



**LEARNING WITH
COMMUNITY WORKERS**

Understanding Change from the
Perspective of Community Workers

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

Learning with Community Workers: Understanding change from the perspective of community workers

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Cover Photo: Taken during GAATW's support visit to Work in Freedom project partners in Nepal in 2016

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INTRODUCTION: CHANGE THROUGH THE EYES OF THE COMMUNITY WORKERS



Rationale and Background

When Malati and Soniya from Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand Districts in India, discussed their experiences, they had some pertinent things to say:

'We are now in a position to share our ideas and experiences with people from all over the country and the world. We have something important to share. People take us seriously and listen to us. That would never have happened if we hadn't had the experience of being community workers, leaders in the community. The opportunities we have had as community workers have enabled us to grow as leaders and helped other women to become leaders as well.'

These sentiments were echoed by almost all participants from India, Nepal and Bangladesh during the learning documentation exercise with community workers, facilitated by GAATW in 2017, as part of the Work in Freedom (WiF) program steered by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Documenting the rich experiences and views of the community workers is a critical component of the WIF project, and also reflects GAATW's approach to community work around migration and women's rights: that of centring the lived experiences of women, and respecting women as agents and experts in their own lives. Hearing the voices and understanding the struggles of community workers enables us to support the catalytic and pivotal role she plays in transforming communities, and is an enabler of knowledge and

leadership building among women in the community. While her role in the WIF project is articulated as being that of an educator and mobilizer on issues related to women's safe migration, the community worker plays a far greater role of promoting women's rights and leadership, addressing violence against women and improving conditions for women and girls in the community.

Through community workers, the sustainability of the project's interventions will be increased; the skills, knowledge and leadership of community workers will be nurtured and the potential of future women leaders in the community will be further developed. Being a part of the community, and probably having been a migrant herself, the community worker is heavily invested in the development of her community and in improving conditions for women and girls in the community. The community worker shares a great deal with the migrant woman; she is from a similar village or community, has lived through similar socio-cultural situations and understands her experiences of social restriction and control from childhood to adulthood, having been through the same discrimination herself. The community worker's lived experience and reality helps her to empathize with the situation of community and migrant women and having carved a path of leadership from a situation of social oppression to reach her current position, the community worker is often a model of inspiration and possibility for the women in her community. Focusing on her story serves a two fold purpose of highlighting the crucial and imperative role she plays in a rights based, women's empowerment programme, while enabling the community to recognize the need to promote women's rights and empowerment.

As part of the WIF program, GAATW has the mandate within the WIF project to strengthen community interventions in the source countries of Bangladesh, Nepal and India and also in working with migrant worker communities in destination countries like Lebanon and Jordan. GAATW recognized the invaluable contribution of community workers to the project and beyond; in sustaining the work, bringing added value and knowledge to the community, especially among women and girls, and enabling the growth of women's leadership in a community that is dynamic; which shifts and changes socio-economically, culturally and politically.

GAATW, therefore, took the initiative to embark upon an intensive learning exercise with community workers (mostly women) of the WIF project, through a series of workshops, with the overall goal of recognizing the vital role of the community worker in advancing the work of the project and in learning from her experiences. More specifically, the objectives of the exercise were to:

- Understand the insights and experiences of the community worker with regard to issues of migration, gender equality, women's work and right to mobility, among others.
- Mapping trends of change in the community, from a socio-cultural, socio-economic perspective, through the eyes of a community worker
- Understanding the growth of the community worker, both personal and professional, especially with regard to leadership among women and promoting gender equality.



The Methodology

Six learning workshops were organised by GAATW, between September 2017 and December 2017, to enable a process of learning and engagement among community workers from India, Nepal and Bangladesh. They were facilitated through a learning framework tool based on Appreciative Inquiry which employed a gender and empowerment approach.

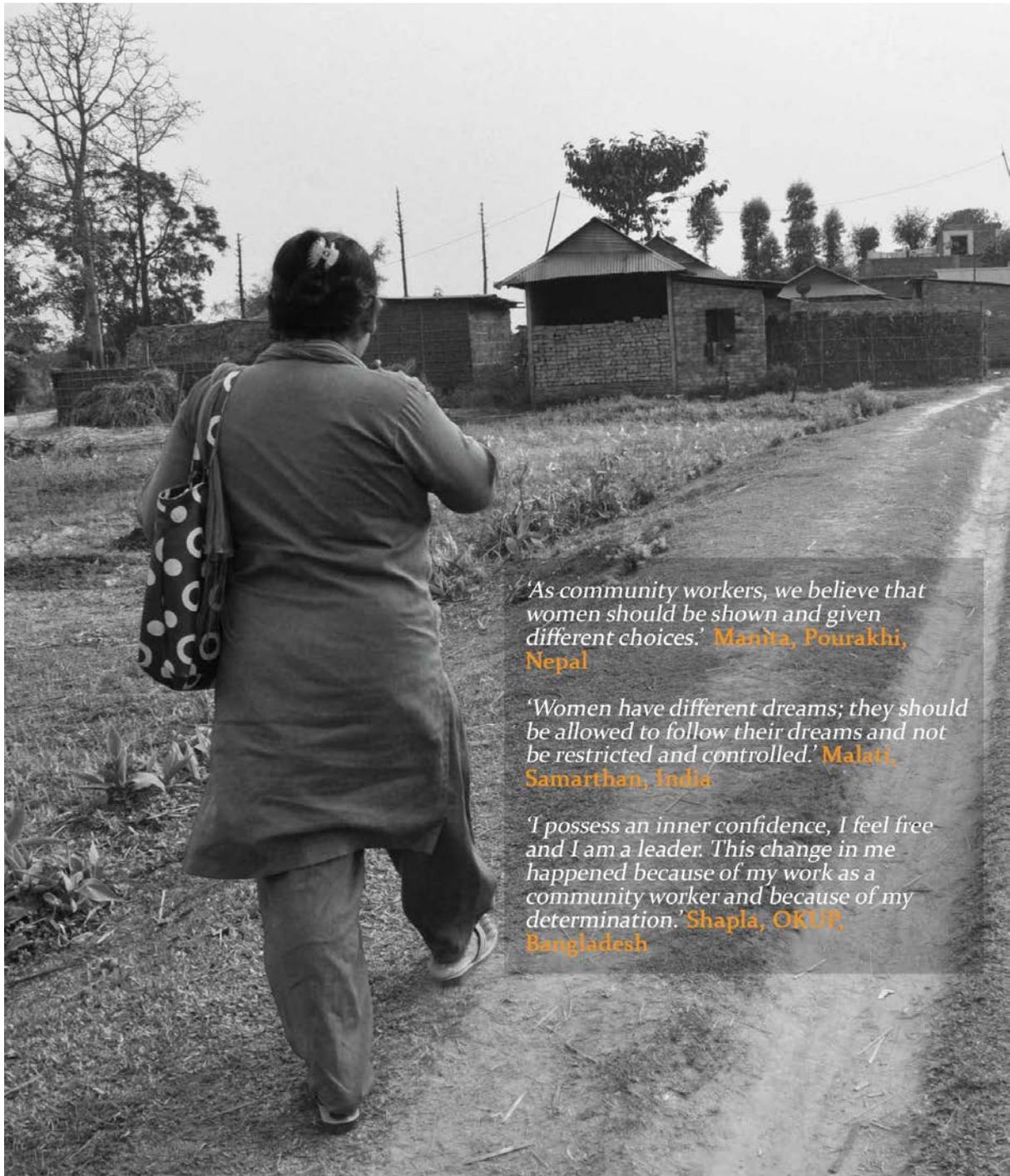
Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a method of review and planning that is built on the premise that change will happen if you concentrate your attention on what works, as opposed to where the gaps and failures are. Hence, it is a positive, empowering approach that is also extremely participatory, since it intensely involves as many stakeholders as possible. While AI is based on strengths, achievements and positive outcomes, it also recognizes the importance of identifying challenges and visualizing them as opportunities to learn; in AI, the main question asked is what was learned from the challenges, what worked in overcoming them and what were the precise steps taken in doing so. AI enables an analysis of what works, why it has worked, what didn't work and why it didn't. An important aspect of AI is that it sees change as a continuum; it recognizes that planning and evaluation are parts of an interconnected cycle.

The learning workshops promoted equality and saw an inclusive space built for all participants from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The process of learning

was an empowering one and promoted the voices and agency of all participants. It enabled participants to freely express themselves in an environment which was non-judgemental.

The learning workshops lasted about two to three days each. The workshops had between 10 and 15 participants each. Almost all participants were women community workers, with the exception of the workshop with workers from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh which had 6 men out of the 11 participants. Within the WIF project, GAATW also organised field visits for community workers to a destination city and an exchange visit to another source community with the aim to strengthen the learning experience of the participants.

The tools employed within the learning framework encouraged participation and interaction; everyone was involved through group exercises, focus group discussions, and individual interviews. Further, community workers were asked to nominate 2 representatives from each organisation to take part in the video documentation. Video recording was used as a tool to capture the experiences and insights of selected representatives. The discussions and exercises centred on the community worker's perception and analysis of changes in their community, changes in women's migration and changes in herself. The participants had the opportunity to deeply analyze changes in their community through mapping exercises and changes in their personal lives through FGDs and interviews. An important aspect of the workshop was that community workers, especially the women, were able to sync their personal life experiences with their growth and role as community workers. The workshop gave them the space to understand how their growth as individuals and growth as community workers were interlinked and not separate phenomena; leading them to build an appreciation of the crucial role they played as community workers.



'As community workers, we believe that women should be shown and given different choices.' **Manita, Pourakhi, Nepal**

'Women have different dreams; they should be allowed to follow their dreams and not be restricted and controlled.' **Malati, Samarthan, India**

'I possess an inner confidence, I feel free and I am a leader. This change in me happened because of my work as a community worker and because of my determination.' **Shapla, OKUP, Bangladesh**

STORIES AND VOICES OF COMMUNITY WORKERS

The following voices of community workers reflect transformation, resilience, courage and sometimes frustration. The stories capture the essence of what community workers believe with regard to being women; their lives and the lives of other women, and how being women workers intersects with their personal lives. Each story is unique and is often a process of self-discovery for the community worker re-living and analysing their stories.



NEPAL

Stories and Voices

Gyani Sara

'When I was a child, I was not allowed to cycle because girls were not supposed to cycle. Now I have a bicycle and I cycle everywhere.'

I am Gyani Sara, I'm 38 years old and I work in Rupandehi district as a community worker with ABC-Nepal.

I lost my mother when I was a child, very early in life. I was raised by my grandmother, along with my four brothers and sisters. Gender restrictions were a part of my life; I was not allowed to do a lot of things I wanted to because I was a girl. The main restriction was on my mobility; I was not allowed to move freely because girls were supposed to stay at home. The one thing I remember very clearly because it upset me so, was that I was prevented from riding a bicycle. I desperately yearned for the freedom my brothers enjoyed in moving freely and riding bicycles. I was told that girls had to stay at home and do household work.

My education lasted till Class 10 and I was married at 18. We lived in very difficult circumstances, economically. Initially, my husband placed a lot of restrictions on me and refused to let me go out. I had, however, become involved in a village development project and the community members persuaded my husband to allow me to work. Our difficult circumstances persisted, however, and it was decided that I would go to Lebanon to work as a domestic worker.

My experience in Lebanon was quite good and I learned a lot, including a little English! Although I stayed in Lebanon for only two years it was a defining period for me and changed certain perspectives in my life. I had heard a lot of stories about returnee migrant women not being accepted by their communities, but to my surprise, I was respected in my community. I was chosen as a ward member on my return and then started working for ABC Nepal.

'I have made it a point to teach my sons to do household work. I have always taught them that no work is too low or beneath their dignity.'

ABC-Nepal has always encouraged me and recently presented me with an award for good work. I love working with women in the community. I feel that I understand their problems and restrictions, since I faced the restrictions too. I do know that it is possible to overcome them and that's what I tell women.

I now realize that women's oppression and violence against women are a result of patriarchy. The restrictions I faced as a child and as a young woman were the manifestations of patriarchy. I do not want my sons to grow up thinking that women are inferior. I have made it a point to teach my sons household tasks and to respect all kinds of work. That is how change will take place in society and men and women will be more equal. It takes a lot of time and effort, though. And one has to really struggle. It is through my work in the

community and through my own persistence that I now receive a lot of respect from my husband and in laws.

Situations have changed in the communities I've worked in during the last 14 years. Women are able to move more. Girls' education is now important and they are being educated in private schools just like their brothers. While certain positive changes are taking place, there's still quite a bit to be done. Women are still regarded as burdens in the family. Women have to ask men for permission to go out. Men are seen as heads of families although things are changing slowly and women are able to speak out more.

Where migration is concerned, I encourage women to make their own decisions. Women have the choice to go for migration but they must do so safely. Women need to be economically independent. I've seen that it makes a difference to them. They should have agency and be able to raise their voice and make their own choices.

And I? I have grown. I used to be withdrawn and had so little self-esteem. I now have the respect of my family, the women and men in my community and my organization. And yes, I ride a bicycle everywhere!

Devi

'I was married as a child because my parents did not want me to marry the wrong sort of boy. They were angry with the attention I was getting from boys of different castes. Child marriage spoils my dreams and ambitions.'

My name is Devi and I am 26 years old. I work with Pourakhi in Sailuk village as a community worker. I grew up in a household which was very strict, with my three sisters and brother. My father worked in the army. I faced a lot of discrimination because of my gender, especially restrictions on my movement and going out of the house.

I received a lot of attention from boys. Many were from different castes. At that time, my concept of social issues was very narrow and I thought inter-caste marriage was wrong. If a boy paid attention to me and wrote me a letter, I used to feel very guilty. My parents were angry with me and they decided to get me married at the age of 16 to a man I never knew or met.

While I was allowed to study further with the support of my husband, I also had to complete all the housework. It was a lot of work since I lived in a joint family. I started working as a teacher since there was a financial crisis at home. It was very difficult to work outside the house and complete all household tasks as well. That is when I decided to negotiate with and convince my family members to help with household tasks. My husband helps me with household chores despite facing taunts from his brother. Amazingly, my brother in law now helps his wife as well and there have been many changes in attitude within the family.

I understood the importance of being able to convince people positively and to change their attitudes and beliefs. After joining Pourakhi, I expanded my knowledge on issues of

women's rights. I used my ability to patiently and convincingly change attitudes among the women of the community and among men as well. Women open up to me when I share my personal views and stories with them. I know how difficult it is for women to be free and to make choices.

'Women should have the right to work. If that means they have to migrate for work, that's fine. They should have knowledge and information and make their own choices. I help in providing this knowledge but it is the woman who ultimately has to make the choice.'

I think women have the right to work and choose their own areas of work. If this means working abroad, then that's fine. My role is to provide her with the knowledge and she has to ultimately decide.

I have changed a lot, learnt a lot. Some of my learning comes from my experiences at home while a lot of it comes from my work with women in the community. I have grown in confidence and stature in my family and in my community. I have helped women to address violence and I have confronted men on the issue. I am now able to do things without asking my husband. I can make important decisions on my own. For example, I recently bought land without asking permission from my husband. This is a huge change from when I was a young married girl slaving away at household tasks.

The most important thing I have learnt is that if a woman becomes empowered, she is able to empower her entire family. An empowering environment has to be created; the change has to begin with you and I am the best example of that!

Ankumari

'I believe that women should take risks in life. I am what I am now because I have taken several risks in my life.'

My name is Ankumari and I have been working with WOREC as a peer educator for the last 10 years. I faced a great deal of gender discrimination while growing up. My father passed away when I was a baby and there was no male member in my family. However, I still faced patriarchal control from the community, perhaps more so because I didn't have a father.

When I got married, my husband tried to control me. He tried to restrict my mobility. That was when I decided that I would work towards addressing the gender oppression that women experienced. It was not an easy task to break patriarchal perceptions and ideas at home and in the community. Before I joined the social sector, I was recognized only by the name of my husband, as "so and so's wife." I now have an identity of my own, but I had to work hard to establish my independent identity. Change happened because I had the will power and strength to move ahead against so many odds. The community now recognizes me as an independent person but I had to work very hard for that recognition!

'I always encourage women to go out and learn more about their rights. Because of patriarchy, most women are restricted. They are suppressed by

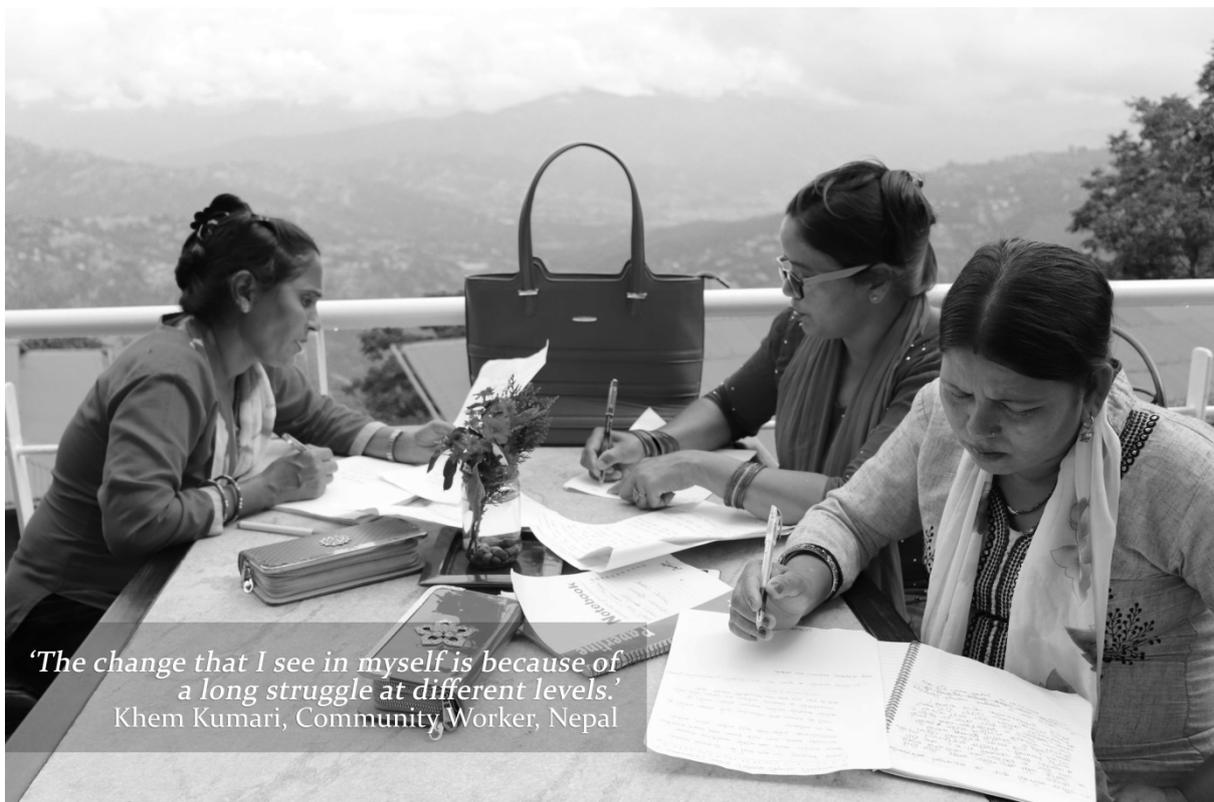
men. I usually go beyond my role to enable women to attend meetings and come out of their homes.'

People, both women and men, come to me because they realize that I have knowledge and authority. They listen to me and ask me for advice. That's a huge change from when I first began work in the social sector.

I believe that women should make their own decisions and choices regarding migration. Nobody else should decide for them. They should have access to all information and then make a decision. That is why I encourage women to attend meetings even if they are busy with household tasks. Sometimes, it has happened that I've gone beyond my role and helped women to complete their household work just so they could attend meetings!

Being with WOREC and being a part of the work of women's empowerment has made me realize that I have quite a lot of leadership in the community. I will continue working with women and issues related to women's rights even if I face barriers or resistance from the community. I am determined to use my strengths and continue to be a leader in my community.

Learning and Insights



'The change that I see in myself is because of a long struggle at different levels.'
Khem Kumari, Community Worker, Nepal

The women community workers of Nepal have struggled to reach where they are now. During their childhood, they were often denied privileges and faced restrictions because of their gender. The most common restriction that was faced was with regard to mobility and

women found that every little concession or privilege had to be fought for. Early marriages, the burden of housework, gender roles, patriarchal control, were some of the forms of gender injustice and bias encountered.

The family has played a very strong role in either restricting and discriminating against women, or supporting them. Largely, the women community workers have had to struggle for support from within the family and have worked hard to win the members over. Puspa had an inter caste marriage and her family would not eat what she cooked since she was from a lower caste. She had to go out, work and share her salary with the family before she was somewhat accepted. Kopila, in an act of defiance, has remained single since her family stopped her from marrying someone from a lower caste. She has had to negotiate her right to freedom with her family, especially with regard to her own mobility. Some women found that their agency increased after marriage where they were treated more equally. In almost all cases, however, the community workers faced various levels of discrimination and restriction from within their families because they were female.

Community workers of Nepal have worked hard to reach a position of being leaders who are respected in the community. They have grown because of the opportunities given to them as community workers, through training and exposure visits, but their leadership has also grown due to their own determination and resilience. Interestingly, it is often other women in the community who are able to encourage, support and motivate them. Community workers found that their own stories of struggle helped forge a bond with women in the community, since many have had the experience of being migrants as well.

Their commitment to the issue of women's rights is also very much evident. While negotiating and intervening in cases of violence against women or rights violations, Nepali community workers have tried reconciliation as a tactic, and if that failed, they would help women facing violence to be economically independent. They would not condone violence under any circumstances. However, their understanding of VAW issues is still evolving. The community workers' involvement is beyond that of the project, and almost all the community workers present believed that building women's leadership and promoting women's rights was what they focused on and how they saw their future role as well. Women's migration, according to the community workers came within the purview of women's rights and it was their role to promote safe migration within that context.

While the women community workers have grown through their experiences, there are still several patriarchal restrictions they face at the family, community and systemic levels where their authority as women leaders is questioned. It is a constant struggle but the community workers of Nepal feel confident that with time and effort, they will prevail.



INDIA

Stories and Voices

Malati

'I dreamt of being someone; I struggled to be someone under very difficult circumstances. Now I want my daughter to be someone.'

I am Malati Ekka and I am 30 years old. I work as a community worker in Lakhanpur block, Chhattisgarh, India. I grew up in a family with two brothers and 3 sisters. My parents were very conservative and didn't let me study beyond Class 9; I was forced to marry when I was only 16 years old. In my in laws' house, I wanted to study further but was not allowed to; there were several reasons for this including the fact that my husband was educated only till Class 8. They also required someone to stay at home and do all the work and I had to work very hard from morning till night.

My daughter was born when I was only 17. It was a difficult birth but I was not allowed any rest. The abuse at home continued; there was physical and emotional violence and often, if the food I cooked was not to their liking, they would throw it away. I once felt so depressed that I tried to commit suicide. My daughter saved me and it was from then onwards that I decided to survive somehow and raise my daughter to become independent.

I worked at all kinds of jobs in order to survive, including that of a construction labourer, a midday meals supervisor and as an ASHA health worker. My husband used to taunt me saying that I was selling myself. I made a final decision to leave my husband and in laws' house, admitted my daughter in boarding school and continued working as a health worker along with doing some farming work. Once I migrated to a city for what I thought was work in a clinic, but it turned out to be domestic work. I was angry and disappointed at being duped. I left the place very quickly.

I was determined to study and completed Class 10 and 12 through open school. I went even further and obtained a computer training certificate. I managed to do all this without any kind of support and I sometimes wonder, in retrospect, how I managed to find the determination and energy to achieve all of this! But my daughter was always my motivation.

'I have overcome challenges by enduring. I work very patiently to build trust in people. Now the community believes in me and supports me.'

I have been a community worker with Samarthan for a year now and I am happy to say that the villagers, especially village women, look up to me. I try and help women who have faced violence. I know what they go through because of my own personal experience. Women trust me and share their problems with me. I advise them to be independent and to follow their dreams. Where men in the community are concerned, I used to face a lot of challenges in building their trust. Through persistence and patience, I have managed to make men believe in my capacity to work in the community. It pays to endure and bide your time; people will support you once they see how you work.

Women should migrate for work if they feel it will help them be independent. They should be careful and gather all information beforehand. However, I sense that fewer women are migrating; there is now more work available in the villages.

I will continue to work with women and support women's rights, even if the project ends. To me, it is working for the community's development that is important, not what the project limits me to.

My daughter stays with me now. We stay in a rented house together and she continues her education. She is my friend and a great support to me. If she is able to be independent and achieve her dreams, I know that all my hard work and struggle will be worth it.

Soniya

'Women and men are equal. This is something I raise awareness about to change the thinking of people in the community, especially the men.'

My name is Soniya and I am 30 years old. I work in Namkum block of Jharkhand. I have been a community worker with CINI since 2014 and I have also had a couple of years experience working with communities on issues related to water prior to working with CINI. I am a graduate and I am unmarried. I live with my mother and support her since my father passed away and my brother migrated for work and we haven't heard from him since.

It was a very difficult time for us; I needed to earn and was the only person getting an income. Matters were worse when I fell ill and was in a coma for a while. I slowly recovered and when CINI approached me, I agreed to be a community worker.

My role is to spread the message of safe migration for women, within the community. However, I find myself going beyond my role; helping women who need my help; especially women who have faced violence. I try and motivate other women to go out and work, to be independent and to stand up for themselves.

'I explain to community members, especially women, that NGO projects are temporary; the work needs to continue and for that to happen, village women's groups, adolescent groups have to be formed, women's leadership has to be built.'

I have changed so much that I sometimes wonder how it all happened. Earlier I was unable to speak confidently at meetings, and now I address village committee meetings. I have often stood up for myself and challenged men's views. I work independently and ride everywhere on a scooter. Villagers give me a lot of respect and that motivates me to continue working.

When we have discussions, I tell the women to pass on their information and knowledge to other women so that future leaders are nurtured. The work has to continue even if there is no project.

Social work is a vocation, a commitment. My work is not limited to this project; I help underprivileged and vulnerable children too. If one is strong and determined, challenges can be overcome and it will be possible to move forward towards great achievements.

Seema

'There was a time I stopped believing in myself. I had very little confidence, very little knowledge. Being with the women in my community helped me to overcome my fears and I have learnt so much from them.'

I am Seema Lakra, I am 29 years old and I work in Sitapur, Chhattisgarh. I belong to the *Adivasi* community and I completed my formal education till Class12. I have worked with Samarthan since 2014.

There has been a lot of hardship and tragedy in my life. My husband was killed in an accident and I raised my son, who is now eight years old, alone. I am the sole earner in my in laws' house since their elder son does not care about his parents.

There has been a transformation in me after I became a community worker. I was so reticent and awkward that I found it difficult to introduce myself in meetings. The women, however, helped and encouraged me. Perhaps one of the reasons was that I am an *Adivasi* and they were able to relate to me. From not being able to introduce myself, I have now transformed into someone who addresses public village and block level meetings.

I believe in improving my skills and I go to computer class, apart from being a community worker. I encourage other women to improve their knowledge and skills too, since these are essential for growth and empowerment. Education for women is something to advocate, it is very difficult promoting it in our community since men feel that women should not be better or more educated than men. There is still a strong patriarchal notion of keeping women back and not letting her go ahead in life. This thinking restricts women in almost everything she does. It requires a lot of strength and determination to challenge this.

'When I first started working in the community, I faced resistance from men. They thought I shouldn't have the liberty to "roam around". Now, men come to meetings led by me and they understand and respect my work.'

My work has helped me to understand many issues, mainly issues related to women's rights. My awareness helped me to deal with a case of sexual abuse in my own family. I fought for the survivor of abuse, and used the media to file a police case. The perpetrator, who is a family member, was jailed for a while. Although he was never convicted and the case was settled, I feel glad that I brought the issue out into the open and dealt with it.

I am now a leader in my community. It is a role that I have grown into. Through my patience and understanding, I am able to gain the respect of the women in my community. I encourage women to work and to migrate for work if they want to. Earlier, I did not understand migration. I now realize that it is the right of women to migrate. They should do so safely and be able to save money.

The only way that women can break free is to take the initiative and work towards their freedom. That is what I did and I will keep helping other women to do the same.

Perception and Ideas of Men Community Workers from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh

“Change begins at home. When I was young, I used to see my mother doing all the housework with no one to help her. I am now aware that women do a lot of work and I help my wife with the housework.”

Ashok Kumar, Block Coordinator-CINI, India

Six men community workers from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh presented their experiences of working on women’s migration issues in their areas. The men were from CINI in Jharkhand and Samarthan in Chhattisgarh. Most worked in supervisory positions. The discussions centred on learning around issues of women’s rights and leadership, women’s work and migration, changes within themselves and the community in perceiving women’s rights issues, including violence against women.

Helping with the housework is one of the main, tangible changes that the men see in themselves. Their exposure to issues of gender and women’s rights has raised awareness about the amount of work women do, both paid and unpaid, and how little recognition and respect they get for it. One of the men articulated that *“women also work outside the house nowadays and when she is ill, it would be good if men help with the housework”*, suggesting that housework is still essentially considered to be a woman’s domain and the perception of gender roles in this area has not shifted much among male community workers. It was also shared that housework was not a masculine thing to do and that in their households; men who helped their wives would be referred to as hen-pecked husbands. However, after their association with this project, their understanding of women’s work has undergone a change and they do contribute towards the housework but the concept of sharing it equally is not there.

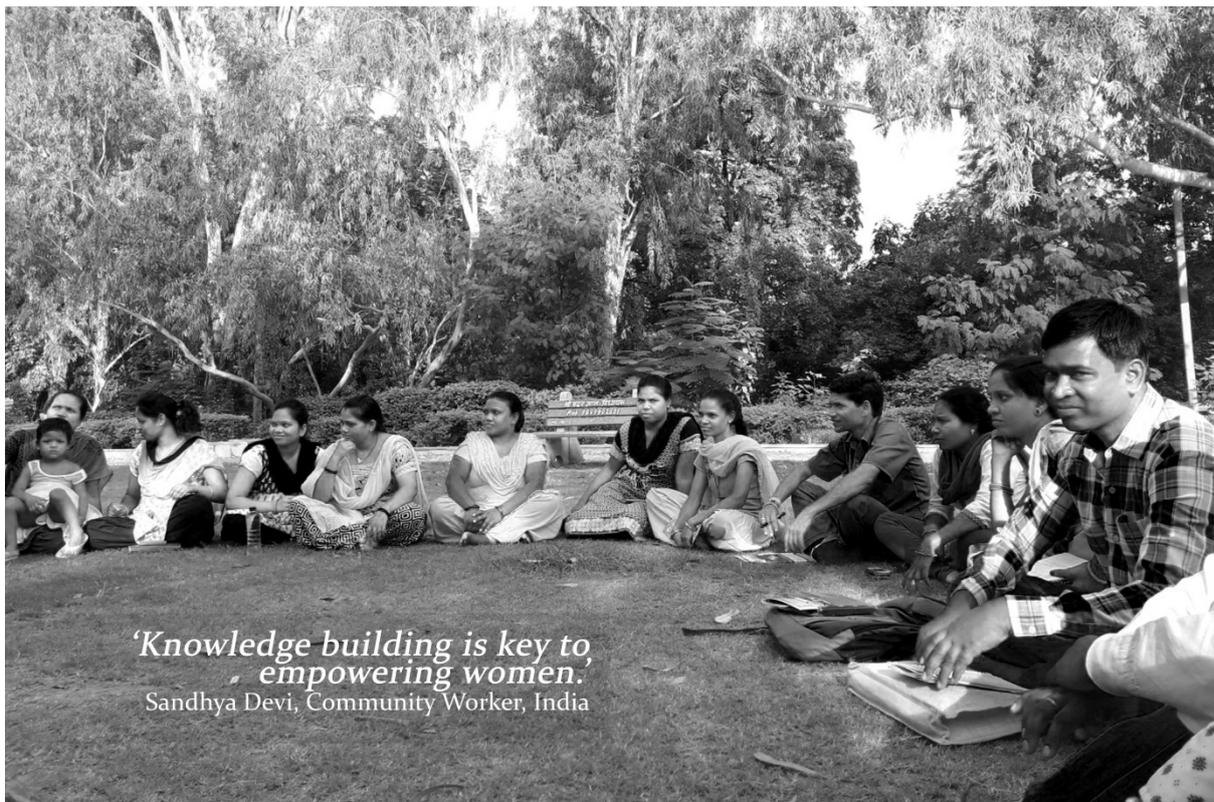
There is a realization among men community workers that women and men need to be paid equally and that women still get paid less than men. Migrating for work, in the case of women, is largely perceived as an economic necessity rather than a woman’s right by men community workers. A block coordinator shared that he had earlier perceived migrant women as “bad” women, but his perception has now changed because he understands that there are underlying causes behind women’s migration.

While the men agree that women’s leadership, especially women community workers’ leadership has increased at all levels and that they are able to move more freely and address public meetings, they still think that safety is paramount and that it is the men’s responsibility to ensure women’s safety. Some of the men felt that women were unsuitable for block level coordination since there was a lot of travel involved and safety was a prime concern. Therefore, most block coordinators in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh were men.

There is much of a protectionist attitude towards addressing violence against women among the six men community workers; protection of her safety and her honour. When a question was posed with regard to rape and if women should consider marrying their rapist, four out of the six men felt she should consider doing so since her honour and future were at stake. Two of the men vehemently opposed the idea and said that under no circumstances should the women marry their rapists.

The men are engaged in information dissemination and awareness raising on safe migration for women. They encourage women's participation and help women when they face problems, such as salary and wage issues. They also talk to men in the community and raise awareness on women's safe migration amongst them. The level of involvement, however, is at an activity, peripheral level, with a deeper understanding of women's rights yet to happen. However, the men do see themselves playing a strong role in easing the challenges posed by men in the community who restrict women's voice and movement. While aligning themselves with women migrant workers, the men feel they have begun to slowly shift attitudes and perceptions on women and migration.

Learning and Insights



A recurrent theme with the women community workers from India is the level of poverty and violence that they have overcome. All the workers present are from economically and socially disadvantaged groups who have struggled against all odds to be where they are today. They have had to fight hard to be educated and almost all are first generation learners. Sandhya Devi belongs to a very economically disadvantaged family and struggled

hard to complete her schooling. Seema had a difficult time raising her son alone with limited resources, Malati Soni lost everything in a fire and faced dire poverty while Malati Ekka had to extricate herself from a violent family and live in penury till she could find her feet again. Sonia was affected by illness and she had to work hard to support her mother and herself after her father's demise and her brother's disappearance.

Given the circumstances and the harsh reality of the patriarchal landscape the women had to encounter, it is clearly evident that their resilience, determination and courage are what have driven them to become the leaders that they are today. Due to their personal experiences, the women community workers are able to relate to the difficult lives of socially and economically marginalized women in their community.

The women community workers have a heightened awareness of violence faced by women in the community and how to address it. Unlike their male counterparts, all the women were vehement in their response to the question of whether rape survivors should marry their rapists; their response was an emphatic "no"! They recognized that rape was violence and a crime, as was other forms of VAW. Where Seema's experience of addressing violence against a close family member by a perpetrator who was also a family member was concerned, she still had the courage to file charges and deal with the matter, showing her growth and maturity as a leader.

The women community members have a clearer idea than their male colleagues about the linkages between women's education and work, migration, women's agency and mobility. They see them as interconnected spaces that cannot be addressed in isolation, as compartments or boxes. Their engagement is therefore holistic and goes beyond the activities of the project. They are clear about their desire to uphold and promote women's rights and while they may not be completely aware of the fact, they approach their work through a rights based and feminist lens.

BANGLADESH



Stories and Voices

Noorjahan

'Women should migrate for work. It is a good learning experience and a good way to earn a lot more money.'

My name is Noorjahan Rina and I am a community worker from Bangladesh. I work with BOMSA in Jessore district. I am also a political leader in my community.

I grew up in the shadow of superstitious belief and neglect. My father passed away when my mother was six months pregnant with me. And everyone convinced her that I was an evil spirit who devoured my father. For some time after my birth, my mother neglected me. Growing up, I had to hear a lot of cruel comments about how I was the witch who ate my father. I couldn't really understand the situation and I used to feel very hurt and guilty at the same time. My mother came around later and looked after me but growing up with the knowledge that she believed I was evil is a betrayal I never forgot.

Despite my early problems, I received a good education and completed a Master's degree in Political Science. My uncle convinced me to join the political arena and when I first stood for elections at the *upazilla* (sub-district) level, I received more votes than the Chairman. This was when I realised that I could be a leader and work for women in my community.

Initially, I was not very confident speaking in public. I had to practice making speeches since I was not a naturally gifted orator. I am glad that I met BOMSA. I learnt a lot about gender based discrimination from them and ways to tackle the issue. As a community worker and a politician, I address and raise issues of violence against women at every opportunity. I am now recognized as a strong leader in my community.

'I have raised issues if violence against women and have advocated justice for survivors of violence. I faced a lot of opposition from community leaders, especially men. But my strength and perseverance prevailed.'

The attitude in the community about women's migration is slowly shifting. Women are not regarded with suspicion as much as they were before, when they migrate for work or when they return. The realization now is that women are doing good work and bringing in money. This change has happened in both men and women. However, one has to be vigilant and raise awareness about trafficking as well as the right of women to migrate.

I was in a relationship with a powerful man who asked me to marry him. However, I decided not to do so. Now I can't think of marrying anyone else for fear of repercussions by this man.

I will never get married now. The work I do with BOMSA and as a community leader are my focus. And I try to help other women in my community to become leaders.

Shapla

'Being a community worker has been an empowering process for me. I used to be very shy earlier... and now, I am an extrovert.'

I am Shapla and I am 24 years old. I have been working with OKUP as a community worker for over two years now. I grew up in quite a liberal, middle class family with my elder brothers and sisters. As the youngest child, I was loved and pampered by my family. My memories are pleasant; of being allowed freedom and being encouraged to study. However, I was shy, especially around boys, and quite timid.

While I had dreams of being a doctor, this ambition of mine was never achieved. I completed my Bachelors of Science degree but not my Masters. I will be getting married soon. My fiance is in business and he has some very traditional views. He does not mind me working now but wants me to stay at home once we are married. I will go along with his wishes although it will be difficult for me to leave my work and independence.

I had worked with World Vision Bangladesh, prior to joining OKUP. Managing the sponsorship programme was my first job. Working as a community worker in OKUP gave me a lot of confidence and increased mobility. I work in three geographical areas where migration is high. My knowledge has appreciably increased on issues related to women's migration and women's empowerment. I have helped many women who have faced violence during migration and otherwise as well. In one instance, a woman domestic worker in Saudi Arabia was in trouble. Her husband in Bangladesh came to me for help, and not to the agent or dalal. That is the change I have seen in the way the community regards me and is also an indicator of my growth as a community worker. I realize that I now inspire confidence among members of the community, which makes me a leader in the community.

I think there should be more economic opportunities made available to women in Bangladesh. They would then be able to stay in Bangladesh and not face risks abroad. However, if they decide to go, they should do so with all information and knowledge. They should practise security measures and learn to negotiate with employers. Men, on the other hand, can go abroad more easily; however, it would be a better use of their resources if they started businesses at home.

'If there are opportunities then women should stay in Bangladesh. If they decide to migrate, they should go in safety, with all knowledge and information.'

On the whole I observe that women's mobility has increased and the community's acceptance of their mobility has increased too. This is true in my case as well. From a shy, quiet girl who was tongue-tied around boys, I am now able to participate in meetings at various platforms, I regularly go to the local union to negotiate with the establishment and encourage them to cooperate, and I have helped build women leaders in the community. And yes, I can now have uninhibited discussions with men in the community!

Rumana

‘Women migrant workers should not be treated only as migrants but as human beings.’

My name is Rumana and I am one of the founders of BOMSA in Bangladesh. It was due to my very sad and difficult circumstances in life that I decided to be a part of forming an organization that worked to protect the rights of women migrant workers.

When I was 17 years old, my mother passed away. At that time, I was taking an examination. After my mother’s death I realized that my education was over and that it was time for me to earn my living.

I decide to go to Malaysia and find work. With 40 other women, I made the journey to Malaysia by bus. The fact that we were travelling by bus and not by air made me suspicious. I realized that we were probably being trafficked. We were physically and mentally abused on the journey and it was quite a nightmare for me. In Malaysia, I was assigned to work in a garment factory, in very challenging and abysmal conditions. I left after three years and returned to Bangladesh. I decided to migrate for work to Malaysia again because I needed the money. This time, I travelled legally, with all documents, and by air. The work experience was marginally better in terms of pay. However, I was very lonely and isolated despite staying in a dormitory. Mentally, I was very stressed. I faced greater stress when the Malaysian police deported me and other workers back to Bangladesh, although we had legal documents. Overall, it was a very difficult and harrowing experience and I hope that through my work, I am able to help women understand the challenges associated with migration and enable them to have a safe experience.

‘I don’t want any woman to experience what I did. My experience inspired me to begin an organization that works for the rights of women migrants from Bangladesh.’

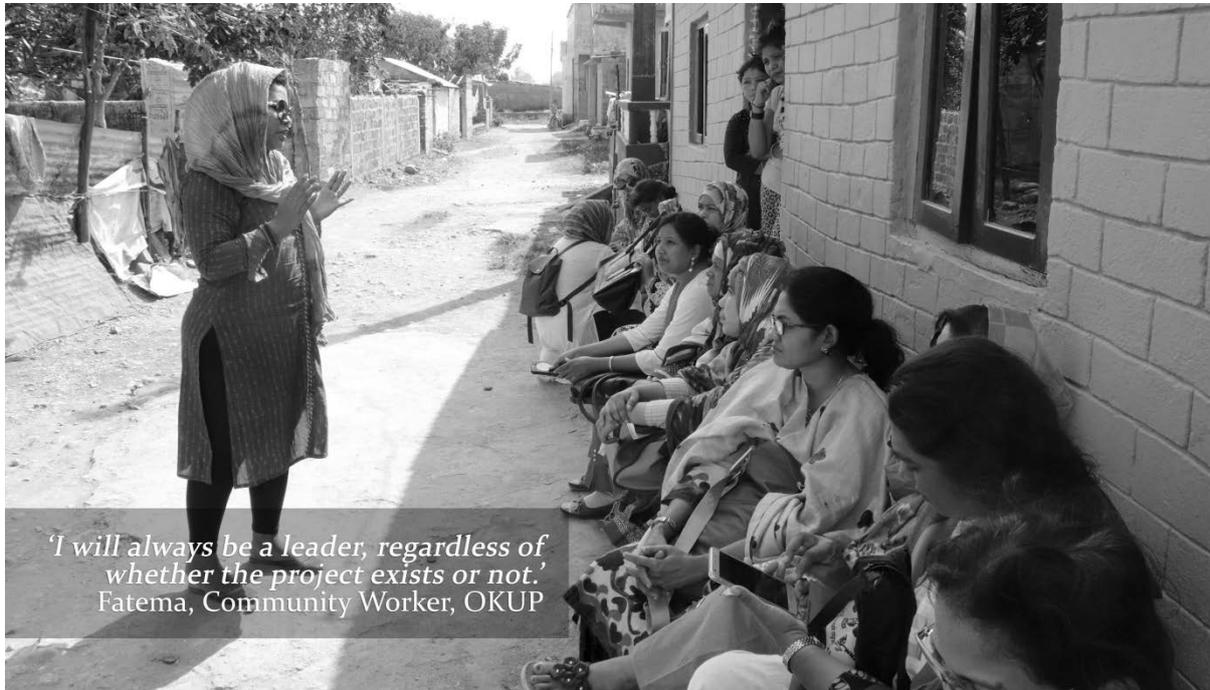
While my experience in Malaysia was quite difficult, to say the least, my reception at home as a returnee migrant was shattering. I had tried sending money home from Malaysia but my family refused to accept it. They were suspicious about the nature of my work. I was perceived as a “bad” woman.

With the help of the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), a few migrant women and I came together to form BOMSA. We focus on women in the community because we realize that men and women migrants are treated differently by society. For 22 years now I have been working in the community to advocate women’s right to safe migration. I have enabled women to access help from BOMSA when they found themselves in precarious situations abroad. BOMSA uses advocacy as a strategy to enable Government policies to be more women friendly.

At the end of the day, I will say that my experience has made me a stronger person. I will continue to raise awareness in the community about the rights of women. At the heart of it, society has to stop considering women as burdens. Once this perception changes, women

will be respected and migrant work will not be stigmatized. I hope that one day, this dream will be realized.

Learning and Insights



It is fair to deduce that the women community workers from Bangladesh are educated and are relatively better off economically than their colleagues in India and Nepal. They have, however, faced discrimination and hardship because of their gender and the patriarchal society they live in. Some have been able to pull themselves out from their restrictive environments while others still find themselves thwarted in some way or the other.

Rina is a strong leader in her community but she does not dare to marry because of possible reprisals from the man she was involved with earlier. Shapla is well educated and enjoys her work but she has agreed to the conditions of her fiancé and will not work after marriage. Samsun had to fight for her education and freedom of movement by painstakingly negotiating with her husband every bit of the way. Similarly, Jesmin had to struggle and use subterfuge to study for her degree and work.

In their lives, patriarchal control has been paramount and it has been difficult for the women community workers to free themselves from this control, despite their education and work. However, there have been those such as Amina who have seen the importance of working with women and girls because they were discriminated as girl children and not given equal opportunities.

Where migration is concerned, the community workers feel, on the whole, that women should have the right to work opportunities abroad and that they should go with all information and knowledge to keep themselves safe. However there are some workers who believe that women should first explore opportunities at home and then decide if they should migrate for work.



LEBANON & JORDAN

VOICES FROM MIGRANT COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORT GROUPS IN LEBANON AND JORDAN¹



Community work in the destination countries of Lebanon and Jordan is focused within two areas: services provided by local organizations through identified women migrant leaders and self-organizing by migrant workers from the same countries, such as the Philippines.

The basis of these interventions is to enable migrant women to access support in the countries of destination, build solidarity among migrant workers and provide a safe space for migrant workers to express themselves and to seek assistance if required. They can also access information, learn new skills and build a community together.

AMEL and ARM (The Anti- Racism Movement) are two entities that support and promote the rights of migrant workers in Lebanon. AMEL protects the rights of domestic workers from exploitation and abuse while ARM seeks to address racial discrimination through initiatives and campaigns. In Jordan, the Al Hassan Workers' Centre works with garment factory workers mainly from South Asia, in the Al Hassan industrial zone.

Apart from leaders being identified and nurtured by non-profit organizations, there are community leaders who organize women domestic workers and help them with any issues that they face. Many leaders are members of domestic workers' unions and also the National Federation of Employees' and Workers' Unions (Fenasol), in Lebanon.

¹ Taken from the document, " Working with Migrant Communities in Destination Countries" by GAATW

Collectivization has helped in assuaging the fears of women migrant workers and in making them more aware about their rights, by accessing support and information from others in the union or network. Marie Constance and Eden, who have been leaders of the union for a long time, claim that as leaders, they feel the weight of responsibility. They share that “Being part of the union demands our time to work and to be attentive to the other domestic worker. We are in a position of leadership and we have to do everything well or it will reflect badly on us.”

Community leaders in destination countries are motivated in various ways. Some feel that they themselves have had good experiences as migrant workers but there are many who have not been lucky. They feel some concern for migrant workers who face problems and try to help solve them. Leaders are an essential part of advocacy towards systemic change; they advocate changes in the *kafala* system, better working conditions such as a day off and encouraging accountability from embassies, agencies and employers.

As with community leaders in countries of origin, community workers in destination countries have a stake and are invested in upholding the rights of migrant workers. They find their work meaningful because they are able to make a difference to others and fighting for the rights of workers is the “essence of being one.”



'Women's status is slowly changing in Nepal. Women are more educated, more empowered economically. However, men are still very much in control, especially of women's sexuality.' WOREC Nepal

'Women's participation has increased in the political and economic spheres. There is also a shift in women's mobility; women are able to go out more.' CINI, Jharkhand, India

'Society used to restrict girls in education, work and migration. This control, while it still exists, has lessened quite a bit.' OKUP, Bangladesh

'Earlier when somebody ran away from their employers, there was nobody to fight for them. Now we fight for them.' Domestic Workers Solidarity Network (DWSN)

SIGNIFICANCE AND LEARNING: THE COMMUNITY WORKER AND THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK AND MOBILITY

Perception of Changes in the Community

The community workers from WOREC, Pourakhi and ABC-Nepal mapped the changes that they perceived in their community. Overall there have been changes and shifts in attitudes and perception of women's rights and women's mobility. However, the general consensus was that while the progress was good, there was still a long way to go for women to be seen as equal to men and a lot more had to be achieved.

The changes in the community were discussed with reference to certain geographical areas that the three organizations worked in; the plains and some hilly areas of Morang district, the hills and plains of Dolakha and Chitwan respectively, and the plains of Rupandehi. Agriculture is the main occupation of people residing in the plains and collection of forest produce and animal rearing are important economic activities in hilly and forest areas. There are now more industrial areas and better roads and infrastructure than a decade and a half ago. There are different types of factories and pollution has increased in urban and semi-urban areas as a result of their growth.

It was observed by all that the number of girls being educated has increased. In addition, girls are increasingly being educated in private boarding schools where earlier only boys were sent. Therefore, there is a change in perception regarding girls' education and the importance of giving them opportunities for quality education.

Opportunities for women's work, including migration options have also increased. Women do packing work in factories, tend to their agricultural fields, raise animals, collect forest produce and work in fisheries in some areas. Women also migrate seasonally across the border to India while many migrate to other countries abroad, mainly for domestic work. In the political arena, women participation and representation has increased.

While women's participation in economic activities has grown, the community workers feel that women's status has not increased and that patriarchal control is still very strong in all areas of women's lives. Women are still subject to all kinds of violence, including domestic violence. Women find that the burden of work is a lot more because household tasks are not shared and they have to work both outside and inside their homes.

However, there is now more awareness on VAW and more women are reporting cases of violence, including marital rape. There is also more awareness regarding migration; women increasingly seek information before going abroad. Some small changes in the way women's empowerment has seen a shift is in the way decisions are not made for them by family members in the context of work and migration; women are consulted, at the very least. Some women are also consulted by their families with regard to economic decisions.

Certain issues are being raised by women regarding gender disparity in wages, the dignity in domestic work and in recognizing domestic labour as worthwhile labour. Where migration is concerned women are more aware of the need for information; earlier, they would regard community workers with suspicion, they now consult them regularly. Women are organizing more as well, being members of cooperatives and self-help groups, returnee migrant workers groups and part of networks on VAW.

While there are still numerous challenges to women's empowerment, the community workers do sense many positive trends which they hope will be strengthened in the days to come.

India

The community workers from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh assessed the changes taking place in their communities, especially with regard to the status of women, with the main changes taking place in the areas of education, livelihoods and mobility.

Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh are both areas with a significantly large tribal or *Adivasi* population. These states are also at the centre of the Maoist or Naxal insurgency and villagers are greatly affected by both poverty and conflict. Women are mainly involved in agriculture, in the collection of forest produce, daily wage labour and seasonal migration to other states for agricultural work and work in brick kilns. Due to the MNREGA, women are now able to get work for 90 days and they demand minimum and equal wages.

The community has observed an increase in women's political participation as well as participation in *panchayat* (village council) and community activities. Skills training by the block office has enabled women to start income generation activities and there are now expanded livelihood options at the village level. The community workers feel that migration may have decreased due to there being more options available at home.

Girls' education is now given more importance. They are educated usually till about Class 10 at least. This is due to the awareness of women about the importance of education and linkages with economic empowerment.

It is interesting to note that the changes identified by the community workers of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh revolved around economic trends. Women's mobility and freedom to move have increased largely due to a change in economic involvement and participation. Men's support to women is mainly due to the need for more women's economic participation. Therefore, men allow women to go out more to the bank and to the *panchayat*, and to access various Government schemes since a lot of the schemes are for women.

Other observations made included the change in women's independence and mobility. Women often migrate to escape violence at home and to be economically independent. More women have opened accounts and are able to save a part of their income from migration.

While women's oppression and violence still exists, more women are organizing to protest violence and to raise their voice against injustice. There is a growing awareness among women, and greater networking, while patriarchal control has lessened with regard to girls' education, women's mobility and women's participation in the economic sphere.

It is observed, that the community workers in India give a lot of importance to economic empowerment of women, more from the standpoint of contributing financially to the family and to be able to stand on their own feet if needed. Other development issues related to women's empowerment are not significantly addressed nor are their linkages fully appreciated. However, there is an attempt to deal with issues other than migration, albeit haphazardly, as the issues come forth. This suggests that the community worker is invested

in protecting the welfare and rights of women in her community and moves beyond her mandate in order to do so.

Bangladesh

The community workers from Bangladesh reflected on the changes that they observed in their communities. The communities discussed were mainly Jessore and Narayanganj districts, with some inputs on Manikganj and Faridpur districts. There is a high rate of migration from these areas, which, the community workers feel has increased over the years.

With regard to education of girls in their communities, the community workers observed that the level of education is now higher among girls and is increasing. Men and women are almost equal in terms of education and girls are better able to negotiate their educational ambitions and delay marriage.

Patriarchal control over women and girls in terms of education, work and mobility has decreased a little and women are able to go out a lot more. Earlier, migration was not always the decision and option of women, nowadays; women seek information and are slowly making more independent decisions about migrating abroad for better work opportunities.

Women's leadership, especially in the political arena is being accepted much more by society. However, women's leadership at the family level has not increased as much as it should and patriarchal control is still exerted over women and girls where leadership and voice are concerned. Women and girls often have to struggle for the same advantages as their brothers and male members of their families although the situation is slowly improving.

At the systemic level, several changes were highlighted. There are now new laws protecting women's rights; anti-dowry and child marriage laws. A birth certificate is required for marriage. Of course, people find ways around these laws but the changes are in place which shows that recognition has been given to these issues. Government policies also support women whose rights are violated during migration. Migrant worker centres have been set up in some destination countries to provide support to migrant women. These are a result of advocacy on the part of the NGO.

Several challenges were expressed by the community workers. There is a resistance to women's leadership and it is an insidious expression of societal control which arises out of the fear that women will become more powerful than men. NGO workers have to encounter this resistance and find it challenging to deal with it.

Agents in Bangladesh are a challenge since their primary concern is not women's right to safe migration and they often regard NGOs with suspicion. It is difficult to work with agents to ensure the safety and rights of women migrants. Government processes are also slow,

observed the community workers. Sometimes, officials are unaware of new steps and laws which make progress and change difficult.

With constant discussions, persuasion and effort community workers in Bangladesh have managed to address the challenges to some extent. It does appear that community workers are very involved in the day to day implementation of project based work which centres around information dissemination, understanding women's needs and problem solving where required.

Lebanon and Jordan²

Various changes in the communities of migrant workers and their environments in Lebanon and Jordan were highlighted.

Earlier, such as 10 years ago, most Lebanese families did not allow their domestic workers one free day a week. Now most are allowed their weekly holiday. Domestic workers were not allowed to speak to their families, but that is slowly changing. There is greater trust involved with domestic workers although the change is slow.

There is greater awareness among migrant workers regarding the *kafala* system and changes that are needed within the system to further protect the rights of workers. Migrant leaders now are able to collaborate with and help workers by enabling them to reach out to NGOs, media and activists. The networks are stronger now.

The need to uphold workers' rights as human rights is also stronger within migrant communities. One positive change that has been observed in Lebanon is the approval of a provision, by the Ministry of Labour, whereby domestic workers can seek permission from their current employer for a new contract before the expiry of their 2 year term..

² *Ibid.*

STRENGTHENING THE IMPACT THROUGH WOMEN COMMUNITY WORKERS: BUILDING LEADERSHIP, DYNAMISM AND SUSTAINABILITY



There were various areas of learning that emerged from the discussions with community workers. These include their own growth as leaders in the community, building the sustainability of the work and working from a women's human rights perspective.

The Role of Community Workers in Building Change

The community workers play a key role in meeting the project's goal to bring about specific behavioural changes in prospective women migrants. The community workers impart 'relevant information' to migrating women believing and hoping that this will result in information seeking behaviour to make migration safe and indeed to some extent, even ensure safety in the destination countries. All stakeholders know that receiving information is not a guarantee to act upon that information and the safety and security of migrant workers depend on many external factors that are beyond the control of the worker herself. Policy makers at both ends of the migration spectrum need to keep safety, justice and fairness at the core of their labour migration policies and monitor their implementation.

Still, having access to information is a small but very significant step towards making migration safe.

It was clear to GAATW that even while the community workers were trying to bring about change, they were also operating within fast changing communities. If labour migration is playing a major role in changing the public face of communities in countries of origin and destination, female labour migration has brought about changes in the private sphere. Women are leaving their 'homes' to enter and work in someone else's home. Their manners, morals and values are constantly getting challenged, questioned and in some instances changing. Overseas and even rural to urban migration allows working class women to see themselves as individuals who have life experiences outside their families and communities. In depth interactions with women community workers enabled GAATW to see that they were uniquely placed to get glimpses of the lived experiences of returnee migrant women. Typically, such experiences do not feature in the current migration discourse.

Leadership and Dynamism:

The exercise of learning with community workers has reiterated the importance of nurturing the women community workers' leadership and perceiving them not as a means towards delivering information on promoting safe migration, but as crucial change agents of the community who will enable transformation at the village level.

The leadership skills that have been gained by most of the community workers have been nurtured largely through their own ambitions and motivation. The training that community workers received from the WIF project and GAATW, enabled a mutual learning opportunity on issues related to women's work and migration from a human rights perspective and not only with the idea of promoting safe migration. In other words, most community workers used the knowledge and information towards building themselves as leaders in usually quite a difficult socio-economic and cultural environment. The exposure and learning visits organized by GAATW, helped in expanding knowledge and ideas towards the growth of leadership.

The testimonies from community workers reflect how their stories of struggle and resistance from patriarchal norms and discriminatory practices, had prepared them to work towards change at the community level. Through their experiences, community women sensed a growing self-awareness which gave rise to self-respect. Their engagement with the community, men and women, opened up doors of possibilities and they kept challenging themselves to go forward. The level of personal growth has been expressed as being metamorphic in the case of some community workers. At the end of the day though, this transformation came about due to the inherent commitment of community workers and their investment in bringing about social change. This change is far more apparent with women community workers rather than men, since women had to struggle harder against social norms and restrictions to get to where they are now.

A Social Movement against Injustice

An important learning is that community workers have begun building movements against social injustice and towards change. There are elements of feminist struggles within these movements and it is the community leaders (mainly the women) who are moving the agenda.

When women community workers discussed cases of violence against women or gender injustice, these were mostly with the intention of enabling women to extricate themselves from an unsafe situation and build their own, independent lives. Their own personal experiences, especially the women who have faced violence or difficult situations, have framed their attitudes towards VAW. Among most women, there is a heightened awareness of strong gender discrimination in their social environment; a sense of unfairness and division which needs to be addressed. There is also an understanding of the fact that this discriminatory environment breeds violence and needs to be tackled.

While community workers have been finding their own way in addressing VAW, the most common intervention is to ensure economic independence, which community workers feel is crucial in enabling women to leave a violent situation and build a life for herself. There is almost a universal acknowledgement of that. They also feel strongly that women should come out of their culture of silence and raise their voice against injustice.

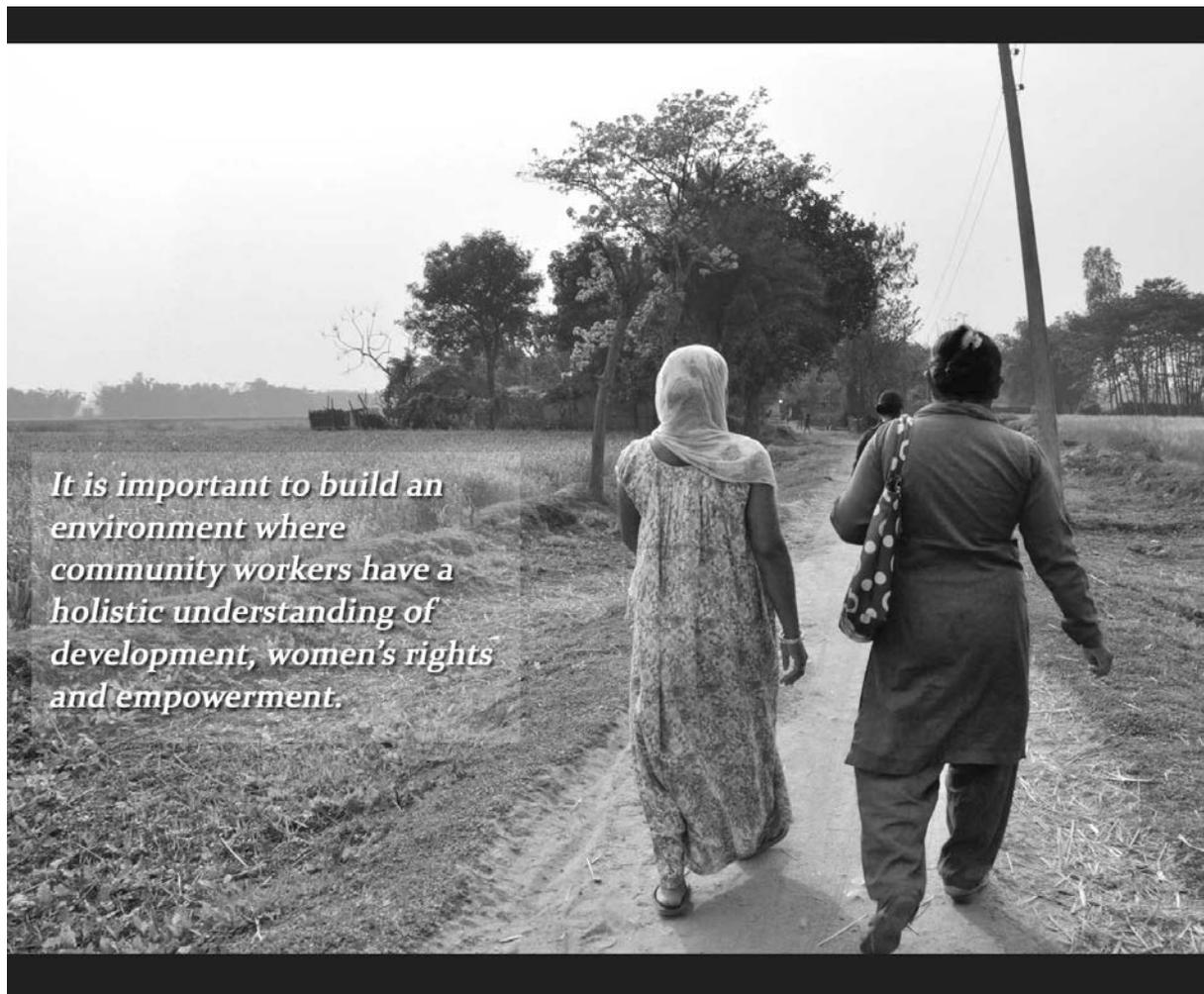
With the seeds of a social movement against injustice already been sown by the women community workers and by other contributory factors in the environment, it is necessary to nurture and build the capacities of the women to ensure a stronger and more focused movement towards change.

Building Sustainability

Jesmin from Bangladesh has started a migrant women's group, Malati Ekka and Soniya from India work with other groups within their communities not related to their projects, Dhankumari and Gyani Sara from Nepal have all vowed to carry on their work and enable women to raise their voice and create a new group of leaders. Most of the community workers have expressed the need for collectivization, to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the work.

Leadership building is definitely one very important area to be strengthened to ensure sustainability. Women community workers have begun identifying and nurturing leaders, many from the returnee migrant women communities. They spread awareness and information and encourage a snow ball effect of building empowered women.

Many community workers encourage the formation of groups in the village for ensuring the continuity of leadership and knowledge building. These include adolescent girls' groups, women's returnee migrant groups, and women's health groups. As Soniya from Jharkhand stated, the project may not continue but the work will. And this is a sentiment echoed by almost all the women community workers.



MOVING FORWARD

The importance of knowledge building and nurturing the leadership of women community workers cannot be stressed enough. Not only are they important agents of change, they are the faces of this change that will build a stronger women's voice and an environment which is conducive to upholding women's rights.

GAATW recommends that in future, the WiF project invests in capacity enhancement of community workers. Conceptual input on migration, labour, women's rights, sexuality and power dynamics in society will help them better understand their own work and enable them to impart their learning to migrating women. Planning regular workshops to listen to their observations and insights and analysing those in a participatory manner will enrich the project. Where feasible, learning trips for community workers to destination sites should be organized. The project should also invest in creating some job security for the community workers by standardizing remunerations and giving longer terms contracts.

And finally, it is important to build an environment where community workers have a holistic understanding of development, women's rights and empowerment. This learning exercise has revealed that community women leaders built their own understanding over

the years and began with information dissemination on migration issues while also addressing some issues of social violations and violence against women. Building a comprehensive and holistic understanding of women's rights, with right to migration as a crucial part of it, should be at the core of enhancing the capacity of the community workers and while GAATW has done some important work in this direction, a lot of intense focus on this would be extremely helpful in transforming the dynamics of the project towards a social movement. And the leadership within the community workers is ready and determined to move forward and meet the challenge.



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