



## Brief on Work in Freedom Programme in Lebanon

### » Women and girls on the move

For many, migration is an important alternative to the realities of home. People move long distances in pursuit of jobs for varying reasons ranging from economic aspirations or loss of habitat resulting from processes of economic transformation, poverty, climate change or gender based violence. While some migrate internally, many also migrate abroad. For women and girls, especially of indigenous, dalit or low-income backgrounds, the experience of further impoverishment and discrimination makes migration a viable option. While many are able to improve their livelihoods in cities at home or abroad, many also face deception by unscrupulous labour recruiters or exploitation by employers – practices that amount to forced labour.

The Work in Freedom programme adopts an integrated and targeted approach to reduce vulnerability to trafficking of women and girls in South Asian countries of origin (Bangladesh, India and Nepal) and in selected destination countries (India, Jordan and Lebanon). It expects to reach at least 150,000 women and girls by 2018.

### » Fair recruitment to decent jobs

The pathways to jobs in domestic and garment work within the region or to the Middle East are intersected by various agents or contractors in an environment shaped by multiple



rules and practices determining the mobility of aspiring workers. The fluidity and segmentation of labour supply chains are such that none of the key stakeholders such as labour recruiters, regulators and even employers can guarantee on their own, a fair migration outcome for any worker. In spite of strong public calls to protect migrating women from the pitfalls of trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery, in practice the presumed responsibility of ensuring fair migration outcomes is eroded among multiple formal and informal stakeholders. Migrants therefore face multiple risks and challenges in their efforts to find jobs such as paying exorbitant fees, taking out high-interest loans ahead of their departure that can lead them into debt bondage,



transit through India at a high cost, deception about the nature and conditions of work, having contracts substituted by less favourable ones on arrival, having passports confiscated, being subject to illegal wage deductions, threats or physical violence.

Work in Freedom works with employers, with labour recruiters, workers and regulators both in the places of origin and destination of migrant workers, to support better regulation and practices of recruitment. It reviews laws and regulations

on foreign employment and recruitment, and it also tests and assesses recruitment practices. It also works with migrant rights organizations and trade unions to increase accountability in the recruitment process.

The Work in Freedom programme has engaged the Ministry of Labour, the syndicate of recruitment agencies in Lebanon (SORAL), and FENASOL in improving regulations and practices of recruitment. The programme facilitated the establishment of relationship between SORAL and the programme's global partners – Verite, IHRB and CIETT—and is currently working with Ministry of Labour on finding an effective mechanism to monitor the code of conduct adopted by it. It also supports the provision of services to migrant workers through MCC and KAFA.

## Law and policies for dignity and decent work for migrant garment and domestic workers

Several laws, policies and administrative practices in Lebanon need to be reviewed to improve prospects of safety and dignity for migrant workers. The programme has produced two studies to inform policy on recruitment practices, namely, *For a Fee: the business of recruiting Bangladeshi women for domestic work in Jordan and Lebanon (2015)* and *Intertwined: Employers and migrant domestic workers in Lebanon (2016)*.

### For more information please contact:

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