conducted.

Recommendations

Ratify ILO convention 189:

Nepal and Lebanon should ratify ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which in addition to providing all domestic workers with the rights and protection to which they are entitled, provides specific measures to address the specific vulnerabilities of migrant domestic workers.

Abolish the kafala system:

The kafala system is the single most important factor contributing to the abuse and exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon and beyond. Immediate measures should be introduced to remove the condition of obtaining notarized authorization letter from their employer for abused migrant domestic workers to leave their employers and to grant these workers a grace period during which they are allowed to seek a new employer/sponsor. Employment-based visas and easy exit procedures which would enable workers to leave Lebanon freely after completion of their contract should also be introduced with the end objective of removing the kafala system altogether.

Include domestic workers in labour laws:

The exclusion of domestic workers from national labour laws makes it possible for governments to introduce lesser standards of protections for this category of workers. Domestic workers are workers like any others and should be included in labour laws and benefit from the same rights and protection as other workers, including minimum wage, maximum working hours, health and safety protection and the possibility of residing within or outside of their employers' home.

Provide accessible and relevant pre-departure information to all potential migrants:

Current provisions for pre-departure training and orientation do not reach the women it should. Efforts should be made by the government of Nepal to respond to these shortcomings including by building upon some of the good practice developed through this project. This includes the use of creative material, the involvement of relevant trainers including returnee migrant

domestic workers and the mainstreaming of safe migration issues to the community through mass media and community dialogue. Training should be de-centralised and possibly delivered at the Migrant Information Centres operating across the country.

Regulate recruitment agencies and monitor recruitment practices:

The practice of recruiting migrant domestic workers from the rural areas of Nepal to work as domestic workers is largely unregulated. Hundreds of brokers are estimated to be operating without any scrutiny, to provide recruitment agencies with potential workers. This lack of regulation increases the risk of women to be trafficked, in forced labour and/or debt bondage as a result of inflated debts contracted at the outset, false passports and deception about their future employment.

Harmonise policy and practice in relation to migration for domestic work in Nepal:

The lack of coherency between the policies and practice currently regulating the situation of potential migrant domestic workers in Nepal, particularly, the co-existence of the ban with the Open Border Agreement creates a parallel economy of migration for domestic work in the Middle East, which profits brokers and agencies at the expense of the rights and safety of migrant workers. Nepal should remove the age ban and enable agencies to issue permits for Lebanon; this will encourage women to take official routes to migrate for domestic work and eventually make them less vulnerable to being exploited if done in the context of the other wider reforms put forward in this report.

Establish an embassy in Lebanon:

Without any consular or diplomatic representation in Lebanon, Nepalese migrant workers, including domestic workers, are left without any protection from their state and unable to access any official support in relation to accessing a shelter in case of abuse, repatriation or obtaining official papers after they were taken away by the employer. A Consulate should be established to support the work of the Honorary Consul in Beirut as a matter of priority.

Support the self-organising of migrant domestic workers with the view of organising them in unions:

Migrant workers, including migrant domestic workers should be able to join trade unions easily and freely and trade unions should be supported to include and represent the interests of domestic workers. As a first step, migrant domestic workers themselves should be empowered and supported to come together, provide peer support and advocate and defend their own rights. Enabling disempowered and isolated migrant domestic women to come together to advocate for their rights is resource intensive but can make a real difference to the individuals and groups concerned.



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Introduction

In 2012 Nepal's gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at USD18.96 billion. In 2009 Nepal was also the 5th highest recipient of remittances, as a percentage of its GDP, at 23%.¹ It is estimated that since 2011, remittance growth has reached 37%. These figures illustrate the very important contribution that migrant workers make to the economy of Nepal, at a level much higher than foreign aid, which is estimated to amount to less than a quarter of remittances. The most important sector of labour migration for women is domestic work.

The treatment of migrant domestic workers in the Middle East, is receiving increasing attention from non-governmental and international organisations as well as the media. Stories of

shocking abuse and alarming rates of suicide amongst migrant domestic workers in Lebanon² all serve to highlight the severity and urgency of the situation.

In 2012, Anti-Slavery International launched a project looking at the situation of migrant domestic workers from Nepal, prior to and after they migrate to Lebanon. The work is delivered in partnership with two organisations: KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation, a Lebanese non-profit, non-confessional civil society organisation committed to the achievement of gender equality and non-discrimination, and the advancement of the human rights of women and children; and GEFONT, the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions, the largest and most representative trade union confederation in Nepal.

¹ Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011, available at: www.worldbank.org

² According to the Nepali Times, 15 Nepali domestic workers committed suicide in the Lebanon during 2010: Hom, K., "Suicide in Lebanon", *Nepali Times*, Issue 517, 27 August 2010.

This multi-country and multi-sectorial partnership set itself a number of objectives, which include:

- to empower Nepalese migrant domestic workers who may be seeking work in Lebanon to be aware of their rights and how to claim them, and aware of the common risks and vulnerabilities they may face;
- to ensure that the Nepalese migrant domestic workers, both new and current, self-organise to create a new, empowered and partly autonomous community of migrant workers;
- to ensure that duty bearers and civil society in both Nepal and Lebanon are responsive to the needs of migrant domestic workers; and to share the lessons learned from the project, in particular what has been learned in terms of the most effective pre-departure and post-destination intervention strategies and how these can be made mutually reinforcing through collaborative working.

The theory of change behind the work delivered by this partnership rests on the understanding that women migrant domestic workers suffer from a broad range of vulnerabilities which frequently lead to abuse and exploitation, these are inter-related and inter-dependent; it will only be possible to improve the situation of migrant domestic workers by addressing the continuum of vulnerabilities to which they are subjected prior, during and after migrating and by making them agents of change for themselves and others in similar situations.

The report explores the socio-legal contexts of Nepal and Lebanon, and offers an analysis of the causality of the high occurrence of abuse and exploitation suffered by migrant domestic workers. It continues to highlight the interdependency of all the various factors that make migrant domestic workers so vulnerable to exploitation as well as the solutions that need to be brought in to diminish them.

Having highlighted the continuum of vulnerabilities that migrant domestic workers face, the report explores the methodology developed by the partnership to counter them, focusing on pre-departure activities dedicated at bringing relevant and accessible information to potential migrants, and post-arrival activities aimed at empowering migrant domestic workers to defend and claim their rights.

The interventions delivered to support migrant domestic workers are, as the report illustrates, very much embedded in efforts to improve the policy and practice currently regulating their situation in both countries – namely, the kafala system, labour laws and regulations, the practice of imposing bans, pre-departure training and ratification of ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

This report offers an overview of the good practice developed as part of this work, introduces some of the specific tools developed over the past two years and also provides an initial analysis of its impact to date. The aim of the report is to encourage the replication of the tools and the theory of change developed and to contribute to stepping up efforts to end the exploitation and forced labour of migrant domestic workers. Whilst the report provides a particular emphasis on the migration of domestic workers from Nepal to Lebanon, it puts forward learning that will be relevant for other migration axes and all migrant domestic workers globally.

Chapter One: Migrant domestic workers: definitions and situation in Lebanon and Nepal



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Definitions

According to the International Labour Organization's definitions, "domestic worker means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship"; domestic works "means work performed in or for a household or households" (ILO C189, art.1).

Domestic work includes a range of tasks carried out in private homes including cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, taking care of children or the elderly, running errands and sometimes looking after the employer small business. Domestic workers can live in their employer's home or independently from them but working within the home is the single most important determinant in defining a domestic worker.

Women make up the overwhelming majority of domestic workers around the world. Many children, mostly girls, also work as domestic workers, under conditions ranging from acceptable to what actually constitutes a worst form of child labour.³ Child domestic workers are extremely vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The ILO estimates that there is a minimum of 50 million domestic workers and over 17 million child domestic workers around the world.⁴ In some countries, domestic work can make up to 10 percent of total employment.⁵

Migrant domestic workers are workers who have migrated to other cities or villages, either

³ See Anti-Slavery International, *Home Truths: Wellbeing and vulnerabilities of child domestic workers*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2013. Available to download from www.antislavery.org.

⁴ See ILO, *Domestic Workers across the World: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection*, ILO, Geneva, 2013; for more disaggregated data.

⁵ There is a lack of accurate data on the prevalence of domestic work throughout the world. This is partly due to the fact that a high proportion of all domestic work remains undeclared, and that national statistics often do not count domestic workers as a distinct category. However, the available data shows that domestic work makes up a significant proportion of total employment: between 4 and 10 per cent in developing countries and between 1 and 2.5 per cent in industrialized countries. See ILO, *Decent Work for Domestic Workers*, Report IV(1) presented at the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference, ILO, Geneva, 2010.

internationally or within their own countries' borders to find employment as domestic workers. Thousands of women and girls migrate every day to find work as domestic workers and provide for their families. Migrant domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, including forced labour, due to the unique and specific circumstances of the work inside the home, away from public scrutiny and social networks of support. Many are trafficked for forced labour, with some employers forbidding them from leaving the house, confiscating their passports and using violence or threats of violence to control and force them to work, often without pay. Others fall into bonded labour⁶ as a result of the transportation and recruitment costs, as well as the commission fees charged by the agent and/or broker in order to take up a job abroad.

Despite the high occurrence of abuse and the vulnerability to exploitation, women continue to migrate for domestic work, forced by economic and social pressures, the absence of opportunities in their countries of origin and the wish to create opportunities for themselves and their families.

In 2011, the ILO adopted a historical Convention and supplementary Recommendation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (Convention 189) thereby recognising the specific abuse and exploitation this group of workers is subjected to and the need to provide for an international policy framework that would enable countries to start addressing their vulnerabilities. Whilst the general provisions of ILO Convention 189 apply to all domestic workers, the convention also introduces provisions aimed at addressing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of migrant domestic workers, by requiring the establishment of:

- A written contract that is enforceable in the country of employment, or a written job offer, prior to traveling to the country of employment (Article 8);
- Clear conditions under which domestic workers are entitled to repatriation at the end of their employment (Article 8);
- Protection of domestic workers from abusive practices by private employment agencies (Article 15);
- Co-operation among sending and receiving countries to ensure the effective application of the provisions of the Convention to migrant domestic workers (Article 8).⁷

However, the national policy agendas of both sending and receiving countries are still short of providing migrant domestic workers with the policy and practice they need to migrate safely for domestic work. To date, amongst the main sending countries, only the Philippines has ratified the Convention. Nepal however does not appear to be taking any concrete step in that direction despite the pressing need to put in place a protective system for the millions of citizens migrating from Nepal as domestic workers, in search of better lives for themselves and their families.⁸

⁶ Bonded labour is defined under art. 1 of the 1956 UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery as: "the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined".

⁷ See http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_161104.pdf

⁸ See for example: The Guardian video witness index, Beirut death of Nepalese migrant worker Lila, [Online Video] 30 January 2012. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/video/2012/jan/30/beirut-death-nepalese-migrant-video>.

Case Study



“With no money it was hard for me to find a job and sustain my family... This is why I went to Lebanon, but my expectations were not fulfilled.

They treated me well for three years, but I don't know what changed later, as my employer started becoming very abusive and authoritarian. She used to lock me up in the house and also used to shut all the doors and windows. I used to feel like a pig, bred to be slaughtered. I was ordered to wake up at 4 in the morning and sleep at 1 at night. I used to keep awake by ironing my master's clothes.

I used to work day and night without complaining, but every month when I used to ask my employer to grant me my salary, she used to frown and get irritated... I was so frustrated and I demanded to be taken to my agent who had placed me here, to which my employer frowned and stated that the agency that had recruited me was no more in business. I felt numb and cried loudly...

My employer used to shut the doors, so that no one could hear me crying. I had phone numbers, but I was even deprived of all connections. I felt like a prisoner in my employers house - cut off from the outside world.

I still remember the day when my employer hit me on the face when I demanded for my salary. My face was swollen and it hurt a lot... I used to shiver with the thought that I would die in here, and it was not in my fate to return back to Nepal.”

– (Kamala, 42, single mother)⁹

⁹ Anti-Slavery International interview, Returnee Female Nepalese Domestic Worker, Jhapa, 2013.



Migrant domestic work and Nepal

According to the ILO, Nepal is estimated to have one of the highest rates of labour force growth in Asia and the Pacific region.¹⁰ However, due to various factors such as poverty, political instability, lack of opportunity, and similar barriers to labour access within the country, the upward trend of migrant labour continues to present a seemingly lucrative economic opportunity, suggesting that a large percentage of this labour force will be employed abroad.

Nepalese labourers have long taken advantage of the opportunity to work abroad, particularly in India or the Gulf countries. A study by the Nepal Institute for Development Studies (NIDS) in 2010 estimated that more than 300,000 migrant workers had left Nepal. This number represents persons granted permission from the government to work abroad and does not account for those who crossed the open border into India in search of work. People going for work through irregular channels are not covered by the official data and their exact number is difficult to assess. However, about 40% of the total labour outflow is estimated to take place through irregular channels.¹¹

Labour migration has increased dramatically over the past 20 years. Such huge leaps in migration opportunities were made possible only after the 1990 People's Revolution, which opened the political arena to restructure the restrictive citizenship and passport laws. In 1992, passports were made available to all, but were still limited because all passport processing was centralised in the capital city. The new millennium presented a milestone in migration by decentralising passport distribution and granting all district offices the authority to issue passports to their local populations. This made the prospect of foreign employment more easily accessible to people

across the nation. In conjunction with other factors including the political instability that grew out of the Maoist movement in 1996, it contributed to the increased flow of Nepalese migrant workers.

Though India has historically been a prime destination for migrant labour due to its Open Border Agreement¹² with Nepal, the increased accessibility of passports has allowed migrants to expand their reach in search of opportunities in other countries. Today, the largest numbers of Nepalese labourers are flocking to countries in the Middle East, where migrant labour is in high demand. In 2010 around 112,682 Nepalese migrants were recorded to have left for the Gulf alone.¹³

Labour migration has since been a major source of economic opportunity for Nepalese workers, but the migrant labour force has generally been dominated by men. This trend, too, is changing. Though the increase in women's migration is attributed to increased economic pressures at home, as well as increased acceptance of women's ability to work outside the home, the determinant of their destination countries is strongly linked to the demand for domestic workers. An increasing demand for women migrant labourers has been drawing Nepalese women across borders to work mainly to the domestic work sector. Officially, only 3% of Nepal's migrant workers are women, though in reality it has been estimated that women may account for as much as 30% of the total number of Nepalese migrant workers. Of those recorded, 66% were employed in domestic work.¹⁴ The discrepancy between recorded women migrants and the estimated reality is the result of a raft of legislation and bans which have been placed on women migrants both in Nepal and in destination countries, with specific consequences on the informal sector.

¹⁰ ILO, *Labour and Social Trends in Nepal*, ILO, Geneva, 2010.

¹¹ Gurung, G., *Living the Golden Dreams: The Gulf and Nepalese Women*, Kathmandu, Maiti Nepal, 2013.

¹² Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between The Government of India and The Government of Nepal, 31 July 1950, entered into force on the same day.

¹³ Nepal Institute for Development Studies (NIDS) and National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), *Nepal Migration Yearbook 2010*. NIDS and NCCR, Kathmandu, 2011.

¹⁴ UNIFEM and NIDS, *Nepali Women and Foreign Labour Migration*, UNIFEM and NIDS, 2006, p.138.

The informal nature of domestic work puts women at increased risk of trafficking and exploitation, but the means by which to protect women migrants is still a point of contention. Due to changing demographic characteristics of developed and high income countries, such as growing aged populations and women’s increased work in formal sectors outside the home, the demand for informal services in the ‘care’ or domestic service sectors is increasing. This presents new economic opportunity for female migrants in the informal sector, which can have a positive impact on their economic status. However, again, the isolated and informal nature of domestic work also increases the risk of trafficking and exploitation.



KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation/Matthew Cassel © 2010

Ten top receiving countries of Nepalese migrant workers by sex (1993-94 to 2009-2010) except India

All migrants		Male migrants		Female migrants	
Countries	Number of migrants	Countries	Number of migrants	Countries	Number of migrants
Malaysia	569667	Malaysia	569169	Lebanon	9389
Qatar	481748	Qatar	480893	Kuwait	3452
Saudi Arabia	341325	Saudi Arabia	340972	UAE	2940
UAE	214515	UAE	211575	Israel	2674
Kuwait	24457	Bahrain	21466	Bahrain	1098
Bahrain	22564	Kuwait	21005	Oman	872
Oman	11478	Oman	10606	Qatar	855
Lebanon	9730	Hong Kong	4321	Malaysia	498
Israel	6414	Afghanistan	4265	Macau	400
Hong Kong	4379	Israel	3740	Saudi Arabia	353

Source: DoFE, www.dofe.gov.np



Perceptions of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon

Reliable figures on the size of the foreign labour force in Lebanon are hard to get. The Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics' estimates indicate a steady increase in the number of people who came to Lebanon to work since the beginning of the 1990's. Migrant workers are generally confined to low paid and low status jobs, representing a large and distinct socioeconomic group within Lebanese society. This has major consequences in the way policies to regulate migrant workers are framed and implemented but also in the way society treats migrant workers, and especially migrant domestic workers. The situation and wellbeing of migrant domestic workers is entirely dependent on the will of their individual employer as a consequence of the policy and practice regulating their presence in Lebanon and the fact that they work behind closed doors in the private homes of their employers.

Prior to the civil war, domestic work used to represent a sector of employment that enabled Lebanese women to move from rural to urban areas; after the war, it has been filled mainly by migrant women, who came initially from Sri Lanka, Philippines, India and African countries.¹⁵

Today, the exact number of migrant domestic workers is impossible to assess but the official number of working permits issued by the Ministry of Labour in 2012 was 18,990, with another 31,649 having been renewed in the same year.¹⁶ However, it is worth noting that these figures do not account for so-called 'run-aways'¹⁷ who occupy a significant portion of the domestic worker force, nor for the domestic workers who may be working in the country without the required work permit, for reasons that vary and

will be explored later in this report. It is estimated that there may be up to 200,000 out of a total population of 4 million inhabitants.¹⁸

Despite Lebanon's reliance on migrant domestic workers, they are generally looked down upon and ill-treated. As part of a research on the attitudes of Lebanese employers towards the migrant domestic workers they employ, KAFA notes that racial stereotypes have become increasingly influential over the way the employment relationship manifests itself. The treatment of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon is also determined by the attitude of the Lebanese society towards them. KAFA writes:

Ofentimes, conversations that revolved around the characteristics of "good" domestic workers used neutral terms and remained within the confines of what is viewed to be socially acceptable. In a few cases, however, participants projected stereotyped images of domestic workers. Nepali domestic workers were described by Lebanese employers as respectable women and compliant (i.e., always smiling and rarely complaining). On the other hand, Ethiopian domestic workers were described as stubborn and difficult to deal with. Whereas some employers expressed a strong preference for Filipina women because they are relatively more educated, others described Filipina women as undesirable because they make demands that others (i.e. domestic workers from Sri Lanka or Bangladesh) do not make.¹⁹

The roots of the systemic discrimination and rights violations suffered by migrant domestic

¹⁵ Jureidini, R., *Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon*, ILO, 2001.

¹⁶ See <http://www.mdwguide.com/facts.aspx>.

¹⁷ Run-away workers are former live-in migrant domestic workers who had to leave the house of their employer for various reasons (mainly abuse and denial of wages). However, in Lebanon, the kafala system links the domestic worker's immigration status to her employer, which means that if a domestic worker "runs away" from her sponsor, she automatically becomes an illegal alien at risk of arrest, detention and deportation. See Anti-Slavery International, *What is she worth? An urgent call for the protection of the rights of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon*, Anti-Slavery International, London, 2012, p.6; and Jureidini, R., supra note 15.

¹⁸ KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, *Policy Paper on Reforming the "Sponsorship System" for Migrant Domestic Workers: Towards an Alternative Governance Scheme in Lebanon*, KAFA, Beirut, 2012.

¹⁹ Abdulrahim, S., *Servant, Daughter, or Employee? A Pilot Study on the Attitudes of Lebanese Employers towards Migrant Domestic Workers*, Beirut, KAFA, 2010.

workers in Lebanon are in part linked to the low value attributed to domestic work as an unskilled, informal and under-paid occupation, performed by women in highly gendered societies. This view was echoed in the report to the Human Rights Council by the UN Special Rapporteur on Slavery who, following a visit to Lebanon in 2012, observed that:

Many migrant domestic workers are not seen as equals to the Lebanese with the same rights, but as commodities, thereby further entrenching the idea that Lebanese employers own and have full control over their workers... this work is not perceived as genuine work. Consequently those who are employed to perform domestic chores do not receive remuneration or recognition for their work and have no rights as workers because their duties are not considered to be genuine work and are not covered by the Labour Code.



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Above: Tika, returnee migrant domestic worker

Endemic abuse and exploitation of migrant domestic workers

The abuse and exploitation suffered by migrant domestic workers in Lebanon is well documented. It ranges from non-payment of wages and no time off to forced and bonded labour and servitude. Due to the isolated nature of their work, inside the private houses of their employers, domestic workers are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The exploitation suffered by migrant domestic workers can take different forms, and can amount to forced labour, bonded labour, servitude, and slavery or practices similar to slavery.

A migrant domestic worker interviewed by Anti-Slavery International, named Amrita worked long hours and was subjected to food deprivation, but when she told her employers that she would not continue working without pay, she was beaten:

“Sometimes I only had bread and tea. I worked all day, with only bread and tea. One day, I asked for my full salary and I told madam not to send me to work at the houses of her friends and relatives, and I said that, ‘If you don’t give me my salary I will not work at all’. After saying this, I was beaten right away. She even used shoes to beat me. My right hand was broken and there were bruises all over my body. I was only taken to hospital 10 days later. But madam told me that if I was asked by a doctor or anyone else about what happened to me, I should not tell them that I was beaten. She told me to say that, ‘It happened because I fell down while I was working.’”

Another domestic workers, AC, was also deprived of adequate food, and told Anti-Slavery International that her employer locked her up inside the house:

“[E]very day I used to peer through the iron gates and used to wish that someone would come and rescue me. I used to work like a slave, but my work was not rewarded.”²¹

²⁰ KAFA interview, Female Nepalese Domestic Worker (name changed), Beirut, 2010. See <http://www.kafa.org.lb/fields-of-action/3/7/stop-the-exploitation-of-migrant-domestic-workers> for more information about this project.

²¹ Anti-Slavery International interview, Returnee Female Nepalese Domestic Workers, Jhapa, 2013.

A survey conducted by KAFA with 102 Lebanese employers of migrant domestic workers showed that 31% of employers lock their domestic worker inside whenever they left the house. Moreover, 88% of them believe that the employer has the right to confiscate their employee's passport in order to prevent her from escaping and 45% indicated that they do not give their domestic worker a day off. Out of the employers who do give their domestic worker a day to rest, only a 37% allow the domestic worker to go outside the house on her own on her day off.

This means that in total, just under only 20% of the 102 employers interviewed grant their worker a day off and outside the house. These results indicate that a large proportion of domestic workers in Lebanon (over 80% of the sample of employers interviewed) cannot do anything separately from their employer, even if they are allowed time to rest.²²

Migrant domestic workers in Lebanon are subjected to a variety of abusive practices and coercive mechanisms used by agents and employers in order to control and exploit them. These include: indebtedness to recruiters, physical and sexual abuse, threats of the use of force or of deportation, verbal harassment, excessive working hours, removal of identity documents, and forced confinement in the work place, no days off, non-payment of wages, isolation and restriction of communications.²³

Maya was exploited and repeatedly assaulted by her employers, but she felt like staying was her only option:

“I was very afraid, but had no other option than to stay at my workplace... I was forced to work both in the house and in a shop. I had to work for 18 hours a day, seven days a week. None of the people in the home were supportive, and I was tortured on many occasions and in different ways... At the end of my stay in Lebanon, the last day was terrible. My mistress was out until late at night, and I was again attacked by a family member in her absence... I shouted as loud as I could but he did not stop beating me. They even closed the door and did not let me go out. Afterwards, in severe pain, I could not contain myself and opened the door and shouted from the balcony. A neighbour heard me screaming. She ran to the house and asked the house owner to stop beating me. The neighbouring lady took me into her home, where I stayed for two days. Thereafter I was left at the agent's office, where several times the house owner came to take me back but I refused to go with them. All I wanted was my life.”²⁴

Debt can be a powerful coercive mechanism that increases migrant domestic workers' vulnerability to forced labour. Nepalese workers often enter into onerous debts in order to cover the costs of migrating for a job abroad – recruitment and visa fees, travel costs, etc. Some workers, may also be indebted to the recruitment agencies, and find that staying at the job is the only way they have to repay their debt. Furthermore, because the worker's visa is tied to the employer, leaving their employer to look for better employment conditions would cause them to lose their regular immigration status. Consequently, workers would be risking detention and deportation, which would in turn significantly hinder their ability to repay these debts.²⁵

²² Data collected by KAFA from interviews with 102 male and female Lebanese employers. See Abdulrahim, S., supra note 19 at pp.37-40.

²³ Hamill, K., *Trafficking of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, a legal analysis*, Beirut, KAFA, 2011.

²⁴ Interview by Gurung, G. for Anti-Slavery International, Female Nepalese Domestic Worker (name changed), 2012.

²⁵ Amnesty International, *False Promises – Exploitation and Forced Labour of Nepali Migrant Workers*, Amnesty International, London, 2011, pp.61-62.

Chapter Two: Policies and practices which increase the vulnerability to slavery

Policy context in Nepal: ineffectiveness and lack of coherency



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In 2012, Anti-Slavery International conducted research in Nepal, Lebanon and India examining the legislation, policy and practice of the migration cycle in origin and destination countries with particular reference to its impact on female migrant domestic workers. It concluded that a combination of gender discrimination in policies, lack of relevant and accessible pre-departure training, lack of protection or little or no regulation of recruitment agencies resulted in a failure to protect female migrant domestic workers at every level. Whilst some policies may have been introduced in good faith, overall current policies and practices expose women to greater risks and vulnerabilities.

Travel bans

The abuse and exploitation of migrant domestic workers can be so acute and widespread that their own countries decide to impose complete bans on their nationals from travelling to certain countries,

such as Lebanon and Gulf Countries. The theory behind these restrictive policies is that by making it in theory impossible for women to migrate, the government is responding to its obligation to protect its own citizens against abuse and exploitation abroad. Bans are not uncommon and many major labour sending countries have used them, including the Philippines, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Nepal.

However, it is broadly accepted that travel bans are not effective in preventing domestic workers from migrating abroad.²⁶ Indeed, almost two thirds of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon are nationals of countries with full or partial bans in place.²⁷ According to the Lebanese Ministry of Labour's Statistics, in 2010, 65% of the migrant domestic workers permits issued were for nationals of countries that have bans in place,²⁸ indicating their ineffectiveness.

Nepal has a long history of introducing complete and partial bans. In 1998, the government enforced

²⁶ Hamill, K., *supra* note 23, at p.34.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, at p.7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

a ban on all Nepalese women migrating to Gulf countries for employment, after the death of Kani Sherpa got widespread media attention. Sherpa was employed as a migrant domestic worker in Kuwait, she was sexually abused and allegedly pushed to her death from a balcony. Kuwaiti authorities maintained that she had committed suicide.²⁹

This ban was partially lifted in January 2003, allowing women to work only in the organised sector,³⁰ and provided that the security of the migrant was guaranteed and certified by the Nepalese Embassy or Consulate in the destination country.³¹ In March 2003, conditions were introduced for female migrant workers to get prior approval from the local government and from their family. In January 2007, conditions were imposed on female migrants to work as domestic workers; they were lifted nine months later.

In March 2010, instead of an official ban, Nepal stopped issuing 'labour permits' for Lebanon. The measure was never embedded in a policy from the Department of Foreign Employment but Anti-Slavery International's research found that the Department stopped issuing permits, hence creating a sort of de facto ban. This resulted in a lot of uncertainty amongst potential migrant workers who did not know whether or not they were allowed to migrate. It resulted in potential migrant domestic workers hiding their migration plans, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and deception. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Labour and Employment lifted the ban entirely in December that same year, the "perception of ban" remained, resulting in many women continuing to use illegal routes to migrate and avoid being seen.³²

In August 2012, Nepal reinstated the complete ban on women from working in Gulf and Middle Eastern countries, but limiting it to women and girls under the age of 30. Government representatives have told Anti-Slavery International that faced with the widespread absence of birth certificates it is easy

for minors to fake their age and pretend to be above 18; with an age-bar of 30, this is made more difficult. The government also put forward that women above 30 run fewer risks of being exploited. Whilst the decision was very probably taken in response to the numerous cases of abuse and deaths reported amongst young women working in the region, it nonetheless falls short of addressing the real causes of exploitation and abuse and violates the principles of gender equality and freedom of movement.

Gender related bans are in direct contradiction with Nepal's efforts to promote gender equality, especially in the field of labour migration. The 1990 Constitution already included provisions regarding labour and movement which had direct implications on women's right to migrate, including a guarantee that all citizens had the right to freedom of movement throughout Nepal, the right to reside in any part of the country, and the freedom to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, industry, or trade. The 2007 Interim Constitution, currently in effect, provides various provisions towards increasing gender equality and eradicating discrimination at an overarching political level. This includes government participation, labour rights, the development of social protections, and the elimination of discriminatory policies and practices. These constitutional commitments have been confirmed and strengthened through the ratification of international instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in April 1991. Amongst the positive policy changes is the fact that women are no longer required to seek a letter from their parents or their husband signifying their consent for the woman to migrate abroad for work.

Even if the intention might have been to protect female migrant workers, the decision of the Nepal government to introduce an age ban for women is in complete contradiction with Nepal's attempt at mainstreaming gender equality in its Constitution and policies.

²⁹ Gayathri, A., "Nepal urged to revoke ban on young women migrating to gulf", *International Business Times*, [online] 15 August 2012. Available at: <http://www.ibtimes.com/nepal-urged-revoke-ban-young-women-migrating-gulf-747690>.

³⁰ Sharma, S., "Whither state ownership?" *The Katmandu Post*, [online] 5 November 2012.

Available at: <http://www.ekantipur.com/the-katmandu-post/2012/11/05/development/whither-state-ownership/241428.html>.

³¹ Gurung, G., supra note 11, at p.8.

³² Nepali Times, "Womanpower: Migration should be a choice not a compulsion". *Nepali Times Online*, [online] Issue #597, 23-29 March 2012.

Available at: http://nepalitimes.com/news.php?id=19120#_UuffXNFB1s.

The Open Border policy

The ban on women under 30 from migrating has certainly made it more difficult for women to do so, but it has not prevented migration from happening and has hence showed itself to be ineffective. As a result of the Open Border Agreement between Nepal and India which was passed in 1950, the two countries have an open border. The original intention of the Agreement was to promote positive

relationships in trade and commerce between the two countries. Today the Open Border Policy is also a determinant factor in the way labour migration takes place in Nepal: it is used by hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from Nepal, including migrant domestic workers, as a route to migrate for work into India and beyond, often to Middle Eastern and Gulf countries.

Making the journey from Nepal to Lebanon via Delhi

According to the findings of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as well as interviews conducted as part of this project with government authorities, a vast majority of Nepalese agents/brokers use Indian routes for migration. In most cases a female will escort the female migrants across the border, as it is thought that this will raise fewer suspicions amongst the police and NGOs, than if they were accompanied by a man. Some, but not many also depart from Tribhuvan International Airport by 'setting' (paying off corrupt officials).

Generally the journey is arranged by both Nepalese and Indian brokers. Nepalese brokers seek migrant domestic worker to send to Lebanon from rural areas of Nepal and then solicit the help of Indian brokers (who usually work for a fee) to arrange the transfer of the workers from Delhi to the destination country. In some cases, Nepalese brokers deal directly with Indian immigration officials with whom they have developed links and can arrange transfers directly.

The main routes used by Nepalese brokers to bring women to Delhi – and then Lebanon - are through Kakarvitta (Jhapa), Biratnagar (Jogbani), Birgunj (Raxual), Bhairahawa (Sunauli), Nepalgunj (Rupaidiha) and Mahendranagar (Gaddachauki). The most convenient route to Delhi is through Bhairahawa and is due the accessibility of bus services directly serving Delhi. However, it was also reported that in response to NGOs' presence there, brokers have diverted the route via Mahendranagar (Gaddachauki). Brokers change routes often, utilising easiness of use and cost.

Once in Delhi, a period of time is spent liaising with Indian immigration officials and arranging flights. These arrangements are made by Indian brokers whose perceived skill in facilitating the process will determine the fee they receive. Nepalese brokers often change their Indian associates depending on how fast they can arrange 'setting' in Delhi airport.

Whilst waiting in Delhi, women are kept in newly constructed, but unfinished, apartments or houses where they cook for themselves with many of them staying in one room. These rented apartments or houses are cheaper than hotels and attract less attention. Although brokers are constantly shifting locations, the main places where women stay during their transition are Mahilapur, Pahadgunj, Munirka and Majnutika. From Delhi, migrant domestic workers are sent to Beirut on whichever airline is found to be cheapest.

Case Study

Anu was in need of money and spoke to a female friend in her village who had been to Lebanon. Through this woman, an agent came to her house and said that such an arrangement could be made if she paid him £364 (50,000 NPR). The agent then suggested that it should be kept a secret as police would not allow her to go to India if she told the truth. On the first day of her journey, the broker lodged her in his sister's house in Siligudi, India, and then at night took her to the railway station to go to Delhi. She stayed in Delhi for five days before being flown to Lebanon. The employer came to receive her at the airport. She was then tortured for three years before being returned to Nepal.³³

Under article 22 of the Foreign Employment Act, migrant workers are to depart from the “native airport”, Tribhuvan International Airport, when they migrate for work. This requirement is intended to allow for the monitoring of migrants, ensuring that all the proper processes have been followed and ensuring that migration can take place safely and legally. Despite this, it was estimated that in 2010, 40 to 50% of migrant workers followed other routes.³⁴ Furthermore, due to confusion about the requirements for women, social stigmas attached to women's migration, and other de facto barriers to women's migration, many women often chose to avoid the airport.³⁵ In doing so, they also hope to avoid having to pay the bribes, or so-called ‘setting fees’, often demanded by border agents at the airport.³⁶

In effect, the requirement to use the native airport, within the context of other policies previously mentioned, operates as a kind of migration deterrent. It allows brokers to convince women to take alternative channels through India's open border, therefore increasing their vulnerability by side-stepping the migration safeguards and controls implemented at the airport. Furthermore, the border between Nepal and India is 1000km in length and largely unmonitored; only a few checkpoints are in place and immigration officers operate for only a few hours a day.³⁷ It leaves many opportunities for brokers to bring women to Delhi before facilitating their journey to a final destination point.

Inconsistencies in state policies work in favour of those wanting to exploit migrant domestic workers; by making it illegal to travel yet remaining relatively easy for women to do so, it pushes female migration underground and makes them follow unregulated migration routes. A study by the Institute of Integrated Development Studies and UNIFEM also highlights this risk.³⁸ The report recognises that when women take irregular channels, they face increased risk of exploitation because they do not have the proper documents, such as the required labour stickers on their passports, which document their foreign employment status. This puts them at greater risk of abusive or exploitative working conditions even if they have proper working permits in their destination countries, as it leaves them without recourse to assistance from their own government. For example not having made contributions to the Welfare Fund (established by the Foreign Employment Act to provide safety nets for migrant workers), migrant domestic workers are not eligible for assistance from the Foreign Employment Promotion Board.³⁹

³³ Interview by Gurung, G. for Anti-Slavery International, Female Nepalese Domestic Worker (name changed), 2012.

³⁴ Adhikari, J. and Gurung, G. *Foreign Employment, Remittance and Its Contribution to Economy of Nepal*, Ministry of Labour and Transport Management and IOM, 2011, p.10.

³⁵ Amnesty International, *supra* note 25, at p. 56.

³⁶ Amnesty International estimates that migrants pay between £73-437 (10,000-60,000 NPR) in setting fees to migration officers in order to leave the country, adding to their debt, *Ibid*.

³⁷ Sijapati, B., A. Limbu and M. Khadka, *Trafficking and Forced Labour in Nepal: A Review of the Literature*, Kathmandu, Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, 2011.

³⁸ Acharya, M. et al, *Status and dimensions of trafficking within Nepalese context*, Kathmandu, Institute of Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) and United Nations Development Funds for Women, 2004.

³⁹ Amnesty International, *supra* note 25.

Pre-departure checks for foreign employment

- Find employment abroad through a licensed agent (mainly form the Foreign Employment Act 2007);
- Undergo a medical exam to obtain a health certificate;
- Receive and sign a written employment contract (must be written in Nepali, although in reality it is normally in English);
- Undertake orientation training;
- Undertake skills training (for those workers going for foreign employment which requires specific skills);
- Obtain a VISA to work at the destination country;
- Contribute with a deposit to the Foreign Employment Welfare Fund;
- Obtain a certificate of insurance: the worker must be covered up to 500.000 rupees –normally it is the agent who must procure this insurance- to provide compensation in the eventuality that the worker suffers injury or death during the duration of the contract;
- Obtain a labour sticker from the Department on the migrant’s passport: after receiving the visa for the worker, the agency must apply to the Department of Foreign Employment for a labour permission sticker;
- Always use native airport to travel abroad for work.

Improving the protection of migrant domestic workers, and other migrants especially women, will not be achieved by simply tightening border controls: most anti-trafficking literature recognises that stricter border controls does not necessarily stop trafficking or migration. Traffickers merely “devise increasingly innovative and underground ways of transporting women and girls across the border,” perhaps rendering victims even more vulnerable due to increased invisibility and the illegality of movement.⁴⁰ The ban hampers the ability of service providers and duty bearers to deliver sensitisation, monitoring or remedial support to migrant domestic workers, or to represent their interests; as well as impeding the ability to monitor or regulate the activities of recruiting agents, whilst nevertheless failing to halt the flow of domestic workers to Lebanon.

Policy and practice must focus on the situation of women, on making it safe for them to migrate for domestic work by reducing their vulnerability to abuse and making them more empowered agents over their own situation. Adequate and accessible pre-departure orientation and training is one of the ways by which this can be achieved. It is not yet however a reality in Nepal.

The inadequacy of the policy framework in Nepal is matched with an exclusionary set of regulations in Lebanon, increasing further the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers to exploitation and forced labour.

⁴⁰ Sanghera, J. and Kapur, R., *Trafficking in Nepal: Policy Analysis - An Assessment of Laws and Policies for the Prevention and Control of Trafficking in Nepal*, The Asia Foundation & Population Council, 2000.

The sponsorship (kafala) system in Lebanon

In Lebanon, the kafala or sponsorship system is not enshrined in one specific law, but is made up by a number of administrative rules and legal provisions disseminated across different regulations and pieces of legislation, including the 1962 Foreigner's Law, the 1964 Ministerial Decree on the Employment of Foreigners, the 1949 Labour Law, the 1932 General Contractual Obligations Law, and the Lebanese Penal Code.⁴¹

However, the practice of the kafala goes beyond the letter of the law. It is customary for migrant domestic workers to be submitted to a set of additional obligations, including living with their employer, not being allowed to go outside or to move freely without the employer's approval, or handing over their passport to their employer.

Importantly, the system ties the domestic worker's immigration status to one specific employer or sponsor, who must also be the worker's sole employer, and serve as her guarantor.⁴² The 1964 ministerial decree on the employment of foreigners established the obligation to obtain pre-authorization for the employment of foreigners. In order to obtain this authorization, the employer must declare his or her name, which then appears on the VISA and work permit of the migrant worker. In practice, the sponsor becomes a mediator between the migrant domestic worker and the state, allowing the government to delegate the responsibility for monitoring the presence of foreign workers on national soil on individual citizens.⁴³

When Lebanese employers hire migrant domestic workers, they are making an investment in labour up-front, covering the costs for recruitment fees, and sometimes for transportation costs, medical tests, government processing fees, and even bribes.⁴⁴ Because the system does not offer guarantees or compensation to the employer in case the worker wants to break the contract, employers have a strong incentive to ensure the continuation of the work relationship and to stop the worker from leaving abruptly. For this reason, employers tend to take measures to make sure that the worker does not "run-away", such as withholding documents, not allowing the worker to leave the house or locking her up in the household while they are absent.

As a result, the kafala system constitutes an asymmetrical relationship between employer and employee: it leaves room for many rights violations such as confinement to the house, no time to rest, no day off, no right to quit, non-payment of salaries, physical and sexual abuse, etc.

Furthermore, access to justice is highly problematic. Many migrant domestic workers are repatriated without grace or reflection period being granted; redress through the legal process is very slow and the courts take years to reach a verdict. Additionally, former employers of run-away domestic workers often file false complaints accusing them of theft, as a way of discrediting workers and discouraging others from taking similar actions.

⁴² Hamill, K., supra note 23.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, supra note 18.

Legal framework in Lebanon: discrimination and exclusions

The sponsorship (kafala) system

The sponsorship – or kafala – system is one of the major causes of vulnerability of migrant workers across the Middle East; it contributes to exploitation, forced labour and slavery. The kafala system is “comprised of various customary practices, administrative regulations, and legal requirements that tie a migrant domestic worker’s residence permit to one specific employer or sponsor in the country”.⁴⁵ The sponsorship system applies throughout the Middle East, to all migrant workers across sectors of employment, with variations between countries and sectors. Its impact is perhaps felt more greatly by domestic workers who in addition to the invisible tie that they have with their employers, have to suffer the consequences of the fact that they live in their employers homes, isolated from the public eye and any form of peer support. This results in migrant domestic workers being completely cut off from any support system and any communication other than with members of the household where they work. This leaves them completely dependent on the will of their individual employer.

The sponsorship system also reinforces the power inequalities that are so common between employers and workers in the household.⁴⁶ Since employers are made to feel responsible for the worker during the whole duration of her stay in Lebanon, the sponsorship system encourages restrictions on freedom of movement and communication. As one employer put it: “She (the domestic worker) is under my name. I am responsible for her in everything. So, I would feel worried if she goes out or if she sleeps

outside my house. I would be scared that she might do something wrong... I would be responsible for that”.⁴⁷ This has many consequences for migrant domestic workers, not least that a majority of employers do not allow the migrant domestic worker to ever leave the house,⁴⁸ their passports are confiscated⁴⁹ and communication with the outside world is often prohibited. While the kafala system does not always lead to such severe abuse, it is very common for employers to impose unreasonable workloads on domestic workers, to delay or simply not pay their wages or to deny them appropriate rest time. This all occurs as a consequence of the imbalance of power and the complete absence of bargaining powers that many migrant domestic workers suffer as a result of the sponsorship system.

The right to change employer is a fundamental safeguard against abuse, exploitation and forced labour. Without it, many domestic workers continue to suffer abuse and exploitation. They are forced to stay in abusive employment situations so that they don’t risk losing their livelihood, accommodation and permission to stay in Lebanon. Under the kafala system, domestic workers cannot resign or terminate their employment contracts without previously obtaining their employer’s formal consent.⁵⁰ Moreover, under the sponsorship system, domestic workers may not work for anyone other than their sponsor, without first receiving a notarized “release” from their sponsor. The release involves a transfer of the legal

⁴⁵ KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, supra note 18.

⁴⁶ KAFA speaks of migrant domestic workers being “locked in a master/servant relationship”, *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Abdulrahim, S., supra note 19, at p.17.

⁴⁸ HRW, *Without Protection: How the Lebanese Justice System fails migrant domestic workers*, HRW, New York, 2010.

Available at: http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/09/16/without-protection-0#_blank.

⁴⁹ The confiscation of passports is prohibited under international law and is described by the ILO as an indicator of forced labour. See Weissbrodt, D. and Anti-Slavery International, *Abolishing Slavery and its Contemporary Forms*, New York and Geneva, United Nations, 2002, at para. 19.

Available at: http://www.antislavery.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/w/weissbrodt_report_final_edition_2003.pdf The practice, however, is promoted by agents and 88% of employers interviewed by KAFA believe that they have a right to take away the passports of their employees.

⁵⁰ KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, supra note 18.

guardianship over the domestic worker, from the first employer to the second employer. The second employer thus becomes the domestic worker's new sponsor, and must provide a notarised pledge to hire the worker and assume all responsibilities for her.⁵¹ For domestic workers, obtaining "release" often comes at a high price. It is the first employer who decides whether to release the employee or not, and establishes how much this will cost.⁵²

This situation leaves those who flee an abusive employer at risk of arrest, unlimited administrative detention and deportation. Moreover, the interests of the employment agencies rest in ensuring that workers stay with their employers at all costs, often returning workers to their abusive employer who are unaccountable for exploiting their employee. The practice of tying migrant workers to a particular employer has been identified by anti-trafficking experts as one of the key factors contributing to trafficking.⁵³

Many abused migrant domestic workers are left with no choice but to flee the violence and exploitation; in doing so, they become so-called 'run-aways', and unable to return to their country or find other employment unless they can identify a new sponsor. They are susceptible to legal action for false reporting by their employer or agent and can find themselves in very precarious situations including being forced to remain in Lebanon.

A reform of the sponsorship system would represent the most important single step towards protecting migrant domestic workers from abuse. Whilst the very existence of the kafala system is embedded in a security discourse,⁵⁴ a series of reforms should be undertaken as a matter of priority. In addition to decreasing the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers to abuse and

exploitation, these changes would not represent any setback for employers or the security of the country. KAFA is pushing hard to amend the kafala system, advocating for two urgent changes to be made in relation to migrant domestic workers who leave their employer's households because of mistreatment. Firstly, to remove the condition of obtaining notarised authorization letter from their employer and secondly, granting migrant domestic

Migrant domestic workers' dependency on agents

"I stayed at that house for 6 days and it was not nice. They told me to go to the agent's office. I said yes. I had to do whatever they told me.

Then I went to work at another place. There I didn't like it much. It was very difficult to work there. The employer was not nice. Food and accommodation was also not good. It became difficult and I didn't like it.

Then I called my agent in Nepal from the agent's office in Beirut to tell him that I was not happy and wanted to return home. He told me not to do that and said that he would lose his investment. He told me that I also spent money to go to Lebanon, and that I should struggle there for one or two years. He said he would discuss it at his office and will look for new house and a nicer employer.

Some people escape their work. It will be difficult if you escape. If they catch you then they don't treat you very well. You will be taken to the police and they will beat you. They will take away your things including your passport. My sisters, you should not do that. Because you are there to solve your problems, you should always think about your problems. You have to be ready to face any situation."

- Savitra,
Returnee Migrant Domestic Worker, Nepal

⁵¹ Hamill, K., supra note 23.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ For example, the OSCE Special Representative on Trafficking, OSCE Occasional Paper series no.4, *Unprotected Work, Invisible Exploitation: Trafficking for the Purpose of Domestic Servitude*, Vienna, OSCE, 2010.

⁵⁴ KAFA rightly points out that as it currently is implemented, the sponsorship system approaches the regulation of migrant labour as a security issue rather than a labour one; see KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, supra note 18.



KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation/Matthew Cassel © 2010

workers a grace period during which they are allowed to seek a new employer/sponsor. Crucially, during this grace period, workers would not face administrative detention as a result of their undocumented situation. Ultimately, further amendments would seek to introduce employment-based visas and easy exit procedures which would enable workers to leave Lebanon freely after completion of their contract.⁵⁵

The Labour Law and the Standard Unified Contract

Domestic workers are not included in the Labour Law. The exclusion of domestic workers from the labour law reinforces the assumption that domestic work is unique and unlike any other type of work and for that reason cannot be regulated or monitored like other employment sectors.

This exclusion denies domestic workers rights largely given to other workers such as the minimum wage, annual and sick leave, maximum hours of work, the right to form associations and organise, and the right to resign with proper notification. It has been argued that this

shortcoming of the Labour Law could be addressed by the adoption of a specific law on domestic work in Lebanon; however, considering the climate and context described above, it is feared that a specific law on domestic work in Lebanon would be used as a further means to prevent migrant domestic workers' from enjoying their full labour and human rights. A specific law may for example be used to allow longer working hours for domestic workers, exclusion from minimum wage and annual leave requirements, and may reinforce migrant domestic workers' dependency on their employers. This was illustrated by two draft laws proposed by the Ministry of Labour in 2011 and 2013 which granted fewer rights than under Lebanese labour law (in relation to days off, annual leave, and minimum wage). This would be in complete contradiction with international efforts for the recognition of domestic worker's equal rights as recognised by ILO Convention 189.

The Standard Unified contract (2009) for migrant domestic workers represents another missed opportunity in the search for adequate legal protection of migrant domestic workers. The contract was introduced to provide a common set of standards for migrant domestic workers but

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.34.

falls short of acting as a safety net against abuse and exploitation. It details measures such as the three acceptable reasons for which a domestic worker might legally terminate her contract (non-payment of salary for three consecutive months, physical or sexual abuse and forced work in places or occupations not specified in the contract). However, in practice these are very difficult for a domestic worker to prove. The contract must be

signed within the first three months of a worker's arrival in Lebanon, but does not guarantee the right of workers to withdraw their labour or find new employment. The contract contains ambiguous language and does not clearly define the responsibilities and boundaries in the employer-employee relationship. Moreover, it is currently only available in Arabic and consequently inaccessible to migrant domestic workers.

Incoherencies of practices across the two countries

Lack of diplomatic representation

Despite the high number of workers established in the country and the severity of abuse and exploitation reported, there is currently no official representation of Nepal in Lebanon. The Labour Attaché with responsibility for Lebanon is at the Nepalese Embassy in Cairo, Egypt.

Until 2012, the Honorary Consul was assisted by two Nepalese individuals who operated as the unique source of support for Nepalese citizens in distress or trouble, especially migrant domestic workers. Since their departure, Nepalese migrant domestic workers in difficult situations have been unable to call upon any representation from their country, nor from the support they were able to receive via the Honorary Consul supported by the two Nepali speakers.

Embassies' shelters are often the last solution for abused migrant domestic workers who have nowhere to turn to and are faced with the prospect of being prosecuted for abuses committed by their employers as a result of the kafala system. Currently, the Nepal government considers that there are not enough Nepalese in Lebanon to justify a consulate/Embassy, although in theory the presence of around 5,000 workers should justify a labour attaché.⁵⁶ Full consular support for Nepalese migrant workers would represent a major step forward in their protection.

Petition submitted to the Nepalese government with signatures collected in Lebanon

There are more than 9000 Nepalese domestic workers working in Lebanon, the majority of whom are women. Most of us receive very low wages or no wages at all. We are forced to work more time than agreed in the employment contract. We are physically and sexually abused and we are facing various other problems such as restriction on our mobility. These problems are not being addressed due to the absence of any official Nepalese government agencies in Lebanon. If the Government of Nepal could establish a Nepalese Embassy in Lebanon then we would definitely receive necessary support in addressing these issues. Therefore, We, Nepalese working in Lebanon, appeal the Government of Nepal to establish a Nepalese Embassy in Lebanon.

279 signatures were collected in Lebanon by KAFA and the petition was submitted to the Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment of Nepal by GEFONT.

⁵⁶ A labour attaché is an official assigned to the staff of a diplomatic mission to address labour issues.

Absence of relevant pre-departure initiatives

Providing adequate pre-departure information to prospective migrant domestic workers is a crucial step in making migration safer for women. If they are informed of the legal steps necessary to migrate, of the realities and potential dangers linked to working abroad as a domestic worker, women are more likely to make informed decisions about their migratory plans. Being better informed about the potential danger of migration for domestic work, women will be better prepared to respond to those dangers and know where to find the information and support they need.

Pre-departure orientation usually revolves around two types of activities:

- pre-departure **orientation** training;
- pre-departure **skills** training.

Pre-departure orientation

The government of Nepal has formulated a number of policies aimed at regulating and monitoring state-sponsored pre-departure training. Under section 27 of the Foreign Employment Act (2007) pre-departure orientation training from institutions accredited by the Foreign Employment Promotion Board is mandatory for foreign employment and a pre-condition to a worker being allowed to migrate for work.

The orientation training is aimed at providing women with information that will reduce their vulnerability, minimize exploitation and risk of trafficking, create a better work environment, and establish better relations with employers. The curriculum has been designed to be covered in 13 hours over 2 days. It is delivered by 60 accredited centres, all located in Kathmandu. The cost of the compulsory orientation training is Nepali Rupees-NPR700 (USD7), which is refunded by the government and is valid for 18 months after which time a refresher training must be taken.

S.N.	Topic	Duration (hour)
1	Introduction, objectives of the training and pretest	1.50
2	Pre-departure preparation, receipt of welfare fund and address of employer/company	1.00
3	Safe journey and safe foreign employment	1.00
4	Occupational safety and health care	1.00
5	Prevailing laws of Nepal regarding foreign employment	1.00
6	International laws and standards regarding rights of migrant workers and their families	0.50
7	Information about the destination countries (country specific classes should be conducted	0.50
8	Need for special training for personal safety of women migrant workers (specific to domestic work)	1.50
9	Personal behaviour, conduct, rights and duties of migrant workers	1.00
10	Basic information regarding HIV/AIDS	1.50
11	Methods of sending remittances home, utilisation of skill and income, development of the saving habit	1.00
12	Post-test and closing	1.50

Above: Content breakdown of the orientation training.



KAPA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation/ Matthew Cassel © 2010

Skills training for migrant domestic workers

In 2012, the Government introduced a compulsory 21-day skill training, to be obtained from one of 17 qualified training centres selected by the Foreign Employment Promotion Board. All 17 training centres are located in Kathmandu but provide training to those outside Kathmandu as well. The cost of the training is NPR 5,300 (USD53). A part of the training costs – which is determined every financial year - is reimbursed by the government.

Limitations and weaknesses of the pre-departure programmes

Interviews conducted as part of this project with returnee migrant domestic workers in groups or individually as well as with government officials have highlighted the shortcomings of the two pre-departure trainings. Their inaccessibility has been highlighted as the single most important reason why migrant domestic workers find them irrelevant. Many migrants come from very remote areas of Nepal and have never travelled to Kathmandu.

They would not know how to do so nor be able to afford to travel there to attend the pre-departure training. The situation is worse for the skills training as participants are required to find ways of sustaining their long stay in the capital city. The use of alternative routes of transport mean that many women would not be leaving from Kathmandu airport, and might not even know of the existence of the pre-departure provisions.

The lack of support and protection afforded to women at the start of the migration process is compounded by the lack of support and protection once they arrive in Lebanon. Case studies collected indicate that almost all the domestic workers interviewed had faced various problems during their travel as well as upon arrival at their workplace. The analysis of policies and practices in place in both countries provide some explanation as to such abuse and exploitation continues with impunity and offers insights into what needs to be done to make them cease.

Chapter Three: Addressing the continuum of vulnerabilities

The plight of Nepalese migrant domestic workers is rooted in a continuum of vulnerabilities starting when they are recruited in their rural villages and lasting until they start work in a home in the Lebanese capital city and beyond. At every stage of the migration process, they are at risk of being abused and exploited as a result of inadequate policies, discrimination, lack of preparedness, isolation, and absence of co-ordinated efforts to protect them. Each one of these factors can lead to serious labour and human rights violations; when combined, as they are for migrant domestic workers generally and more particularly for Nepalese in Lebanon, they create the conditions within which abuse and exploitation can flourish.

Recruitment of Nepalese migrant domestic workers in Lebanon: law and practice

In Lebanon

1. An employer contacts an agency in Lebanon to request a domestic worker from a certain country and pays upfront for this service;
2. If the country of origin chosen is Nepal, the recruitment agency in Lebanon contacts one or several agencies in Nepal to identify the requested workers; money is paid by the Lebanese agency to the Nepalese one. Usually, a small to medium size agency recruits one workers at a time but there are agencies that recruit many workers at a time. The Ministry of Labour previously imposed quotas (usually between 100 to 200 workers per agency) which have now been lifted;
3. The agency presents an application to the Ministry of Labour to obtain a preliminary work authorisation and another application to the General Security⁵⁷ to obtain a pre-approved visa;
4. The migrant domestic worker arrives in Lebanon. Within three months, the employer must apply for a work and resident permit from the Ministry of Labour and General Security respectively;
5. The Ministry of Labour and the General Security issues the authorisation and visa. Both contain the name of the worker and the employer/sponsor.

In Nepal

in theory

in practice

1. The recruitment agency finds job for the potential MDWs and brings demand letters from the receiving country	Broker (very few of whom are registered) finds potential migrant domestic workers in villages with promises of a good job abroad
2. The recruitment agency advertises the job in national daily newspapers	Broker applies for citizenship and passport
3. A candidate applies for foreign employment	Papers are sent to the recruitment agency
4. The recruitment agency sends the candidate's details to the agency in Lebanon	The agency finds a job for the potential migrant and provides the demand letter from the receiving country
5. The recruitment agency prepares all required documents, including the health certificate, the insurance, the pre-departure training certificate, receipt of contribution to the Foreign Employment Promotion Board, and the air ticket	
6. The recruitment agency submits all the documents to the Department of Foreign Employment and requests the work permit be issued	
7. After the enquiry, the Department of Foreign Employment approve the document and provide the Work Permit	

⁵⁷ The General Security (the "General Directorate of General Security") is a Lebanese Agency under the Ministry of Interior which primary functions relate to protecting the national security of the country and monitoring the situation of foreigners in Lebanon.

The following section offers a presentation of some of the responses developed by KAFA, GEFONT and Anti-Slavery International to the shortcomings, incoherencies and lack of co-ordination between the various policies and practices regulating the migration and employment of women for domestic work, especially from Nepal to Lebanon. It relies upon a combination of approaches that look into pre-departure and post arrival interventions,

delivered mostly by community members and returnees, all co-ordinated by an international partnership composed of a trade union (GEFONT) and two non-governmental organisations (KAFA and Anti-Slavery International). The project's approach to integrating pre-departure training with post-destination community building also potentially offers a highly replicable model which could be of value to many source countries, regardless of whether they have bans in place.

Making migration safer by bringing relevant information to potential migrant domestic workers



Above: Illustrations used by FCHV during their outreach with potential migrant domestic workers.

Pre-departure orientation and skills training in Nepal are currently inadequate and mostly inaccessible to women. Pre-departure and skills training are complementary to each other and both are crucial not only to making migration safe but also to opening new opportunities to women, beyond migrating and working as a domestic worker.

Skills training is lengthy and can be resource intensive. Some countries have developed, with the support of NGOs, migrants groups, unions and trainers, strong models for migrant domestic workers. However, the theory of change developed by Anti-Slavery International, KAFA and GEFONT, led the partnership to focus on promoting rights awareness rather than skills building. The assumption followed is that rights awareness can have an immediate and dramatic impact on the situation of potential migrant domestic workers as it focusses on highlighting the dangers they might face, what they can do to reduce their vulnerability

and how they can seek support during the process of migrating and whilst abroad.

One of the biggest challenges to making pre-departure trainings meaningful for women is finding ways of making it accessible, especially given the challenge of access to rural areas as is the case in Nepal. Another obstacle, as highlighted earlier, is to overcome the secrecy of women's plans to migrate for domestic work. There is a lot of stigma attached to this type of migration, which is linked to both the low status attributed to the sector as well as the negative experiences and abuses reported by returnees. Many women chose to hide their plans from their family and friends making it difficult to share safe migration information with them. This is why Anti-Slavery International, GEFONT and KAFA chose to establish a pre-departure, safe migration approach, which utilises locally trusted agents to impart safe migration information to potential female migrants.

Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV)

Who are the Female Community Health Volunteers?

The Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) Programme in Nepal was started in 1988 by the Ministry of Health and Population in order to improve community participation and to enhance the outreach of health services through local women working voluntarily. Initially the strategy proposed one FCHV per ward in rural areas. In the mid-1990s a “population based” strategy was adopted in 28 districts whereby additional FCHVs were recruited leading to a current total of nearly 50,000 FCHVs in Nepal; 97 % of them are in the rural areas.

FCHVs play an important role in contributing to a variety of key public health programs, including family planning, maternal care, child health, vitamin A supplementation/ de-worming and immunization coverage. They are the foundation of Nepal’s community-based primary health care system and are the key referral link between the health services and communities. Additionally FCHVs have made significant contributions to women’s leadership and empowerment at the Village Development Committee (VDC) level, and several active FCHVs are as VDC members.

http://www.nep.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Home_Female_Community_Health_Volunteer1.pdf

FCHV were identified as the most appropriate and relevant agents to bring information to potential migrant domestic workers. As already described, accessing isolated women to impart safe migration information is a challenge but it is estimated that FCHV access 97% of the Wards in Nepal making them a very common presence across the country.

Tasked with accessing women to provide basic medical support, they are more likely to know the women they are interacting with or at least be able to gain their confidence; potential migrants will be more inclined to disclose their plans and more open to receiving pre-departure information. These women are more likely to feel protected from moral judgement and reassured that they will not be forced to change their plans. Migrant domestic workers are almost exclusively women, which makes it a very relevant issue for FCHV to discuss during their outreach in the communities.

GEFONT organises FCHV under NEVA, the Nepalese Voluntary Association. While FCHVs provide very important services to the community and assist the government delivering basic health care services, they do not receive any compensation for their work. Due to the voluntary nature of their work, FCHVs do not receive a salary and do not have access to certain services – unlike other health care providers. As a result, from February

2010, 20,000 health volunteers came together to organise themselves in a Union, and founded the Nepal Health Volunteers Association (NEVA) with the help of GEFONT. The objectives of this organisation include: organising FCHVs for the recognition of their rights and interests as workers, improving the rapport between FCHVs and local bodies, raising awareness about the work of CHVs, influencing the government’s labour policy, and developing CHVs’ skills and knowledge, allowing them to fulfil their social responsibilities.

Today, with over 5,400 members and presence in 64 districts and 1,500 Village Development Committees (VDCs), NEVA is the only national union of Health Volunteers.

After FCHV were identified as a trusted and accessible potential source of information for women, they needed to be equipped with the necessary knowledge about safe migration. Regular trainings on safe migration are consequently delivered to FCHV through NEVA using a variety of materials to increase their knowledge and awareness of the vulnerabilities linked to migration for domestic work to the Middle East, especially Lebanon. A specific curriculum was developed focusing on safe migration and using the experience of returnee migrant domestic workers to reinforce the issues raised.



GEFONT © 2013

Above: FCHV training session

FCHV are currently trained during a two-day session led mostly by GEFONT central and local staff in the villages of the districts where the activities are implemented. The current training covers the following themes and issues:

- GEFONT and NEVA's campaign on safe migration;
- Steps of migration;
- Advantages and disadvantages of foreign employment; discussing it with family and friends;
- Skill training;
- Information about the broker/agent and employment agencies;
- Preparation and required documents: migrating legally;
- Pre-departure training;
- The government bodies and their role;
- Going legally and illegally;
- Working in Lebanon;
- Legal provisions and right;
- Harassment and abuse;
- Trafficking;
- Support networks in Lebanon;
- Role of FCHV on safe migration.

FCHV have shown a strong connection with the issue of migration for domestic work, which GEFONT has been able to consolidate by providing more tailored workers' rights information. Despite operating on a completely voluntary basis, approximately 150 NEVA members have already been trained on safe migration issues, with the potential for each woman to reach out to hundreds of individual women during their health outreach activities.

“In that training we were told how to select manpower agencies, why it is important to go via Kathmandu's airport and not via Mumbai or Delhi; we were also told about the amount of money women have to pay to go abroad for work. We were trained on different issues of migration. Trainers stressed the importance of keeping all documents up to date and keeping a copy of each document at home for record. They also stressed how important it is to go through government registered manpower agencies. At the training I also came to know about GEFONT's role in helping to rehabilitate persons who are vulnerable and how important it is to keep all receipts of payment. This kind of training would be very useful to men and women at the grassroots level. It would be more effective. I would also love to participate in other such trainings and help women in the community.”⁵⁸

- Bimala Sangraula, Maidhar, Jhapa

The evaluation of FCHV training activities has confirmed the validity of the project's theory of change which rests on close links between the health volunteers and Nepalese women in the villages. FCHV confirmed that as trusted members in the villages, they often knew who was going abroad for work and felt positive that they could use their direct contact with women at the village level to “support their sisters”. Additionally, it was also felt that the information could benefit men who are also cheated by employment agencies. Some participants were particularly hopeful that they could intervene to stop those who had returned from going back again, despite having had bad experiences the first time.

⁵⁸ Anti-Slavery International interview, Female Community Health Volunteer, Jhapa, 2013.

FCHV testimonies

“I encourage people to join unions to fight discrimination and violence. I distribute materials and share simple information; I tell them who to talk to, to decrease the impact of manpower agencies on their lives. I received a two-day training when I was working at the factory and now I do door-to-door”.

Female Community Health Volunteer from Koshi, Morang, interviewed by Anti-Slavery International, 2013.

“I am a NEVA member and received a two-day training. When I returned from Kathmandu last time I talked to a woman on the bus and shared my knowledge. I also talk to women during my NEVA meetings and distribute GEFONT forms and material. I also use the story of a woman I help rescue from Saudi”.

Female Community Health Volunteer from Koshi, Morang, interviewed by Anti-Slavery International, 2013.

“After receiving a two-day training from GEFONT, I trained a women’s group in my community, about 70 women about MDW and using the main airport. One lady had gone to Kuwait three months before, there are a lot of problems there. When she contacted the agency, there, they did not do anything but eventually she returned; now she does a lot of community awareness”.

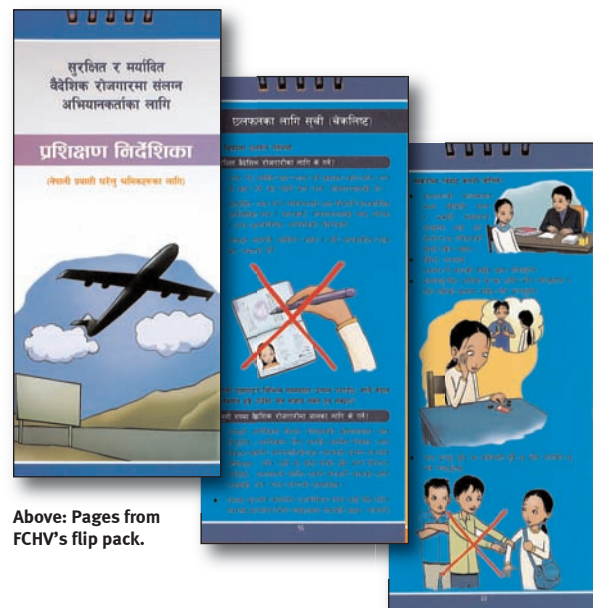
Female Community Health Volunteer from Koshi, Morang, interviewed by Anti-Slavery International, 2013

One FCHV trainee blamed a cultural belief in luck and a “better luck next time” attitude, stating she had learnt from the training that staying safe was about preparation, knowledge and understanding, rather than simply luck.

The majority of women who will be travelling for domestic work are illiterate which not only increases their vulnerability to abuse but also renders any written-information irrelevant to them.

This makes the conversational information brought to them by FCHV all the more crucial. Thinking outside the box about the best ways of bringing information to potential migrant women is determinant to offering safe migration orientation that works. An analysis of the needs and abilities of rural women in Jhapa and Morang led to deciding that the information needed, first and foremost, to combine oral and visual forms as well as to be organised around short key messages and themes.

A ‘flip pack’ was developed to bring together the most central principles of safe migration for domestic work in Lebanon and more broadly the Middle East. The flip pack uses colour coding to also support FCHV in accessing the information and reminding themselves of what they covered during the training. A series of illustrations were commissioned and included in the flip pack to enable women to relate to the information more easily. The pack also includes a facilitation guide, a linguistic guide and a discussion guide aimed at initiating reflection on the themes covered.



Above: Pages from FCHV’s flip pack.

Transport workers

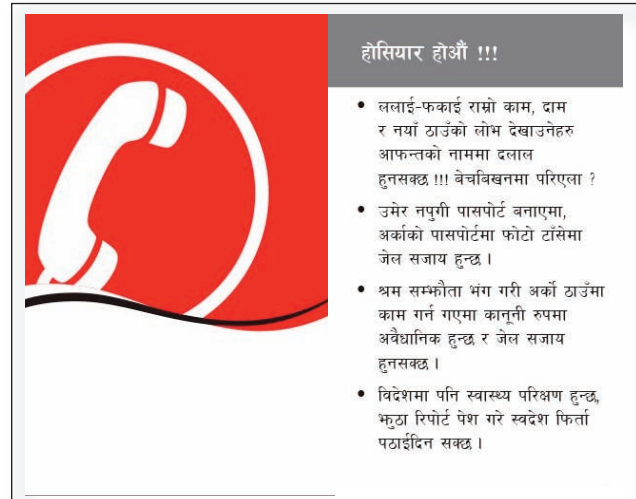
Transport workers are organised by GEFONT under the Independent Transport Workers' Association of Nepal (ITWAN). Transport workers are a less traditional ally in the fight against the exploitation and trafficking of migrant domestic workers despite playing a critical role in the migration process. Transport workers are often the last link between Nepalese migrant domestic workers and Nepal: they come across hundreds of women in their buses on the way to the border with India, the main route followed by migrant domestic workers going to the Middle East.

GEFONT is currently reaching out to transport workers through short training sessions on safe migration, either jointly with FCHV or separately. Transport workers are trained in basic safe migration issues and made aware of the warning signs of unsafe migration. They do not operate as law enforcers but learn to identify women who seem comparatively more vulnerable than others to refer them to relevant services.

A contact card was also developed to provide potential migrant workers heading to countries of the Middle East with a list of safe contacts for Lebanon, Jordan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain as well as Nepal. These safe contacts are mostly those of Embassies, Nepalese groups abroad and trusted NGOs. The contact cards are used and distributed by other NGOs but transport workers play a critical role in disseminating them because of the high number of people they come across.

Transport workers also operate as pointers to other sources of support for migrant women in a vulnerable situation, including other GEFONT affiliates, NGOs, migrant rights centres and police.

A consolidated co-operation between GEFONT and the ITWAN has also led to many drivers accepting to broadcast a two-part audio drama following a female character's journey from Nepal to Lebanon. The audio drama was commissioned to respond to the need to generate thinking about migrant domestic work by using creative and engaging materials. The drama highlights specific issues and advice on migrating to Lebanon for domestic



Above: GEFONT's contact card was developed to provide potential migrant workers heading to countries of the Middle East with a list of safe contacts.

work. One of the strengths of this intervention is that it provides succinct and practical information to women who are on their way to India with a probable final destination in the Middle East.

Reaching out to and involving communities

One of the challenges of bringing relevant information to potential migrant domestic workers is making sure that the information reaches the right person. In addition to the one-to-one outreach to women by FCHV it was deemed important to also bring the issue of safe migration to the heart of the community and to discuss it there using a variety of materials. The end objective is that the community, through its various forms, including the VDC or mothers' groups, takes increased responsibility for bringing the issue of safe migration of women for domestic work to the fore of community concerns.

During an interview, a FCHV involved in bringing safe migration information to potential migrants in Jhapa illustrated ways in which the community can take ownership for mainstreaming safe migration issues:

“We have a formed mother’s group in our community, every month the group meets to discuss different issues. In this meeting we talk about foreign employment issues and also share who is trying to go for it in our villages. Whenever I get the information about the person going for foreign employment, I go to their home and talk to them directly. Sometimes they feel reluctant to tell and sometimes they thank me for visiting them to give the information. Sometimes they also approach me for the information. I don’t know the exact number but I may have conveyed the message related to foreign employment to more than hundred women.”⁵⁹

- Naramaya Karki, Sipaganj Ward, Jhapa.

Regular community meetings have been organised, bringing together local community and union leaders, women from the community as well as returnee women. The voice of the latter has been found to be particularly effective in illustrating the vulnerabilities that potential migrant domestic workers may be confronted with. In July 2013, returnee migrant workers started to formally organise under the banner of the Returnee Migrant Workers Network with the mission of creating awareness on decent and safe foreign employment.

Materials

Consultations with FCHVs highlighted the need to support the information they provide to potential migrant domestic workers with visual and creative material.

“It would be more effective if we could also listen and watch stories of women who have been to foreign employment in the form of audio and video. As women in our community are illiterate they could easily understand through these kinds of materials what we are trying to convey. Posters and Flip charts could also help us to convey the message.”

- Jamuna Gautam, Biratnagar ward, Morang

As a result, bespoke materials were developed to engage the broader community on safe migration issues and the vulnerabilities linked to migrating for domestic work to Lebanon.

A street drama entitled ‘Manasari’ (a female name) has been played in over 20 villages in the two districts of Morang and Jhapa (where most of the work is implemented) and it is estimated that over 7,000 people have seen it so far.

Below: street drama



GEFONT © 2013

⁵⁹ Anti-Slavery International interview, Female Community Health Volunteer, Jhapa, 2013.



The audience has been extremely responsive to the information being brought to them in that way and several persons have actually shared that what they saw directly impacted on their decision – or other members of their family’s decision – to migrate for domestic work. In Morang for example, after the street drama was performed, a woman called Mina approached a GEFONT leader and told her that as a result of the play, she would not send her daughter to Lebanon as she is under 18 and took a false passport from a broker.

A ten-minute video⁶⁰ designed to provide potential migrants with a sense of what their experience might look and feel like is also played during community meetings. It enables further discussion about the issues and rights raised, including what steps should be taken prior to departure and what they should expect upon arrival.

Radio has also been extensively used to relay messages on safe migration to the wider communities, targeting radio with broad coverage as well as those that can be listened to in the hills of Nepal, and as far as some Nepalese-speaking areas of India. There again, it was deemed important to provide materials that listeners could easily engage with, including, in addition to the street drama, interviews and interactions with returnee migrant domestic workers as well as songs on safe migration. It is estimated that the information, in its different forms has reached tens of thousands of listeners.

The pre-departure, safe migration information imparted by GEFONT, the FCHV, transport workers and returnee migrant domestic workers is starting to have an impact. Individual women are indicating that they will change their migration plans and take protective measures; community members respond to the messages that are put across to them and some agents are starting to be responsive to the need to address women’s vulnerabilities and operate within a legal system that should improve their safety. However, these changes take time and this type of initiatives should be led and implemented by the Nepalese government. Pre-departure training curriculum

Impact of radio

After listening to the programme, two recruiting agents from Sindhupalchowk who send Nepalese women to various Middle Eastern countries including Lebanon contacted GEFONT officers to inform them that they would orientate any women planning to migrate to Lebanon to GEFONT offices first.

should be re-thought to better target the complex needs of women, including by finding ways of bringing accessible and relevant information to them. It is imperative that pre-departure orientation be decentralised and brought to women instead of women having to go and find the information in Kathmandu. It could for example be delivered at the migration information centres spread-out throughout the country after a baseline of existing facilities is conducted. Pre-departure orientation needs to build on existing good practice, integrate the learning generated by the various actors who have been pioneering this type of work.

Efforts dedicated to inform potential migrant domestic workers about safe migration prior to their departure are crucial to ensuring they make an informed decision about migrating for domestic work and in order to reduce their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. It also needs to be paired with support post-arrival so as to ensure that women who do end up migrating have access to support when and where needed.

⁶⁰ KAFA, *Working in Lebanon: What you need to know- Nepal*, [Online Video] 31 January 2013.

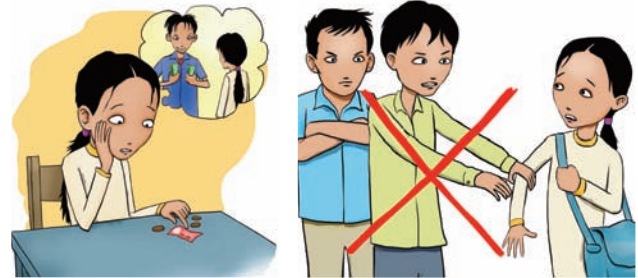
Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mra_3ZKcDGu&list=PLUh-iUyPllCOTuJs5jV0j6nIPSeHpHbNN.

Building a community of empowered and informed migrant domestic workers in Lebanon

Migrant workers in Lebanon come from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Madagascar, the Philippines and Nepal.⁶¹ Whilst newer communities are less organised, reported to be paid less and be more vulnerable to being abused, all migrant domestic workers suffer from exploitation as a result of their precarious legal and socioeconomic status. Some communities are more organised than others and generally, migrant domestic workers have so far been coming together according to their nationality.

KAFA, together with Anti-Slavery International and GEFONT started supporting the development of the Nepalese community of migrant domestic workers, with the objective of scaling up and replicating its model across communities, based on lessons learnt from the Nepalese experience. This model of 'community-based' organising can partly be traced back to the fact that presently, most communities in Lebanon, and beyond, rally around cultural events, celebrations of national days or religious events, more than around the common struggles they experience as migrant workers. This has been the reality for migrant communities in Lebanon to date.

Whilst current efforts are focussed on optimising the opportunities created by community-based approaches, the end objective remains the creation of a strong domestic workers group that brings together workers across nationalities and gender. This has started to some extent in 2012 when NGOs brought together leaders and members of different communities to participate in activities such as the Labour Day or smaller events such as vigils. The Lebanese trade union FENASOL is also playing an extremely strategic role in bringing together and organising domestic workers beyond national divides. Ultimately, the creation of a union of domestic workers born out of the various initiatives emerging in the country would represent a significant step forward for the protection of all domestic workers, enabling them to collectively



Above: Illustrations used by FCHV during their outreach with potential migrants.

bargain for their rights and represent their own interests. It will also put an end to the ongoing race to the bottom which agencies and employers are often engaged in, by looking for less organised and less paid domestic workers from newly established communities.

The current global trend in support of domestic workers organisations and unions, as illustrated by the recent establishment of the International Domestic Workers Federation,⁶² alongside the recognition of dozens of domestic workers groups and unions, should be perceived as a very encouraging sign of change.

Whilst acknowledging the merit and need to support the organising of all domestic workers, beyond national divides, the project's approach has facilitated a first step towards this by pairing pre-departure training in Nepal with efforts to support the self-organisation of newly arrived and longer established Nepalese migrant domestic workers. The objective is to create a new, empowered and partly autonomous community of migrant workers who begin to gain the confidence to claim their rights and reach out to others in the same situation. As explained above, this approach rests on the theory that if informed prior to departure about the existence of support groups, potential migrant domestic workers will be in a better position to know where to find support and information and later reach out to their peers.

⁶¹ Hamill, K., supra note 23.

⁶² See <http://idwfed.org/news.php?id=414>

Reaching out to Nepalese migrant domestic workers

The initial task for KAFA in order to establish a partly autonomous group of Nepalese migrant domestic workers consisted of identifying and reaching out to a number of migrant domestic workers who would be ready to act as the founders and initial leaders for the group. To that purpose, in January 2012, KAFA started working with two Nepalese community leaders who had been living in Lebanon for a long time and had strong links with the Nepalese community – including the NRNA, with NGOs and with the Honorary Consul in Beirut.

Ten Nepalese migrant domestic workers were identified with the support and mentoring of KAFA and founded NARI, the group of Nepalese Feminists in Lebanon. For NARI members, it was important to constitute a sub-group that was dedicated at representing the specific interests of migrant domestic workers, an overwhelming majority of whom are women. To that purpose, they established their group autonomously from the Non-Resident Nepali Association, which is mostly made of males, but remain a member of it. The development and self-empowerment of its members has since the establishment of NARI been an essential part of the creation and growth of the group.

Working together towards participatory advocacy and peer support services.

Supporting isolated women to come together to advocate for their rights is a process that requires time and sustained investment. KAFA plays a very important mentoring role with members of the NARI group and have, since its inception, implemented with them activities and approaches dedicated at enabling the development of the group and the members within it.

Migrant domestic workers are for the most part isolated and made to feel powerless as a consequence of their treatment by their employers, society, the socio-legal system within which they operate or a combination of those. The experience of NARI seems to illustrate that

the initial steps towards building a coherent group must focus on enabling a positive and collaborative spirit between its members and on building their confidence and trust. To this purpose, a lot of resources were initially invested in activities such as drama therapy sessions, days out and fun activities. The group notes about one of their members that these activities made a significant difference to the way women feel about

The NRNA⁶³

The Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) was established with the purpose of uniting and binding the Nepali Diaspora under one umbrella on 11 October, 2003. In the course of completing 8 years of its existence NRNA has developed into a non-governmental global organization and a network of Nepali origin by establishing National Coordination Council (NCC) in 60 countries to represent its interests, concerns and commitments.

“Wherever we Nepali may go or settle, whichever nationality we may possess, we never forget our land of origin, the land which holds our identity and soul. We rejoice in the achievement of our beloved country and her people and are disheartened by their sufferings and failures. Our belief:

“Once a Nepali you always remain a Nepali”, is reinforced by our commitment to streamline our energy and resources for the transformation of the Nepali society.

The network of Nepali Diaspora represented by NRNA has developed itself into a formidable force that can represent Nepali interest globally. Keeping all these in mind, the Government of Nepal has given legal status to Nepali Diaspora by promulgating Non-Resident Nepali Act 2064.

Motto: “For Nepali by Nepali”

Objectives: The objective of NRNA is to unite and bring Nepali residing all over the world under one umbrella; protect and promote their interest in and outside Nepal and utilize their potentials and resources for the welfare of Nepal. Promote and protect the rights and interest of Nepali residing outside Nepal and to promote Nepal.

⁶³ See <http://www.nrn.org.np/nrna/intro.php>.

themselves and the group: “initially she was very shy and not talkative in the first meetings. After, with the exercises and games she is able to express herself more and she is more talkative”.⁶⁴

Building their identity as a group also had consequences for the NARI members’ relationship with their employers: some members shared that their employers stopped beating them because they became part of a group which started to be recognised by the media. As a result, these women felt they were in a better position to deal with their employers and that it changed the established dynamics between them.

It was also important to convey the need for consistency in the participation in NARI – in as much as its members’ employers and obligations allowed for it. Early on, members highlighted that everyone’s commitment to participate and contribute was a significant criteria for them. The leadership of NARI was agreed by all members based on the willingness and ability of interested individual to best represent the interests of the group.

Other activities were implemented at the early days of NARI to agree on its mission, ‘rules’, other internal policies and programme of activities.

The next phase in the building of NARI consisted of developing their ability to represent and advocate for their own interests. The group members were trained on issues such as violence against women, the legal framework – specifically, the consequences of the sponsorship system, the rights of workers and social media. Together, they identified how they can help migrant domestic workers who are victims of abuse play a more active role in the community and become more active in advocating for their rights. After about a year of internal capacity building and strategy setting activities, NARI started to concentrate its efforts on positively impacting the outside environment and context relevant to migrant domestic workers.

One of NARI’s ways of reaching out to others consists of disseminating a leaflet in which they



Above: Flyer from NARI.

explain who they are, their mission and vision, what they do as well as ways of joining them.

They say:

Mission & vision:

We organised ourselves because we believe that together we can change and improve the situation of Nepalese migrant women in Lebanon. We want to help the Nepalese community, give advice and information, support those who have problems and help other Nepalese learn from our experiences living and working in Lebanon.

What we do:

We help distribute information on workers’ rights and who to contact for help to other Nepalese domestic workers; we help domestic workers who need assistance by linking them to organizations that can help in Lebanon; we organize activities and events, usually with the Non-Resident Nepalese Association and other migrant communities; and ourselves take trainings and participate in capacity building activities.

⁶⁴ KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, *If Not For the System... Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon Tell their Stories*, KAFA, Beirut, 2013.

NARI's activities and impact so far

NARI is getting increasing external recognition for the value of both what it set out to achieve and the participatory, migrant domestic workers-led way it is doing it.

NARI has organised a number of cultural events – with an advocacy component - either in partnership or independently of NRNA; events are used to publicise their group and its mission and to mainstream migrant domestic work issues within the wider migrant worker community and society at large. It is estimated that through these events, NARI has been able to reach out to hundreds of other migrants, Nepalese and others, including migrant domestic workers. NARI has also taken an active role in organising a number of public campaign events, including around Workers Day, which represented an opportunity to bring migrant domestic workers groups across communities to ask of a common voice for the end of the sponsorship system. Public campaigning and outreach has come up as a pillar of NARI's strategy and has enabled the group to establish itself further by gaining more autonomy, recruiting new members and confirming their ability to operate as a campaigning group. NARI also developed and distributed a calendar in Nepalese which contains basic info about working and living conditions in Lebanon, as well as contacts of NGOs, consulates and other useful numbers.

The use of modern technologies is increasingly recognised as an efficient methodology to reach out to isolated migrant domestic workers.⁶⁵ NARI has also been making good use of its Facebook page as a means to further their goal. Members are invited to post on the group's progress and achievements and use it as a way to reach out and showcase their impact. It has proved a useful way of empowering members and reaching out to a wider audience.⁶⁶

Good practice in partnership: KAFA and NARI working together to make a difference for migrant domestic workers

Partnerships between rights based, advocacy focussed non-governmental organisations concerned with the rights of migrant domestic workers and migrant domestic workers led organisations have been tried and tested in various national contexts.

In the UK, Kalayaan is recognised as a leading organisation on the rights of migrant domestic workers and the organisation is working closely with Justice for Domestic Workers (J4DW), an organisation of migrant domestic workers, with over 1000 members. Whilst both organisations are widely recognised in their own rights and well represented on both national and international platforms (the leader of J4DW represented workers during the negotiations for ILO C189), they benefit from offering complementary insights into migrant domestic workers problems and offer complementary services to them. Other models of such partnership can be found in Ireland with The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and the now 10-year-old Domestic Workers Action Group.

The establishment of a similar partnership in the Middle East came with additional challenges linked to migrant domestic workers enjoying generally even less mobility and autonomy than in other countries like the UK and Ireland, as a result of the sponsorship system. However, the co-operation with KAFA and NARI is already making a difference. Of particular interest is the fact that NARI members are starting to successfully identify migrant domestic workers who are abused and exploited and are now able to refer them for support. Migrant domestic workers will be more likely to put their trust in fellow migrant domestic workers and more likely to open up to them. This has led to 6 cases being referred to KAFA by NARI, from within the Nepalese community and

⁶⁵ Frantz, E., *Breaking the Isolation: Access to Information and Media among Migrant Domestic Workers in Jordan and Lebanon*, OSI, New York, 2014; and Gayathri, A., supra, note 29.

⁶⁶ Holly, Y., "Connected women: using mobile phones to protect migrants", *The Guardian Online*, [online] 27 February 2014, Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/feb/27/international-labour-organisation-freedom-women-migration#_>; Thapa, L.B., "Telling Tales – Nepali Migrant Workers in Lebanon", *The Rising Nepal*, [online] 28 February 2014, Available at: <<http://epaper.gorkhapatraonline.com/friday-supplement/book/814-friday-supplement-feb-28-2014/7-friday-supplement.html>>.

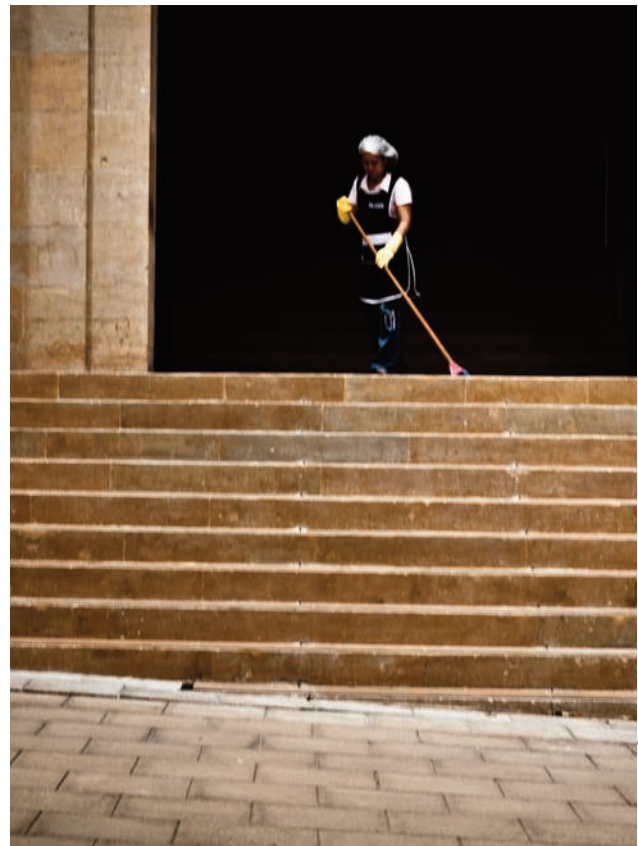
beyond. In the absence of any consular services being offered to Nepalese migrant domestic workers, this represents significant progress for Nepalese migrant domestic workers in Nepal.

First-person testimonies are also a very powerful tool in achieving policy reforms. NARI has gained the confidence to share their experience of working as domestic workers in Lebanon, present their analysis of where the system fails them and what needs to happen to improve their situation. This is a very efficient tool in convincing policy makers and the general public of the urgency and severity of the situation. They have proven this recently by bringing their concerns directly to the attention of the Minister of Labour and General Security at a conference organised by KAFA in Beirut in January 2014.

Participatory advocacy can have a clear impact; NARI illustrates very well the way it does not only have the potential to change policies and practices but also how, when it is done properly, it is a self-empowerment powerful tool for those delivering it.

It has taken about two years to firmly establish the mission and leadership of NARI and for the group to feel confident taking part in and initiating advocacy and campaigning activities. The next step for NARI will most probably consist of broadening its membership base so as to be able to support more migrant domestic workers and to reinforce its position as a group advocating for and on behalf of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon.

International good practice has shown that this is possible but requires a solid investment from members who are already part of the group. In full time employment already and enjoying limited autonomy it is likely that only those who benefit from the support of their employers will be able to do this at the outset. However, migrant domestic workers are best placed to identify and reach out to their peers, including the most isolated and inaccessible by knowing what these women do and where they go when and if they have a day off, and knowing the routines and restrictions they are under as fellow domestic workers.



Bi-lateral co-operation: using the organising experience of GEFONT to empower NARI

The international partnership between organisations in the sending and receiving countries, as well as between a rights based organisations and a confederation of workers also represents a very good asset for the reinforcement of NARI's capacities and its development. In the same way as returnee migrant domestic workers play a very important role in sharing their experience with potential migrant domestic workers in Nepal, bringing the experience that GEFONT has of organising informal workers to bargain for their rights to NARI has proven very effective. On several occasions, exchange visits were paid by members of GEFONT to NARI and its members received training and advice on how to self-organise. GEFONT has also played an important role in facilitating the relationship between NRNA and NARI. Finally GEFONT and NARI also provided joined follow up for a case of a domestic worker who committed suicide in Lebanon.

Conclusion and recommendations

This report has highlighted that migrant domestic workers, with a focus on those from Nepal and going to Lebanon, are subject to a number of inter-related vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation as a result of a combination of discriminatory or inefficient legal provisions, societal attitudes and practices in place in both countries.

They are currently ill-prepared to migrate for domestic work, and forced to keep their plans secret, keeping them in the dark about what their future life is likely to look like. Once they arrive in their country of destination, they are generally isolated from any network of support and unable to seek help and support.

Some measures have been introduced, especially in Nepal, to try to address these vulnerabilities but they fall short of having a real impact on the lives of the many women migrating for domestic work. These shortcomings call for joint efforts to be made by countries of origin and destination to improve the legal system relevant to migrant domestic workers and to address the environment which enables discrimination and abuses of migrant domestic workers to thrive.

The work of Anti-Slavery International, KAFA and GEFONT is starting to show that it is possible to improve the visibility and position of migrant domestic workers. This multi-sectorial and community based approach should be replicated to benefit more potential and actual migrant domestic workers, until appropriate and relevant policies and practices are adopted and implemented by the two governments.

The situation of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon and in the Middle East at large remains highly concerning and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Recommendations

Ratify ILO convention 189:

Nepal and Lebanon should ratify ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which in addition to providing all domestic workers with the rights and protection to which they are entitled, provides specific measures to address the specific vulnerabilities of migrant domestic workers.

Abolish the kafala system:

The kafala system is the single most important factor contributing to the abuse and exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon and beyond. Immediate measures should be introduced to remove the condition of obtaining notarised authorization letter from their employer for abused migrant domestic workers to leave their employers and to grant these workers a grace period during which they are allowed to seek a new employer/sponsor. Employment-based visas and easy exit procedures which would enable workers to leave Lebanon freely after completion of their contract should also be introduced with the end objective of removing the kafala system altogether.

Include domestic workers in labour laws:

The exclusion of domestic workers from national labour laws makes it possible for governments to introduce lesser standards of protections for this category of workers. Domestic workers are workers like any others and should be included in labour laws and benefit from the same rights and protection as other workers, including minimum wage, maximum working hours, health and safety protection and the possibility of residing within or outside of their employers' home.

Provide accessible and relevant pre-departure information to all potential migrants

Current provisions for pre-departure training and orientation do not reach the women it should. Efforts should be made by the government of Nepal to respond to these shortcomings including by building upon some of the good practice developed through this project. This includes the

use of creative material, the involvement of relevant trainers including returnee migrant domestic workers and the mainstreaming of safe migration issues to the community through mass media and community dialogue. Training should be decentralised and possibly delivered at the Migrant Information Centres operating across the country.

Regulate recruitment agencies and monitor recruitment practices:

The practice of recruiting migrant domestic workers from the rural areas of Nepal to work as domestic workers is largely unregulated. Hundreds of brokers are estimated to be operating without any scrutiny, to provide recruitment agencies with potential workers. This lack of regulation increases the risk of women to be trafficked, in forced labour and/or debt bondage as a result of inflated debts contracted at the outset, false passports and deception about their future employment.

Harmonise policy and practice in relation to migration for domestic work in Nepal

The lack of coherency between the policies and practice currently regulating the situation of potential migrant domestic workers in Nepal, particularly, the co-existence of the ban with the Open Border Agreement creates a parallel economy of migration for domestic work in the Middle East, which profits brokers and agencies at the expense of the rights and safety of migrant workers. Nepal should remove the age ban and enable agencies to issue permits for Lebanon; this will encourage women to take official routes to migrate for domestic work and eventually make them less vulnerable to being exploited if done in the context of the other wider reforms put forward in this report.

Establish an embassy in Lebanon

Without any consular or diplomatic representation in Lebanon, Nepalese migrant workers, including domestic workers, are left without any protection from their state and unable to access any official support in relation to accessing a shelter in case of abuse, repatriation or obtaining official papers after they were taken away by the employer. A Consulate should be established to support the

work of the Honorary Consul in Beirut as a matter of priority.

Support the self-organising of migrant domestic workers with the view of organising them in unions

Migrant workers, including migrant domestic workers should be able to join trade unions easily and freely and trade unions should be supported to include and represent the interests of domestic workers. As a first step, migrant domestic workers themselves should be empowered and supported to come together, provide peer support and advocate and defend their own rights. Enabling disempowered and isolated migrant domestic women to come together to advocate for their rights is resource intensive but can make a real difference to the individuals and groups concerned.

Anti-Slavery International, founded in 1839, is committed to eliminating all forms of slavery throughout the world. Slavery, servitude and forced labour are violations of individual freedoms, which deny millions of people their basic dignity and fundamental human rights. Anti-Slavery International works to end these abuses by exposing current cases of slavery, campaigning for its eradication, supporting the initiatives of local organisations to release people, and pressing for more effective implementation of international laws against slavery. For further information see: www.antislavery.org.

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KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation



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