



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

Subscribe!

January 2018

Dear friends,

It's been a whole year since we published our last English-language bulletin. We were caught in a whirlwind of projects activities, deadlines, conferences, and workshops, and we had less time for reflection and communication with our members and partners, although many exchanges around concrete issues or events did take place. Adding to that was the strained human resource situation within our team, with two colleagues leaving the organisation in January-March and two in September-October. However, we were pleased to welcome two new colleagues at the end of 2017 - Eunha Gim as Programme Officer Research and Ratna Mathai-Luke as Programme Officer Asia.

With new additions to the team and new energy at the beginning of the year, it is our wish for the new year (we won't say resolution!) to make the time to inform you more regularly about our work. We do believe it is important to share our successes, challenges and insights with all of you, as well as learn from yours.

In 2017 we continued working on our three thematic priorities - Accountability, Access to Justice, and Power in Migration and Work - as well as our core activities of research, advocacy, and participatory learning.

Within the **Accountability** programme, we worked with our members and partners in Bolivia, Colombia, and Guatemala to conduct, for the second year in a row, an assessment of their governments' obligations to implement national anti-trafficking policies. Similarly to [the 2016 Assessment](#), the [one published in 2017](#) found that institutions in the three countries are not fulfilling their legal responsibilities and are failing to guarantee the rights of trafficked persons and at-risk groups. Governments do not allocate appropriate budgets, do not collect statistical information, and do not ensure ongoing training of state officials. In addition, this time government institutions were less cooperative, and in some cases hostile, to the requests for information they received from our partners. This is yet another manifestation of the shrinking space for civil society that we are witnessing throughout the world, and the diminished opportunities for NGOs to act as watchdogs. We reflected on some of these frustrations in a [short piece](#) published this month on Beyond Trafficking and Slavery. In 2018, together with our members and allies, we will continue this work and review what we've done so far in order to deepen the analysis and improve the methodology.

In 2017 we also began a landscape assessment exercise to map the advocacy work related to trafficking undertaken by NGOs in the ASEAN region. We conducted scoping visits to five countries to determine the interest and capacity of civil society organisations to conduct monitoring of the implementation of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP), and this year we will visit another four countries. Once the study is complete, we will organise a regional consultation to determine how regional advocacy efforts on the monitoring and implementation of ACTIP may be better coordinated.

Within the **Access to Justice** programme, we completed two projects and published two reports

summarising their key findings and learnings. The first one, [Access Unknown](#), highlights the experiences of abuse, labour exploitation, and human trafficking of Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand and the factors that facilitate or hinder their access to justice. It documents how lack of information about migration and work procedures and working conditions, mistrust of authorities, and lack of information about sources of support, prevent Cambodian workers from seeking justice for rights violations in Thailand. The second report, [Enabling Access to Justice](#), focuses on the experiences of CSOs in trying to support South Asian women migrant workers abused and trafficked in the Middle East. The report documents the many obstacles to justice that migrant workers face, including legal, social, and procedural, and the many ways in which CSOs are assisting them in their struggles. Some of these are exemplified through the stories of three Nepali women, documented in [a thirty-minute video](#). Based on the two reports, as well as reports by GAATW members in Europe and consultations with members in Asia, we prepared a [submission](#) to the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery for a special report on access to justice and remedies for victims of contemporary forms of slavery. It is clear from our work that justice remains an elusive concept for many trafficked persons and abused migrant workers the world over, and cannot be separated from the broader issues of democracy and rule of law. In many countries, corrupt, slow, and inefficient legal systems prevent marginalised groups, such as migrants or trafficked persons, from seeking justice. In many countries, trafficked persons don't even associate the concept of justice with the legal system and simply want to move on with their lives and find a new, non-exploitative job, without seeking recourse for the abuses they suffered. We were pleased that these, and other issues we highlighted, were included in the [Special Rapporteur's report](#).

[Continue reading about our work in the other thematic and core programmes](#)

As always we welcome your feedback and contributions to future issues at borislav@gaatw.org.



From our Member Organisations...

In 2017 we welcomed three new members to the Alliance from Europe, Asia and North America.

NGO Novi Put, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Udruženje "Novi put"

Novi put was established in 2010 by women with long anti-trafficking experience. The organisation is registered at the state level and implements anti-trafficking programmes comprised of education and grass roots prevention activities among groups vulnerable to human trafficking; counselling support to potential and confirmed victims; training and lectures for both law enforcement agencies and general public; lobbying and information campaigns. Novi put runs a Help Line providing up-to-date information on human trafficking and safe migration. The organisation is a member of the core Regional Monitoring Team for anti-trafficking established by the ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a member of the La Strada International NGO Platform and European NGO Platform Against Trafficking, Exploitation and Slavery (ENPATES). Website: <http://www.newroadbih.org/>

Justice Centre Hong Kong



PROTECTING FORCED MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

Justice Centre Hong Kong is a leading nonprofit human rights organisation working to protect the rights of vulnerable groups in Hong Kong: refugees and victims of torture, human trafficking and forced labour. Justice Centre Hong Kong works to protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, survivors of torture, human trafficking and forced labour. The organisation's vision is for Hong Kong to be a fair and inclusive society where even the most marginalised enjoy fundamental rights and access to justice. The mission is to enable clients to access their rights through legal and psychosocial support, policy, advocacy and research while strengthening the rule of law in Hong Kong.

Justice Centre was historically Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre (HKRAC) founded in 2007 and was

the first and only non-governmental organisation in Hong Kong to provide free and vital legal aid to vulnerable refugees seeking protection through the UN refugee agency's Refugee Screening Determination process. The organisation was relaunched as Justice Centre Hong Kong in 2014, expanding its services to assist all refugees seeking protection via the Unified Screening Mechanism, as well as working on human trafficking and forced labour issues in Hong Kong. Website: <http://www.justicecentre.org.hk/>

Human Trafficking Legal Center, USA



The Human Trafficking Legal Center (HT Legal Center) uses a rights-based approach to fight for justice for trafficking victims. HT Legal Center trains pro bono attorneys to represent trafficking victims in the United States. It makes referrals on case-by-case basis, providing mentoring and extensive technical assistance for complex civil, immigration and criminal cases. HT Legal Center attorneys monitor the developing case law, focusing on impact litigation in the federal courts. The Center also conducts research and

maintains a comprehensive database on federal civil and criminal trafficking cases. Website: <http://www.htlegalcenter.org>

www.gaatw.org

Resources

[More than catch phrases and click bait: mutual learning as a tactic for combating the exploitation of migrants](#)

Borislav Gerasimov

Anti-trafficking awareness-raising campaigns are by necessity simplistic and can lead to unintended consequences and comic results. Given all their flaws and limitations, the money used for awareness-raising campaigns may be much more efficiently spent on smaller-scale direct work in communities, as well as on research and collective advocacy for change. NGOs can play a catalytic role in this process if they strive to go beyond generating clicks and return to grassroots, bottom-up approaches.

[Civil society and the clampdown on freedoms](#)

Chus Álvarez

The space for effective action is narrowing for civil society organisations, and many groups fear repercussions when they challenge the government. This was also obvious when GAATW members and partners in Colombia, Bolivia, and Guatemala tried to hold their governments accountable for their obligations towards trafficked persons. In this hostile environment it is essential more than ever that civil society is organised and stands up to the clampdown on civil liberties and social participation that states are carrying out in the name of security and economic prosperity.

[What does justice mean for migrant women workers?](#)

Priyanka Borpujari

Social and gender justice for migrant workers ought to include universal social protection, access to basic healthcare, basic income security, and access to education regardless of citizenship. However, migrant workers in many countries must also contend with intolerance and extremism that increases marginalisation and foments exclusion. More than ever before, it is crucial that the pursuit of justice is a unified effort, carried out in collaboration with migrant workers themselves. This also means that their work is recognised, and that their working conditions are improved.

[Confronting root causes: forced labour in global supply chains](#)

Genevieve LeBaron, Neil Howard, Cameron Thibos and Penelope Kyritsis

This new Beyond Trafficking and Slavery report aims to answer questions about globalisation, poverty, exploitation, and supply and demand, in relation to forced labour, in a rigorous yet accessible way. It is organised around 12 closely-related chapters: two examining concepts, four looking at the "supply side" and four looking at the "demand" side of forced labour. The report demonstrates that rather than a simple consequence of greed or the moral shortcomings of individuals, forced labour in global supply chains is a structural phenomenon that results when predictable, system-wide dynamics intersect to create a supply of highly exploitable workers and

a business demand for their labour.

[Animation video: Between Decent Work and Modern Slavery](#)

Focus on Labour Exploitation

A new animation from GAATW member Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX) shows how labour abuse can develop into exploitation and what can be done to prevent it. The film is intended to inform the public and policy makers about how workers can become vulnerable to exploitation through abuse of their labour rights. It shows the ways in which FLEX works to protect workers and, in doing so, to prevent labour exploitation.

[Supporting the Reintegration of Trafficked Persons: A Guidebook for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region](#)

Rebecca Surtees, NEXUS Institute

This guidebook is meant for practitioners from government and non-government organisations alike, to address weaknesses in the current frameworks of victim assistance and reintegration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam). The guidebook highlights positive examples of the reintegration of trafficked persons as well as challenges that many victims face as they seek to move on from their exploitation. It also offers practical guidance to practitioners - through checklists and recommendations - on how to improve reintegration programming and policies.

['Understanding sex work: a brief guide for labour rights activists'](#)

International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe

The labour movement was born during the industrial revolution in the 19th century when workers came together to advocate for better working conditions and treatment by their employers. Workers formed trade unions in different industrial sectors, and, through collective action such as strikes, obtained sick and maternity leaves, holidays, abolished child labour, reduced weekly working hours, increased wages and forced governments to adopt labour laws protecting people's lives through health and safety measures. This briefing paper is intended as an introduction to sex workers' rights from a labour rights perspective. Its aim is to provide labour rights activists and trade unionists interested in including sex workers in their fight for labour rights with basic information on the struggle for the recognition of sex work as work and the correlation between the criminalised nature of the sex industry and labour exploitation.

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women | Email | Website

STAY CONNECTED:



e-Bulletin



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

Subscribe!

May 2018

Dear friends,

As the summer heat is intensifying in Bangkok, so is the work in our office. In February we published our new report '[Sex Workers Organising for Change](#)' which documents how sex workers are organising around the world to demand rights and better working conditions, and the incredible work of sex worker rights organisations in empowering sex workers and assisting women in the industry who experience violence, coercion and exploitation. We organised a convening of over 50 representatives of sex worker organisations, anti-trafficking organisations and human rights funders to discuss the findings of the report and how the sex worker rights movement can be supported by allies in other movements. We also presented the report at a parallel event during the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, at several events in Mexico organised by our member Brigada Callejera, and at an event in Wellington organised by the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (read more further on in this bulletin). Sadly, at the same time as we were presenting this evidence in different spaces, the US Senate passed a [controversial law](#) that will hold websites liable for publishing user content related to sex work, for example, advertisements by sex workers, as well as any discussion of sex work-related issues. The bill was opposed by [anti-trafficking groups](#), [sex workers](#) and [survivors of trafficking](#) alike, as well as [advocates of free speech](#), who warned that it will force sex workers into more precarious conditions, prevent websites from reporting suspected trafficking cases, and censor free speech online. Despite this opposition, the bill passed with overwhelming support from both democrats and republicans. Less than two weeks after it was signed into law, the impact was already [visible](#) on Craigslist, Twitter and Reddit, among others, and was felt by sex workers as far away as [UK](#), [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#). As advocates had warned, the closure of online advertising spaces would push sex workers into the hands of potentially exploitative [third parties](#) and there are reports that this is [already happening](#). Thus while the legislation *might* deter some trafficking activities in the future, it has very real consequences in the present, and we are yet to see the full extent of the 'collateral damage' it will cause.

At the beginning of April we organised a three-day [knowledge-sharing forum on Women, Work and Migration](#). Focusing on South Asia, the Forum gathered over 60 civil society activists, community workers, worker representatives, migrants groups, trade unionists, and academics to discuss the key issues surrounding women's work across both formal and informal sectors, including agriculture, sex work, entertainment, domestic work, garment and manufacturing. The discussions centred on decent work, migration, gender based violence in the workplace, and the need to build cross-sectoral solidarity between all women workers (read more below). We were inspired to be among so many like-minded individuals from different fields and sectors that share a common concern for the rights and working conditions of women. Yet less than two weeks after we came back from the Forum in Colombo, the media [reported](#) that the draft 'World Development Report' of the World Bank calls for lower minimum wages and greater hiring and firing power for employers, especially in developing countries, so that workers can [compete with robot labour](#). The Washington representative for the International Trade Union Confederation [wrote](#) that the draft 'almost completely ignores workers' rights, asymmetric power in the labour market and phenomena such as declining labour share in national income'. In a world of [staggering inequality](#), where exploitative and [precarious work](#) is practically the norm, especially for women in the Global South, it is inexcusable for the World Bank to make such recommendations! We hope that the report will undergo substantial revisions before its

publication in September, so that its recommendations can actually contribute to a fairer and more equitable world of work for women.

At the end of April we published the [new issue](#) of our flagship publication, the open access, peer reviewed journal *Anti-Trafficking Review*. This issue, themed 'Life after Trafficking', documents the challenges that people face after exiting situations labelled as trafficking, as well as those whose exploitation garnered no legal protections or service provision. Contributions from a diverse range of countries - India, Thailand, Azerbaijan, the United States, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Denmark, United Kingdom and Switzerland - highlight the lack of appropriate and comprehensive support for survivors after trafficking, as they struggle with family reunification, legal recognition and compensation, and long-term economic opportunities (see more below). While finalising the issue in mid-April, we were painfully reminded about the meaning of 'rehabilitation' and 'rehabilitation homes' for some (trafficked) women, when [news broke out](#) that a 26-year-old Uzbek woman had committed suicide in one such institution in Hyderabad, India. Although the media reported that she was '[lured and forced](#)' into sex work and received only a small portion of what she was earning, it was also reported that she was collecting money for her mother's treatment and '[yearned to get out of the rescue home](#)'. GAATW has always [spoken out](#) against the detention of trafficked persons, even the name of their 'rehabilitation', yet this flawed model is likely to continue after the adoption of the [new Indian anti-trafficking bill](#). You can also read the [paper by Diya Bose](#) in the *Anti-Trafficking Review*, which describes an anti-trafficking shelter in Dhaka, Bangladesh as a 'total institution' and how the organisation's actual practices undermine its stated empowerment objectives.

But the world news is not all gloomy. On International Women's Day, more than five million women in Spain [joined different marches, pickets and blockades](#) and an estimated 5.2 million took part in a two-hour 'feminist strike' throughout the country to counter widespread inequality and a growing wave of violence against women. [In Armenia, thousands protested](#) for democracy and transparency and against the corrupt elite, and succeeded in forcing the prime minister to resign. In Trinidad and Tobago, the High Court of Justice [ruled](#) that the country's laws criminalising same-sex relations between consenting adults are unconstitutional, after a gay activist challenged these laws in 2017. After a similar ruling in Belize in 2016, the LGBT community in the Caribbean now [hopes that other countries will soon follow suit](#). Importantly, British Prime Minister Theresa May expressed [regret over the UK's role in imposing anti-sodomy laws](#) on its former colonies, after campaigning by LGBT activists around the world. In the US, hundreds of domestic workers and farmworkers met with members of Congress [to demand policies](#) against sexual harassment against all workers. And in Bogotá, sex workers are [publishing their own newspaper](#), which is a ray of light in an otherwise depressing and violent neighbourhood. Such little pockets of resistance and the collective power of women, of workers, of citizens and activists, give us hope for the world and inspire us to continue our work.

As always we welcome your feedback and contributions to future issues at borislav@gaatw.org.



International Advocacy Update

MIGRATION

Global Compact for Migration: The third round of negotiations on the Global Compact for Migration was held in April. Governments discussed Rev.1 (available [here](#)). GAATW-IS did not attend but is grateful to Kate Sheill who was able to share her notes. States did not finish a first reading of this text but got through objective 16 (covering paras. 1 to 31). They'll continue this first full reading at the May round of negotiations (14-18 May) - starting from objective 17 - which means we won't see a new text before then (the co-facilitators had originally planned to issue a revised text between each round of negotiations). Also at the next round of negotiations the co-facilitators will present their proposal for a capacity building mechanism - they will share a draft on that before the May session.

Some reflections and selected points from the April negotiations:

States positions and groupings:

- The EU27, Hungary, Norway, Australia, Russian Federation, Singapore, China, India and to some extent South Africa are hostile. These states want to delete references to regularisation, firewalls, deny that all migrants enjoy the same human rights, and want to reiterate throughout the text that the Compact is non-binding, among others. These positions will do nothing to address the protection gaps for migrants in vulnerable situations that the GCM processes were designed to address. Hungary is likely to be a big problem - they're entirely opposed to migration so it's difficult to see how states can negotiate anything if they decide to get involved.
- Brazil, Paraguay, El Salvador, Mexico, Bangladesh, Philippines, Switzerland Holy See are our main 'champions' so far (on issues such as regularisation, labour rights protections) though as we have not yet discussed the section on returns yet, this list could get shorter. There is grouping of "likeminded states" that is worth watching, supporting, pushing - this is a loose grouping of (so far) 21 states: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Uruguay. They function really only to give general statements, they are not negotiating as a block but it's good to see some of the more progressive states collaborating and hope they get more active as we continue. ...

[Continue reading about the Global Compact, the ILO Instrument on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work and the UNTOC Review Mechanism...](#)

Employment opportunity

Communications and Networks Advisor at Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)

This is an exciting opportunity to shape FLEX's communications strategy and to contribute to a growing and dynamic organisation. You will work to generate interest in FLEX's message and work, and to ensure that our research gains media traction and reaches new audiences. You will help build FLEX's communications network and work closely with key journalists, acting as the main media contact for FLEX. You will use your excellent storytelling skills to share the stories of those affected by forced labour and exploitation and to foster change in this field.

For more information and how to apply, [click here](#). Deadline for applications is 25 May 2018.

News from the GAATW International Secretariat

Knowledge-sharing forum Women, Work and Migration



On 7-9 April, GAATW, with the support of the ILO, organised a three-day regional Knowledge-Sharing Forum on Women, Work and Migration in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Focusing on South Asia, the Forum gathered over 60 civil society activists, community workers, worker representatives, migrants groups, trade unionists, and academics to discuss the key issues surrounding women's work across both formal and informal sectors of work, including agriculture, sex work, entertainment, domestic work, garment and manufacturing. The discussions centred on decent

work, migration, gender-based violence in the workplace, and the need to build cross-sectoral solidarity between all women workers. ...

Sex Workers Organising for Change

In February we published our new report '[Sex Workers Organising for Change: Self-representation, community mobilisation, and working conditions](#)' based on research conducted with sex worker organisations in seven countries: Canada, Mexico, Spain, South Africa, India, Thailand and New Zealand. The report highlights the transformative effect that organising has on the lives of sex workers and their ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse and exploitation, and the creative ways in which sex worker organisations respond to the challenges



that people in the industry experience. It describes cases where sex workers, or sex worker organisations, learnt of situations where a woman was experiencing violence, working under unacceptable conditions, or was brought to the industry through force or deception, for the purpose of exploitation. In these instances, sex workers resolved the issue as a collective, by providing advice and referral to other organisations, negotiating with the brothel owner/madam, chasing the pimp out of their area, or gathering money to help the woman return home.

Ultimately, the report demonstrates that sex worker rights organisations are human rights organisations whose primary mandate is to ensure that the human, economic, social, political, and labour rights of the people they

work with are recognised and respected by state and non-state actors. ...

Anti-Trafficking Review, issue 10 'Life after Trafficking'



Media, policymakers and NGOs typically focus on the horrors of life *in* trafficking and 'rescuing' trafficked persons, but much less attention is paid to life *after* trafficking. The [new issue](#) of the *Anti-Trafficking Review* documents the challenges that people face after exiting situations labelled as trafficking, as well as those whose exploitation garnered no legal protections

or service provision. ...

[Read all news from the GAATW International Secretariat.](#)

From our Member Organisations...

Tackling the exploitation of women workers in the UK

In March, Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX) brought together leading experts to share ideas on how to end exploitation of women workers in the UK. Key UK labour inspection authorities, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Health and Safety Executive, Revenue and Customs, and the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate were represented, as well as officials from the Home Office, the Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the office of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement. A wide-ranging discussion took place about the abuses women are facing in the workplace and the gaps in the existing labour market enforcement framework to stop these abuses before they develop into labour exploitation.

The Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) shared cases of sexual harassment and assault in the cleaning sector. When the women LAWRS supports have tried to complain about abuses, they have faced disbelief and have been threatened or fired as a result of speaking out. Sexual harassment at work often goes hand in hand with other forms of abuse, which never get reported because survivors are afraid of repercussions if they speak out. When these abuses are ignored, they can open the door to exploitation. ...

La Strada-Ukraine celebrates 20th anniversary!

On 31 March, La Strada Ukraine celebrated 20 years of work in the areas of prevention of human trafficking and domestic violence, protection of children's rights and promotion of gender equality.

La Strada was the first organisation to address the problem of human trafficking in Ukraine. During these twenty years a lot was achieved in the country: the ratification of international



treaties and inclusion of human trafficking in the Ukrainian Criminal Code, the development of state anti-trafficking programmes, the establishment of a department on combating human trafficking, the adoption of an anti-trafficking law, and numerous information and awareness-raising campaigns at the national level. La Strada Ukraine has worked together with other CSOs to contribute to these developments/achievements. ...

Conference "20 years LEFÖ-IBF. From 1998 to

2018: Same old, same old?"



The Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women and Girls of LEFÖ (LEFÖ-IBF) is also celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. On this occasion, LEFÖ-IBF is organising a conference titled "Trafficking in Women. From 1998 to 2018: same old, same old?" on 5-6 June in Vienna. The conference will bring together national and international experts in the areas of human trafficking and migrant women's rights.

Since 1998 LEFÖ-IBF has provided direct assistance to more than 2600 women and girls. LEFÖ-IBF now has four shelters and apart from accommodation, offers psycho-social counselling in the women's native languages, legal assistance, accompaniment to public authorities and assistance in claiming and obtaining compensation. ...

Ban Ying in the press

On international women's day, our German member Ban Ying gave an [interview on the blog of the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung](#), discussing how the new so-called Prostitute Protection Act offers protection to sex workers only in its title: new regulations allegedly allow for the identification of victims of human trafficking through initial interviews with women planning to engage in sex work, although it is still not clear who will conduct these interviews, where, and in what language. The new law, with its mandatory registration and a special ID-card for all sex workers, puts them at risk of repression or blackmail, offers dubious protections of personal data and further marginalises undocumented sex workers. ...

[Read all news from GAATW members.](#)

www.gaatw.org

Resources

[Shaky Foundations: Labour Exploitation in London's Construction Sector](#)

FLEX

This study draws on interviews and surveys with migrant construction workers in London to shine a spotlight on the labour abuses present that can lead to exploitation. It a range of labour abuses and risk of exploitation in the sector, including workers not being paid, being physically and verbally abused, and being forced to work in dangerous conditions. The report calls for urgent action by the Government, the Director of Labour Market Enforcement, the Mayor of London and the construction industry to put an end to abuse of London's construction workers.

[Risks and rewards: Outcomes of labour migration in South-East Asia](#)

International Labour Organization

Based on interviews with 1800 migrant workers, this report challenges some of the commonly held assumptions about the end result of labour migration in South-East Asia and how best to ensure a safe and rewarding experience for migrant workers. Positive outcomes can be achieved if migrant workers are able to avoid burdensome debts, benefit from labour rights protection, enhance their job skills and find gainful employment upon return. Lack of assurance of obtaining these conditions contributes to a situation where labour migration is often a considerable gamble for migrant workers and their family members.

[If you control movement, you control sex workers](#)

Prabha Kotiswaran and Rebecca Angelini

In this interview, Rebecca Angelini from the GAATW Swiss member FIZ reflects on the organisation's thirty years of experience in the anti-trafficking field. She acknowledges the

progress that Switzerland has made in protecting the rights of women identified as trafficked and providing them with assistance and justice. At the same time, she recognises that the anti-trafficking framework has had multiple negative effects on the lives and working conditions of other migrant women in the country, especially sex workers.

[The false promise of the Nordic model of sex work](#)

Sam Okyere and Essi Thesslund

In this interview, Essi Thesslund from the GAATW member Pro Tukipiste describes the Finnish legislation on sex work, which criminalises clients who knowingly use the services of women who are victims of trafficking or working for someone else. Although this legislation is not used very often anymore, because of the difficulty to prove knowledge, it has created an environment in which the police harass sex workers in order to get to clients. Essi also points out that, unlike in other countries, sex worker rights and abolitionist organisations in Finland find ways to work together to support victims and advocate for policies that they agree on.

[RAIDED: How Anti-trafficking Strategies Increase Sex Workers' Vulnerability to Exploitative Practices](#)

SANGRAM

This report is the result of research carried out by VAMP and SANGRAM in cooperation with sex worker collectives in Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The research examines the impact of The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA) on the protection of the human rights of sex workers. It discusses the relevant national and international legal frameworks and analyses the case law on sex work. Above all, it gives voice to sex workers themselves. A theme that runs through the sex workers' stories is the daily exposure to arbitrary arrest and detention, and police abuse. Rather than combating trafficking, the ITPA creates the conditions under which sex workers can be arrested without due process under the flag of rescue operations, detained in 'rehabilitation' or 'correction homes' that are in fact prisons, sometimes for up to five years, subjected to forced medical tests, humiliated and abused, coerced into sex and extorted with impunity in the process.

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women | [Email](#) | [Website](#)

STAY CONNECTED:





Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

Subscribe!

August 2018

Dear friends,

Greetings from the tropics!

A brief overview of world news related to our areas of work over the last few months:

Countries in the global North continued blatantly disregarding international human rights law that obliges them to protect refugees and migrants: the United States [separated more than 2000 migrant children](#) from their parents (most of whom have since been reunited), Italy [refused port](#) to ships carrying hundreds of migrants and refugees from North Africa, Hungary [passed a bill](#) that criminalises NGOs and attorneys who help refugees and imposes a 25% tax on NGOs that 'paint immigration in a positive light', and Australia [announced](#) that it wouldn't sign the Global Compact on Migration because it wants to cling to its overseas migrant detention centres.

The US withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council just days before UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty presented to the Council a [damning report](#) from his visit to the United States. Only days later, the US Supreme Court [dealt a blow to labour unions](#), ruling that public sector workers are not required to pay union fees. This ruling will greatly weaken the strength of unions and their ability to bargain with employers on behalf of employees in the public sector. The concept of 'gender ideology' which has been [undermining](#) women's and LGBT rights in Latin America, was used by the Bulgarian Constitutional Court to [declare](#) an international convention aimed at combating gender-based violence and domestic violence incompatible with the Bulgarian Constitution. This only a day after yet another woman was killed by her intimate partner (since the beginning of 2018, one woman has been murdered by an intimate partner in Bulgaria almost every week).

Even the most heartwarming and happy-ending story during these months - about the Thai boys and their coach who were trapped in a cave for more than two weeks - had a bitter side: the coach and three of the boys are from an ethnic minority group and among 500,000 stateless persons in Thailand, whose freedom of movement and opportunities for work are heavily restricted. While Thai authorities have now given them citizenship, people shouldn't have to go through life-threatening ordeals to be citizens of their birth countries.

As for our team, the past three months were busy as usual. In May we began a process of consultations for the development of our next strategic plan. Our International Board met in Bangkok to discuss how to implement the findings of the organisational assessment conducted in 2017 and outline the directions of work of the Alliance for the next five years. In June we organised an initial consultation with our members from Latin America in Bogota, where they shared with us the main issues of concern for the region and the ways these can be taken up by the Secretariat. Our International Coordinator shared [some reflections](#) from this trip and, in particular, from a meeting with three Venezuelan migrants supported by our member Sintrasedom. The situation in Venezuela, and the rights of its citizens who are fleeing to neighbouring countries, is one of the most pressing issues in the region at the moment and our members are working hard to assist these migrants. Throughout June and July, we also organised meetings with our members in South Asia, and at the moment we are planning consultations with Southeast Asian, Latin American and European members later in the year.

Our plan is to complete the member consultations by November and prepare our draft strategic plan by the end of this year or early 2019.

On the advocacy front, we attended the International Labour Conference in Geneva, where the ILO, trade unions, employers and governments discussed a new instrument to address violence and harassment in the world of work, as well as the final round of negotiations of the Global Compact on Migration in New York (read more about these two events in the [International Advocacy Update](#)). We made a [submission](#) to the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants for his report on access to justice for migrants and two submissions to the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery - on [domestic servitude of migrant women and girls](#), in cooperation with PICUM and La Strada International, and on the [gender dimensions of human trafficking](#).

We also joined academics, labour rights activists, informal workers and transgender activists in opposing India's draft Anti-Trafficking Bill as proposed by the government to Parliament. We wrote [an article](#) for the Economic and Political Weekly (as part of a [series of articles](#) critiquing the draft bill), and two letters to the Minister of Women and Child Development, outlining the deficiencies of the draft bill, such as the general approach to trafficking as a criminal problem rather than a social, labour and human rights issue, the conflation of trafficking and smuggling and the protectionist, paternalistic approaches to assistance. Our International Coordinator [reflected on her personal blog](#) on the bitter way the bill had been debated in the public sphere, pitting the rights and wellbeing of survivors of trafficking against those of workers, as if the two are incompatible.

In June we visited Kuwait to meet our project partner Sandigan - a group of volunteers who support abused and exploited Filipino domestic workers. We also organised a workshop in Bangkok for eight project partners from South and West Asia and East Africa to plan our new joint project to document women's views and experiences of labour migration (read more in the News from the GAATW-IS). In July, we held our annual mid-year review meeting to reflect on our current achievements and plan for the second half of the year.

Throughout the first six months of this year we worked together with Beyond Trafficking and Slavery (BTS) and Translators Without Borders to translate some of the core BTS material into Spanish. We selected sixty pieces, focusing broadly on human trafficking and 'modern slavery', globalisation, migration, domestic work, sex work, and child labour, and edited the translated pieces for language accuracy. The aim of this effort was to ensure that GAATW members from Latin America, as well as the broader Spanish-speaking audience, can benefit from the insightful contributions published in BTS so far only in English. The result is [BTS en español](#), where the Spanish pieces will be published from July to October. Our colleague [elaborated](#) on the importance of this initiative for us as an international feminist alliance.

As always we welcome your feedback and contributions to future issues at borislav@gaatw.org.



Interview with Sunita Danuwar and Ivana Radović



"Our mission is to convert tears into power and justice."

Sunita Danuwar
TIP Report Hero from Nepal

This year, two members of the GAATW family were awarded the US State Department *TIP Report Hero Acting to End Modern Slavery Award* - Ivana Radović, Head of Policy and Learning of [ASTRA](#) (Serbia) and Sunita Danuwar, Founder Member



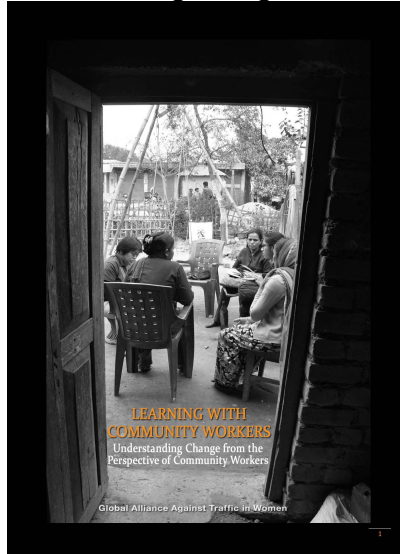
"Human trafficking is not a story about victims and their traffickers; it is a problem of our global society which structurally makes exploitation possible. Young people should fight this issue the right way: by attacking the root causes and advocating for a society in which human trafficking cannot exist."

Ivana Radović
TIP Report Hero from Serbia

and Executive Director of [Shakti Samuha](#) (Nepal). This award recognises the work carried out by different individuals, in different parts of the world, to end human trafficking. GAATW-IS congratulated Ivana and Sunita for this recognition and asked them a few questions about the award and the work of their organisations.

Read the interview with Sunita and Ivana [here](#).

Understanding Change from the Perspective of Community Workers



Community workers have been on the frontline of delivering direct services and information to individuals and communities. Their role takes on an added value as they create the foundation of community-level interventions, especially in promoting women's empowerment and in providing information about safe migration.

In 2017, GAATW focused on the work and personal journeys of community workers in fostering women's empowerment and social change within the community. We initiated an intensive learning exercise with community workers from India, Bangladesh and Nepal with the overall goal of recognising them as critical agents of change, in building an environment which is conducive to upholding women's rights both in the community and in their migration journeys....

Together we are stronger: A reflection of GAATW-IS

trip to Kuwait

On 21-25 June, GAATW-IS staff visited Kuwait to meet our project partner [Sandigan](#) and to interact with other local organisations working on migration issues. Sandigan is a group of volunteers who provides immediate relief and counselling to Philippines domestic workers who are abused and exploited at their workplace. We had a moment to interact with domestic workers at the shelter run by the Philippines embassy where many women workers had shared their struggles yet not given up their hope for a better future.

We were also invited to an event organised by Sandigan to celebrate International Domestic Workers' Day with more than 200 Overseas Filipino Workers. It was a touching moment to see a number of domestic workers who were awarded for their years of service to a single employer for more than twenty years. The acknowledgement was for both employers and employees to set a good example of co-existence and respect to each other. We also witnessed the launching of Sandigan's *Domestic Workers' Handbook* in cooperation with the International Domestic Workers Federation, Social Work Society and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. The handbook provides practical information starting from job placement, upon arrival in Kuwait and guidelines in case help is needed by a domestic worker. The handbook also has chapter on the Domestic Workers' Law in Kuwait translated in English and Tagalog...

Safety and Fairness for Women in Migration and Work



In August, GAATW-IS organised two focus group discussions with 20 Bangladeshi returnee and aspiring migrant women, in cooperation with our member OKUP and project partner KarmojibiNari. The aim of the FGD was to get the women's perspective on what safety and fairness in migration and work mean for them. We asked questions about their reasons for migrating, the conditions of work abroad (mostly in West Asia), the situation back in Bangladesh after

their return, and how they think labour migration can be improved for them and for future migrants.

The women pointed to the low wages in Bangladesh, as well as abusive husbands and indifferent family members, as the main reasons for seeking work in the Gulf countries. Once they were abroad, many faced physical abuse, had no or little time off work or couldn't leave the employer's house. The 'success' stories they shared were result of putting up with excessively hard work for low wages and tolerating a wide range of discriminations without protest. The absence of physical beating and inhuman torture was seen as a 'good' situation. Regularly paid salary, even when it was less than what was mentioned in the contract, were seen as 'fair' because non-payment was a common problem. Overall, it appeared that the lived experiences of women had made them lower the bars for safety and fairness...

New Project: Power in Work and Migration: Learning from the Lived Experiences of Women Migrant Workers

Studies repeatedly indicate that often-times the policies designed to 'protect' women migrant workers, such as the imposition of travel restrictions to certain countries, can be knee-jerk responses to reports of violence and abuse, and are not well-planned strategies that are sensitive to the underlying concerns and needs of migrant workers. Hearing women tell their own stories - not just their problems but also their responses and strategies - and in the process illustrating the impact of big policy decisions in their personal lives can positively contribute to evidence-based policy making on safe and fair migration...

[Read all news from the GAATW International Secretariat](#)

News from our Member Organisations

20th Anniversary of Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women (LEFÖ-IBF)



On 5-6 June, LEFÖ - Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women organised an international conference in Vienna entitled 'Trafficking in Women 1998-2018: Same Old, Same Old' to mark its 20th anniversary. More than 120 national and international experts discussed and analysed the developments and changes, or lack thereof, in the areas of human trafficking and labour migration, with a special focus on Transnational Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for safe and voluntary return. Participants highlighted that despite the progress made in many areas in the past twenty years, such as the introduction of new laws and structures, many trafficked persons fall through the cracks when it comes to rights protection, especially in the current anti-migrant climate in Europe and in Austria. Participants emphasised the importance of cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in order to guarantee that trafficked persons enjoy their rights effectively.

New Hong Kong Action Plan Falls Short of Human Rights

Standards

The Hong Kong Government launched the Action Plan to Tackle Trafficking in Persons and to Enhance Protection of Foreign Domestic Helpers in March this year. It is a welcome first step, but in its [recent submission to the Hong Kong government](#), our member Justice Centre expressed concerns that the Action Plan's effectiveness is limited by, *inter alia*, the lack of time frames for most new activities, the absence of a commitment to introduce anti-human trafficking legislation and the lack of information about granting immunity for prosecution to victims.

The Hong Kong Government claims that human trafficking is not prevalent in Hong Kong on the basis that it only identified nine victims in 2017. However, Justice Centre Hong Kong's research [Coming Clean](#) estimated that 8,000 migrant domestic workers were trafficked for the purpose of forced labour. Two years has passed since *Coming Clean* was published and the Hong Kong Government never acknowledged the research. Justice Centre's Head of Research Jade Anderson was invited by the Taiwanese Government to speak about *Coming Clean* in the 2018 International Workshop on Strategies for Combating Human Trafficking in July. We will continue to promote our research findings to contribute to evidence-based policy-making in Hong Kong.

Online Tools for the Prevention of Labour Exploitation - strategy manual

Migrant workers in the Netherlands are at risk of experiencing bad working conditions and labour exploitation. They are often not well informed about their rights or are deliberately misinformed by their exploiter in order to make them afraid and dependent. They have a weak negotiating position, are very often dependent on their exploiter due to debts, threats and violence and therefore find it difficult to escape.

For several years, FairWork has been experimenting with online resources to approach its target group, alongside its physical outreach work to provide information. As a result, clients are increasingly starting to find the organisation online.

This [new manual](#) is based on an analysis of this work. The manual provides useful tips for NGOs how to reach out to migrant communities in their country, for example, through Facebook groups, Google ad words, Instagram, website optimisation and cultural mediators, to

inform them about their rights and where to seek help in case of rights violations. The manual outlines the steps to carry out baseline measurements, create attractive and engaging posts, advertise content, measure results and make adjustments...

Sex Worker Rights and Anti-Trafficking in Canada



On 23 March Supporting Women's Alternatives Network (SWAN)-Vancouver appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. The Committee travelled across Canada in March to learn more about human trafficking in order to make recommendations that address the needs of people affected by human trafficking. SWAN submitted an additional [brief](#), based on their 16 years of experience in supporting im/migrant sex

workers, outlining how the current anti-trafficking responses increase the vulnerability of im/migrant sex workers while doing little to support trafficked women. The brief points out that the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA), which criminalised most aspects of sex work, has instilled fear in im/migrants working in the sex industry, who are routinely arrested, detained and deported for engaging in sex work. 'We receive calls from im/migrant sex workers who have experienced violence, exploitation and/or trafficking but these women are too afraid to contact law enforcement', the brief states. SWAN highlights the particularly negative impact of 'Operation Northern Spotlight' which has deprived many sex workers of their income but failed to identify large numbers of trafficking victims, despite its huge financial resources. The brief ends with a number of recommendations to the federal government to improve anti-trafficking laws and to allocate more funding for sex worker rights organisations who are best positioned to detect cases of exploitation and trafficking in the industry, but receive no funding for it...

I am Still a Child

The Human Resources Development Foundation (Turkey) developed a new campaign to raise awareness about child labour and child marriage among Syrian refugees in Turkey. The front side of these new materials depict situations of child labour and child marriage, with messages in Turkish and Arabic such as 'I am still a child - I feel so tired of working' and 'I am still a child - don't force me to marry'. The back side provides information about the relevant laws and regulations in Turkey that criminalise these practices.

The postcards are distributed in NGO-run community centres that provide services to Syrian refugees in the country.

[Read all news from GAATW members.](#)

www.gaatw.org

Resources

[Sex Workers Organising for Change](#)

Borislav Gerasimov

In February 2018, GAATW published its new report '[Sex Workers Organising for Change: Self-representation, community mobilisation, and working conditions](#)', based on research with sex worker rights organisations in seven countries. This short blog post highlights some of the main findings of the research. These include the ways in which anti-trafficking legislation is used to harass sex workers, and the many creative ways in which sex workers, and their organisations, respond to the needs of those in the industry, including exploited and trafficked women.

[Gender-based Violence in the H&M Garment Supply Chain](#)

Global Labor Justice

This new report details gender based violence in H&M Asian garment supply chains. For women garment workers, violence and harassment isn't limited to violence that takes place in physical workplaces, but also during commutes and in employer provided housing. Women garment workers in H&M supply chains in Bangladesh and Cambodia reported acts of violence that include acts that inflicted sexual harm and suffering; physical violence, verbal abuse, coercion, threats and retaliation, and routine deprivations of liberty including forced overtime.

[Towards Achieving Decent Work for Domestic Workers in ASEAN](#)

International Labour Organisation

There are an estimated 9 million domestic workers in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Over 2 million of these are migrants - almost one-fifth of all migrant workers in the region. While there is an increasing demand for domestic workers, there is also growing recognition of the lack of protection for the majority of domestic workers, who are overwhelmingly women. Globally, and in ASEAN, domestic workers are often excluded from labour laws and labour protection available to other groups of workers. Consequently, around the world, domestic workers regularly work excessively long and unpredictable hours. Many domestic workers do not receive any rest days and are paid below the minimum wage. This report reviews the current situation for domestic workers in ASEAN and makes recommendations to ASEAN Member States.

[Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work](#)

International Labour Organization

This report analyses the ways in which unpaid care work is recognised and organised, the extent and quality of care jobs and their impact on the well-being of individuals and society. A key focus of this report is the persistent gender inequalities in households and the labour market, which are inextricably linked with care work. The report contains a wealth of original data drawn from over 90 countries and details transformative policy measures in five main areas: care, macroeconomics, labour, social protection and migration. It also presents projections on the potential for decent care job creation offered by remedying current care work deficits and meeting the related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

[Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants](#)

UNODC

The first UNODC *Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants* shows that migrant smuggling routes affect every part of the world. The study is based on an extensive review of existing data and literature. It presents detailed information about key smuggling routes, such as the magnitude, the profiles of smugglers and smuggled migrants, the modus operandi of smugglers and the risks that smuggled migrants face. It shows that smugglers use land, air and sea routes - and combinations of those - in their quest to profit from people's desire to improve their lives. Smugglers also expose migrants to a range of risks; violence, theft, exploitation, sexual violence, kidnapping and even death along many routes.

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women | [Email](#) | [Website](#)

STAY CONNECTED:

