

### December 2020

Dear friends,

Greetings from the GAATW International Secretariat!

The year is coming to an end and what a year it has been! All of us have experienced confusion, fear, stress and worries as never before. It has not been possible to carry out our planned work and we have struggled to adapt it to the changed situation. Not only has international travel been difficult or impossible, we have also had to stay confined to our homes for many weeks or even months. Our communication with family members, friends and colleagues in other countries has been mediated by technology. Working from home or working remotely from another country has become a necessity. In our efforts to make sense of things, to learn from other colleagues and share our thoughts with them, we have tried to straddle multiple time zones and organised many on-line sessions. Those sessions worked to some extent but have also left us with tremendous zoom-fatigue at the end of the year.

At the other end of the work spectrum, millions of workers have lost their jobs and do not know if and when they will find employment again. Support from governments has been largely inadequate, and often excluded migrant and unregistered workers. Economies around the world have collapsed and recovery is going to take a long time. Although the vaccine offers some hope, it is going to take a long time before everyone feels safe again.

At GAATW-IS, 2020 was the year to welcome several new colleagues and start the implementation of our new strategic plan. We made some progress but the pandemic tested our resilience in multiple ways and we were often pushed to our limits. Nevertheless, we were able to start a series of Feminist Participatory Action Researches in Asia, Europe and the Americas (see more below). New partnerships have begun with several organisations and previous projects have continued. Substituting in-person meetings with on-line ones has been difficult but the support and commitment of our staff, members and partners have enabled us to go on with the work. In fact, as this bulletin shows, not just GAATW-IS, our members and partners have also been very busy this year.

We know that travel restrictions will continue for many more months and we have to continue to work on-line at least until mid-2021. We hope that all of you take a break from work at yearend and spend time with family and friends.

The GAATW-IS team wishes you happy holidays and let us hope that we can begin 2021 with new energy and hope.

As always we welcome your feedback and contributions to future issues at [borislav@gaatw.org](mailto:borislav@gaatw.org).

Read all the news from the GAATW Secretariat [here](#). These include:



## New Issue of Anti-Trafficking Review, 'Everyday Abuse in the Global Economy'

In September, we published the [new Special Issue of Anti-Trafficking Review](#) themed 'Everyday Abuse in the Global Economy' and guest edited by Joel Quirk, Caroline Robinson, and Cameron Thibos. It examines the driving forces behind the increasing prominence of precarious work, the accelerating role of migrant labour within the global economy, and the political relationship between everyday abuses and forms of severe exploitation.

The new issue features seven full-length articles that examine 'everyday abuses' as experienced by migrant workers, domestic workers, gig/platform workers, and waste pickers. The authors demonstrate how these

everyday abuses are enabled by a number of factors, such as privatisation and deregulation, natural disasters, technological advancements, and labour migration regimes; a recurring theme in several of the papers is the need to move away from the sensationalistic and narrow focus on modern slavery and human trafficking and towards measures that enable workers to organise to demand better working conditions and wages. The contexts examined include United States, Colombia, United Kingdom, Lebanon, South Africa, and India.

## Global Research on Social and Economic Inclusion of Migrant and Trafficked Women

What work and education opportunities are available to migrant and trafficked women in the country of destination or upon return to the country of origin? Are these relevant to the local labour market or do they reinforce gender stereotypes and condemn women to a life of low-wage work? What do women think about these opportunities and how do they articulate their own ambitions and desires?

These are some of the questions that we and 30 partners in 17 countries will attempt to answer through a new Feminist Participatory Action Research focused on the topic of social and economic inclusion of migrant and trafficked women. ...

## Documenting Migrant Workers' Struggles during the Pandemic

The sudden onset of the pandemic had huge impacts on the work of our members and partners. While much of their planned work could not be done, many had to deal with the humanitarian crises caused by the pandemic (see some examples in [our e-Bulletin from May](#)). What began as conversations with our members and partners on how they were dealing the crises, soon turned into a series of documentation by NGOs, journalists and advocates on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the lives of migrants - the impacts of lockdowns, job losses, return or inability to return home, attempts to resume work, and others. The stories that have reached us are diverse: some migrants spoke about being abused or not being paid their due wages; others demanded that their governments provide them with some support to make ends meet; others were frustrated with the chaos of sudden or conflicting measures to restrict the pandemic; some were trying to return to their families, while others - to return to their work abroad. Perhaps the common thread running through these stories is that governments are not doing enough to support migrants, both in the migrants' home country and the host country, despite the huge contributions that migrants make to both countries' economies. The other thing that stood out was the everyday struggles that many migrants experience which can be addressed if states are serious about protecting their rights. (Check the [entire news item](#) for more information on the videos, reports, and articles) ...

## Mutual Learning on Women, Work and Migration

In the past several months, we organised three online mutual learning opportunities for GAATW members and partners. In September, we organised a webinar titled [Returning Home, Resuming Work: COVID-19 and the Inter-State Migrant Workers in India](#). It aimed to understand the impact of lockdowns on informal workers, especially inter-state migrant workers, in India, after many had been effectively left jobless, homeless and stranded. In desperation, many migrant workers walked, cycled or hitchhiked on water tankers and milk vans to reach their villages thousands of kilometers away. Even when the Workers' Trains were restarted in May, return home was not easy. Some migrants stayed back in the cities as returning home jobless or without any wage was not a feasible option. ...

### Handbook for Domestic Workers in India and Indonesia

GAATW believes that workers' education to strengthen organising among them is crucial to the process of social change.

While trying to map the range of trainings available for women in low-wage and informal work we observed an important gap. We noted that although many trainings were available to explicate relevant legislation and carry out collaborative advocacy, there was a dearth of trainings focussing on political education and critical literacy. The link between precarity and development paradigms appeared to be an unexplored area in training modules for women workers with nominal or no formal education.

In late 2019, GAATW, Asia Floor Wage Alliance and International Domestic Workers Federation had conceptualised and planned to develop an inter-sectoral political education curriculum that would address the need for political education among domestic and garment sector workers.

### Advocacy Update

#### *CEDAW General Recommendation on Trafficking*

For the past two years, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) has been developing a new General Recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. The GAATW secretariat, individually and together with members and allies, contributed in a number of ways, including by providing written feedback and participating in several meetings (see previous issues of the e-Bulletin). In November, the Committee finalised and adopted the GR, which can be found [here](#) (an advanced unedited version). ...

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

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## News from our Member Organisations

Read all news from GAATW members [here](#). These include:

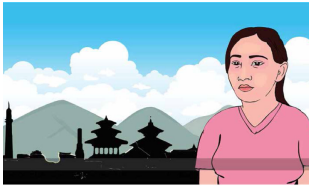
### New GAATW Member Organisations in LAC

We recently accepted two new member organisations from the Latin America and Caribbean region. [Libera Foundation against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery in All Its Forms](#) works to prevent human trafficking by disseminating knowledge, conducting training and research, and providing legal and social assistance to victims and vulnerable people and communities in Chile and Latin America.

[CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago](#) focuses on advocacy and public awareness and education on and for the Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The GAATW Secretariat extends a warm welcome to the newest members of our family and hopes that this will strengthen our work in LAC and beyond.

Survey on the Socio-economic  
Impact of COVID-19 on Returnee  
Migrant Women Workers in Nepal



## Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Returnee Migrant Women Workers in Nepal

The Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), with support from the GAATW Secretariat, carried out a survey among Nepali women migrants who returned from abroad, as well as those who are still abroad, to find out the impact of the pandemic on their income-generating opportunities. The survey with returnees inquired on issues related to wage theft, their experiences in quarantine shelters in Nepal, their relationship with family and friends and whether these are impacted by stigma, and their perceptions of the future employment opportunities in the country. The survey was conducted among 25 returnees and five women who were still abroad, over the phone, Facebook

Messenger and WhatsApp.

The returnees reported experiencing stigma in the community, as potential carriers of COVID-19, but only one of the women avoided communicating with anyone outside her family; the other women's treatment by friends and neighbours improved after the end of their 14-day stay in quarantine shelters. ...

## Assessment of the Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Bangladeshi Migrant Workers

As the coronavirus pandemic cripples the global economy, the restrictions on movement and the closure of businesses have hit migrant workers particularly hard. To assess the economic impact of the pandemic on Bangladeshi migrant workers, OKUP conducted a survey among 40 migrants working in Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Qatar, Oman, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, and Lebanon. The survey revealed that 32.5 per cent of the migrant workers lost their jobs since the start of the pandemic and as many continue to work but irregularly. The remaining 35 per cent said they continue to have regular work and income. Almost half of the surveyed workers said they are not trying to return home and want to stay in the destination country. However, more than half also said they were pessimistic about their prospects and worried that the temporary layoffs may become permanent. Read the full report published in October [here](#).



## La Strada Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

On 15 September 1995, three organisations from Poland, Czech Republic and the Netherlands launched the first La Strada project: Prevention of trafficking in women in Central and Eastern Europe. The name of the project was inspired by Federico Fellini's film La Strada, which follows the story of Gelsomina, an Italian girl who is sold by her mother to the owner of a small travelling circus.

Since then, the La Strada project has developed into a European NGO Platform, which now comprises 26 [member organisations](#) in 23 European countries.

To mark its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, La Strada International launched a year-long social media campaign on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Website](#) to reflect back and highlight the work achieved over the last 25 years. (Source: [La Strada International newsletter issue 58](#)).

GAATW and La Strada have always shared the same philosophy and approach to human trafficking and migration, grounded in human rights, gender equality, and social justice. We wish our sister network and fellow traveller many more successes in their journey.

## New KOK Report on Data Collection and Data Protection

On 18 October, EU day against trafficking in human beings, the German NGO network against human trafficking KOK published a [new report](#) on data collection and data protection in anti-trafficking work.

The report provides a new approach to data collection and data security for

trafficked persons from a human rights perspective. The new data tool presented in the report, which has been developed by KOK and its member organisations, focuses on the rights and protection of trafficking persons and their access to justice in the German legal system. The tool offers insight into the work of civil society organisations, namely the specialised counselling centres for trafficked persons, and the wide range of services they provide to survivors of trafficking. ...

### Report on Violence against Sex Workers in Europe

On 28 October, the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) launched their new report '[Undeserving victims? A community report on migrant sex workers victims of crime in Europe.](#)' In cooperation with 12 national partner organisations from 10 European countries, ICRSE collected and analysed 49 cases of violence and crimes committed against sex workers. Sex workers were involved in the design of the research methodology, including defining its aims, creating a semi-structured interview template, and collecting evidence as recruiters of respondents and in the role of interviewers. The report highlights some of the key obstacles faced by sex workers in accessing justice and focuses in particular on enabling and disabling factors of reporting crime and on the effects of policing sex work on the ability to report crime. The report was launched at an [online event](#) where migrant sex workers shared testimonies alongside with presentations of European civil society organisations and Members of the European Parliament.

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### Harms of Anti-Trafficking

More and more people are learning about human trafficking and feel compelled to do something about it. Unfortunately, this desire to take action is not always expressed in productive ways. Some initiatives are ineffective. Others are harmful, and actually increase vulnerability to human trafficking.

By raising awareness about the negative consequences of mainstream anti-trafficking initiatives, SWAN Vancouver will work with the community to address these harms.

SWAN's [video](#), [guidebook](#), [action group](#) and [interactive webpage](#) provide concrete tools anyone can use to think critically about mainstream anti-trafficking initiatives and campaigns, separate fact from fiction, and help without harming.

The [project launch webinar](#) includes the original release of the video, followed by a moderated panel discussion featuring four leaders in the global discourse on ethical approaches to addressing human trafficking.

### Trafficked Persons Speak Out

Capital Humano y Social Alternativo presented the book 'Seeking justice: Trafficking in persons, violence and exploitation: 40 testimonies' written by Andrea Querol. The book describes, through in-depth interviews, what thirty victims of trafficking and ten of their relatives experienced in their interactions with various state institutions after leaving the situation of trafficking.

At the book presentation, Rosario Sasieta, Minister of Women and Vulnerable Populations, Rosario López Wong, senior prosecutor responsible for human trafficking, Martín Castro, from USAID Peru, and Ricardo Valdés, executive director of CHS Alternativo highlighted the importance of this book to make public institutions and civil society aware of the needs of victims and survivors. ...

### Sex Workers Project Gets a Boost

GAATW member [Sex Workers Project](#) (SWP) at the Urban Justice Center in New York received a generous donation of USD 1.2 million from the Sex Work Rights Fund to significantly increase SWP's capacity, size, scope, and impact. With this gift, SWP was able to hire a Director of Communications, Director of Development, Director of Research, Organizing, and Advocacy, and an Associate Director for State and Local Campaigns, as well as locally based organising consultants. While continuing to focus on legislative efforts in New York, SWP will also focus on building a statewide campaign in Oregon to decriminalise and destigmatise sex work, partnering with SWR and other national, statewide, and local human rights organisations through 2020 and

beyond. ...

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

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## Resources

### [Editorial: From Exceptional Cases to Everyday Abuses: Labour exploitation in the global economy](#)

*Joel Quirk, Caroline Robinson, and Cameron Thibos*

In recent decades, neoliberal policies have transformed both the world economy and the world of work. Hard-won rights and protections have been eroded by deregulation, outsourcing, and subcontracting. New forms of unstable, isolated, and insecure work have emerged. This Editorial examines the driving forces behind the increasing prominence of precarious work, the accelerating role of migrant labour within global economic systems, and the political relationship between everyday abuses and forms of severe exploitation which have recently come to be defined as human trafficking and modern slavery. We argue that a singular focus upon individual cases of extreme exploitation is unlikely to be effective, and can also draw attention away from the larger systems, interests, and abuses that are associated with the smooth and regular operations of the global economy. We also suggest that at least some of the energies which have recently been expended debating the contentious category of 'modern slavery' could be usefully redirected towards lower profile interventions concerned with worker and migrant rights. There are never going to be simple or straightforward solutions to labour abuses, so it is necessary to take many bumpy paths simultaneously, with small steps forward and some steps backward.

### [Twenty years of trafficking: taking stock of the world the Palermo Protocol built](#)

*Cameron Thibos*

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Trafficking Protocol, *Beyond Trafficking and Slavery* launched an exciting new feature. This introductory article outlines the thinking behind it and the two main questions contributors engage with: 1) 'What is exploitation anyway?' with currently eleven contributions, and 2) 'Are we better off on the inside? Modern slavery and human trafficking as platforms for political mobilisation' with currently ten contributions.

### [Briefing Note: Misinformation on Sex Work](#)

*Global Network of Sex Work Projects*

Misinformation on sex work has flourished for centuries, fuelled by age-old stereotypes, myths, and moral judgments which continue to shape policies and public opinions. Whether falsehoods are disseminated to deliberately deceive, or are shared unknowingly, the spread of inaccurate and misleading information on sex work has significant consequences. This Briefing Note outlines some of the most prevalent forms of misinformation surrounding sex work, providing recent examples to demonstrate their impacts in the realms of policy, research, and the protection of human rights.

### [COVID-19 impacts on the labour migration and mobility of young women and girls in South-East Asia and the Pacific](#)

*International Organization for Migration*

This paper explores the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on labour migration and mobility of young women and girls in South-East Asia and the Pacific. Building on the research report '[Supporting Brighter Futures: Young Women and Girls and Labour Migration in South-East Asia and the Pacific](#)' published by IOM in 2019, the paper offers speculative reflections on some policy implications that the shifts induced by the pandemic may have had on the overarching and interrelated economic, social, cultural and structural findings of the report, as well as the gender dimensions at play in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

## [Out of the shadows: A spotlight on exploitation in the fashion industry](#)

*Clean Clothes Campaign*

This report, based on a survey of 73 fashion brands and retailers, and 490 workers in 19 factories, aimed to assess brands' commitments and practices in paying living wage to workers in their supply chains. Sadly, it found that no brand pays living wages to all the workers in their supply chains despite numerous pledges to do so. Even with extensive overtime, workers do not earn an amount corresponding to a living wage.

## [Social Protection and the Future of Work: A gender analysis](#)

*Overseas Development Institute*

There is growing pressure on social protection systems to adjust to a changing world of work and to harness the opportunities presented looking forward. The time is ripe to build on learning to date to deliver social protection that adequately addresses gender-related contingencies over the course of the life cycle and, in conjunction with wider labour and social policy, gender inequalities in the world of work. Social protection policy options set out in this paper provide examples of how this can be achieved in practice. They also highlight key emerging issues and areas for future research in the pursuit of gender-responsive social protection in the context of the future of work.

## [Global guidelines on the economic reintegration of victims of forced labour through lifelong learning and skills development approaches](#)

*International Labour Organization*

The present guidelines are designed to assist governments, workers' and employers' organisations, NGOs and development practitioners in supporting the economic reintegration of victims of forced labour through formal and non-formal skills development services, skills recognition services and post-training support. Based on extensive research, they draw from a wide range of case studies and good practices identified at local and national levels to offer evidence-based recommendations on how to design and implement effective skills-based interventions for the long-term rehabilitation and protection of victims of forced labour.

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