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In Their Own Words...

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

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The Editors approached service providers members of the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) with a request to speak to people who are using their services and ask them about the difficulties they are currently facing, their hopes for the future, or anything else they want to share with the journal audience. The responses below were translated by the service providers or GAATW staff and have been edited only for clarity.

Abused (male) Bangladeshi migrant workers who spoke to Transient Workers Count Too, Singapore

I have an order of tribunal for SGD 9,954.75. The Ministry gave the company three weeks to pay but it was never paid. I claimed more than SGD 15,000 for unpaid salary, but without any signed cards or salary slips I can't prove that amount. The employer never gave me signed cards. Now the Ministry says that my boss might go to jail, but that doesn't help me.

Even if the boss has to go to jail, what about my bank loan and my house?

I paid the agent SGD 7,000 for this job; the interest is already more than SGD 3,000. The Ministry says they can only help me get SGD 2,000 at most from the insurance company. How can I accept that? First I mortgaged my house and now the bank has repossessed it. Our water line is cut and I can't pay school fees for my daughter or buy food for the family. I have no way to pay back any of the money I borrowed.

Mehedi

I have a wife and a small baby and I have to take care of them.

I borrowed SGD 4,000 for this job, but got only SGD 75 in salary. I was injured after working only one month and the boss hasn't paid me yet for that month. Nobody is helping me, so how?

The company says they have cancelled my work permit, and after the injury the company never took care of me. My daughter is still small. What can I do?

Mostafigur

The boss suddenly said all workers must go home. All twelve people. After I go home I don't know what I'll do. I gave so much money to the agent for this job. I haven't paid back the loan for that money yet. If I go back to Bangladesh I'm finished. So many people are waiting to take their money back. My family is very poor. There's no way for me.

Marine worker

My cousin called me to ask why I haven't even built a house after working so long in Singapore. I've been here ten years and I send all my money home to the family. I don't keep anything here for myself. But my cousin doesn't believe me. She thinks that everyone in Singapore has so much money and that it's easy to get rich here. She thinks that I'm saving it all for myself. But after all these years I've saved nothing. My parents

tell me to stay here and continue working because they need money for my little brother and for medicine now that they're old. They don't think about my life and how hard it is for me to do nothing but work every day. Sometimes I think I'd rather die than continue like this.

Sagar

Survivors of trafficking interviewed by Corporación Espacios de Mujer, Colombia

I want to live with my mom and son and study social work. I also want to have my own business.

A female survivor of internal trafficking, 27 years old.

I want to live in another city with my children and a stable partner. I want to publish a book with my life story and I want to help other women and do prevention in schools.

A female survivor of trafficking to Chile, 40 years old.

I want to have my own apartment and live with my daughter there. I want to study theatre and work in television as a make-up artist. I want to travel and see other countries.

A female survivor of trafficking to China, 29 years old.

I want to have my own house and my own business. I want to study more.

A female survivor of internal trafficking, 36 years old.

Focus group discussion with trafficked women assisted by LEFÖ–Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women, Austria

My first dream is to study hard so I can be useful to myself and society.

I **need** to go to school. Without education you cannot have a good job.

I also expect Austria document [e.g. residence permit—editors' note] if possible so I can go visit other countries if possible.

Document is important to me because it contains the freedom I was denied in my former country, the freedom to become great [...] like I have dreamed about all my life.

In five years I want to be with my family. People would say they want success in their fields and life. I want that too. But more than that, I want two things: happiness and peace.

Living a life I always dreamt of, being a nurse and being able to help myself and other people around me. Having a family of my own. [For my life right now I want] to be in touch with life, to be intimate and less afraid, to have purpose, to live my life as I do and want to, grow my soul through lessons.

I want my documents and I want to finish my Deutsch kurs and to speak good Deutsch and I want my family as well.

I see for me one safety day, when nobody can be dangerous for me and I can wake up in a safety world. I wish for me one day when I can contact with other people without

fear and I can be happy every day of my life in a safety place. It is real happiness when nothing can be dangerous for you. I just want to be a woman.

Survivors of trafficking interviewed by ECPAT, Guatemala

Before all this, my life was beautiful. I dreamt of being a doctor and I liked going out with my friends.

I would like to be reunited with my brothers and keep fighting to be together. Now I don't want to be a doctor anymore; now I want to be a teacher.

Rosselyn, 15 years

Before, I used to have many goals and keep going and not give up. After what I experienced, I dream of becoming a vet and making my family happy.

Aurora, 13 years old

If I could go back in time, I would give more love to my brothers and I would help my uncle a lot so that he doesn't send me to my dad. Things that I would do ... continue studying and I would not disrespect my uncles.

I am studying. I want to be with my brothers, I want to go to university and work for them. A few years from now, I see myself as a law graduate, helping homeless children and those who have been victims of sexual abuse and human trafficking.

Reyna, 16 years old.

Girl at risk of trafficking accommodated in the crisis centre of Animus Association Foundation/La Strada Bulgaria.

I'm 15 years old, from Sofia, and I've always wanted to work with Bulgarian society. With children, adults, psychology or something related to education. I'm in a place where for good reasons there are rules [the crisis centre rules]. One day, if God is willing, I will graduate [from University] and work here.

...

EVERYTHING is in my hands and I can achieve anything if I want it strongly enough!!!