



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

GAATW sees the phenomenon of human trafficking as intrinsically embedded in the context of migration for the purpose of labour.

e-Bulletin

December 2025

Dear friends,

As we approach year-end, we would like to pause and reflect on our work against the backdrop of the global crisis and the state of human rights worldwide. Across regions, there have been growing concerns around restrictive asylum policies, externalisation of borders, the return directive for undocumented migrants, and the rise in right-wing politics. These crises are often marked by displacement, conflict, unfair labour systems and the systemic erosion of labour and social protections, which heighten vulnerability to trafficking and severe exploitation. Traditional policy advocacy spaces have become problematic or futile at best. Many states have increasingly fallen silent on the rights of migrants and trafficked persons. At this critical moment, it is crucial to strengthen solidarity and mutual support across movements by creating alternative spaces for strategic discussion.

At GAATW Secretariat, 2025 has been a transition year. We have restructured our thematic work and created three intersecting programmes: Human Trafficking and Forced Labour, Women on the Move, and Women Workers for Change. Three Programme Advisory Committees comprising colleagues from among our membership as well as allies have graciously supported the priority setting in the thematic programmes.

In early 2025, we were able to launch, Reframing Narratives: Anti-Trafficking from the ground up, the annual publication series by members. The inaugural issue, titled (In)formal Pathways to Justice, showcases different advocacy strategies used by our members to achieve justice. Work on the next issue has begun and we plan to launch it in the first quarter of 2026. Meet our Members, our in-depth conversation with members, continues to highlight the journey of our members and we aim to carry out several interviews next year. In the last quarter of this year, we launched an online initiative, Alliance Conversations, which will continue next year..

This bulletin at year's end, shares some highlights from the work carried out by members and the Secretariat. We hope you will find it useful and continue to share your feedback and input for the forthcoming issues of the bulletin.

All of us at the Secretariat wish you a restful and joyous holiday and a good start to the new year.

Sincerely,

The GAATW International Secretariat

News from the GAATW International Secretariat

October

"Voice & Participation" Partners visit in Greece



During 2023-2024, [MAP Foundation](#) from Thailand, [Tenaganita](#) from Malaysia, [Serve the People Association \(SPA\)](#) from Taiwan, [Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants](#), [Melissa Network](#) from Greece, [Comitato per i diritti civili delle prostitute \(CDCP\)](#) from Italy, [MIST](#) from France and [SEEAC](#) from the UK have worked together on a project titled *Voice and Participation*.

Conceptualised and facilitated by GAATW Secretariat, this project was a truly learning journey that encouraged the organisations to collectively reflect on their work. This year, the group embarked on a new initiative to document their organisational journeys of engaging with migrants, trafficked persons and refugees. Each organisation is working on an essay that will describe the context of their work, as well as their strategies, struggles and successes. On 1-3 October 2025, the groups met in Athens to peer-review and fine tune their chapters. Melissa Network, the partner based in Athens, was the gracious host who opened their beautiful office for the convening. The anthology will be published in January 2026.

6th General Assembly of the International Migrants Alliance (IMA) in Kathmandu, Nepal

During 24–26 October, in Kathmandu, Nepal, the 6th General Assembly of the International Migrants Alliance (IMA) brought together 164 participants from 28

countries and regions, representing 125 organisations, under the theme “Defend Migrants’ Rights, Livelihood, Lives and Movement.” The opening underscored how deeply migration is shaped by inequality, conflict, climate crisis, and



economic exploitation. Speakers highlighted how forced migration is driven by capitalist expansion, labour export policies, contractualisation, and recruitment practices that amount to trafficking. The rise of fascism, racism, and anti-migrant policies globally was identified as a central threat, with calls to strengthen united workers’ movements, build community defence mechanisms, and confront the root causes of displacement and exploitation.

Throughout the Assembly, sectoral discussions examined the realities of gig workers, migrant domestic workers, and agricultural workers, all facing precarious work, low wages, lack of labour protection, and intense risks of exploitation. Organising under conditions of isolation, surveillance, and fear of retaliation remains a major challenge, particularly under tied visa systems. At the same time, participants shared powerful examples of resistance—through digital organising, cultural work, legal challenges, alliance-building with trade unions, and community-based education. Alfie Gordo from GAATW-IS delivered a solidarity message affirming the centrality of migrants’ struggles to broader fights for labour rights, anti-trafficking, and social justice, and also served as part of the Electoral Committee during the IMA leadership elections.

APWLD Regional Women Migrant convening and migrant solidarity exchange



The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) Regional Women Migrant Convening brought together over 30 women leaders and network members to assess the state of women’s migration in Asia and the Pacific and to

strengthen regional coordination toward the 2026 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). Discussions highlighted how irregular migration, restrictive visa systems, shrinking labour protections, and weak enforcement of rights continue to expose women migrants to trafficking, gender-based violence, exploitation, and criminalisation. Despite the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), participants critically examined its uneven implementation, the lack of accountability mechanisms, and the persistent exclusion of migrant women’s voices from policy spaces at national and international levels.

Alfie Gordo, from GAATW-IS was one of the speakers on the session about regional trends on irregular migration, labour precarity, and emerging forms of trafficking for forced criminality, including online scam operations. Country consultations from Thailand, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, the UAE, and Bougainville surfaced priorities such as independent residency status for married migrants, access to social protection and healthcare, language-accessible services, protections for domestic workers, and reintegration justice.

Participants mapped these issues against the objectives of the GCM and began developing shared feminist advocacy strategies for coordinated engagement at the next IMRF, reinforcing the importance of migrant-led participation, regional solidarity, and intersectional justice in global migration governance.

Learning Circles on "How We Work" Community organising and Community-driven advocacy

On 3rd December, GAATW held its second Learning Circle on “Community organising and Community-driven advocacy” where members heard from three organisations working in very different contexts but grounded in the same principle where communities themselves must guide the work, set the agenda, and lead the political demands to uphold their rights.



Flora Enifo from [MIST](#) in France, shared how their survivor-led organisation identifies community leaders through storytelling and intentional conversations with women who have experienced trafficking for sexual exploitation. Because all members come from outreach, police referrals, or partner organisations, the community defines its own priorities to work on. Flora emphasised that advocacy is built with members - not for them - and that visibility is only valuable when it is safe and purposeful. In Flora's words: “Members choose what, when, and whether to share or not their stories, ensuring full control over their narratives as they reject portrayals of victims as helpless, but instead centre on inclusion and meaningful participation”.

From Scotland, Margarita and Graham of the [Worker Support Centre \(WSC\)](#) highlighted how ongoing outreach, informal gatherings, and worker-led communication channels create spaces where seasonal agricultural workers in the UK can organise despite short stays and constant risks of surveillance. Margarita shared that leadership among workers emerges naturally, especially from those “who feel strong discomfort about injustice and

want to take action". They do so whether by writing to Members of Parliament, collaborating with media, or guiding new workers before they migrate.

Finally, Elvira from [Brigada Callejera de Apoyo a la Mujer EMAC](#) in Mexico emphasised that communities themselves decide who leads the movement and what are the issues that matter. Their organising with sex workers and trafficked persons has enabled women to speak directly to government institutions, secure housing, confront police extortion, and expand access to healthcare and education. With over 3,500 trained community promoters and human rights defenders by Brigada, the women sex workers groups strengthen both collective and individual autonomy. In Elvira's words: "this peer-led organising is how they ensure that knowledge circulates, protection grows, and women support one another".

We invite all members to join the upcoming Learning Circles, resuming in **March 2026!**

November

Critical Analysis of Criminal Law Approaches to Trafficking in Persons

Between 17-18 November, GAATW brought together members and allies to collectively reflect on how criminal law approaches to trafficking in persons are experienced across different regional and political contexts. During this consultation, participants shared that while criminalisation is often presented



as the primary solution, in practice it frequently fails to deliver justice, protection, or meaningful access to rights for trafficked persons and migrants. Instead, law enforcement-led responses were described as reinforcing surveillance, detention, deportation, and conditional assistance, particularly for people in irregular migration situations, sex workers, and those in informal labour sectors. The discussion emphasised that these punitive frameworks hide the lived realities of exploitation and shift focus away from prevention, rights, and long-term justice.

In the discussions, participants stressed that criminal law responses often individualise harm and responsibility while ignoring the structural drivers of trafficking and exploitation, such as restrictive migration regimes, tied visas, debt, informalised labour systems, and gendered and racialised inequalities. Survivors' access to support was widely noted as being conditioned on cooperation with authorities, creating fear, retraumatisation, and further vulnerability. The consultation reaffirmed the need for rights-based, worker-centred, and feminist approaches that prioritise autonomy, safety, collective organising, and access to justice over punishment. It also strengthened a shared commitment among members to continue challenging carceral anti-trafficking models and to advance community-led, survivor-informed alternatives rooted in social and economic justice.

As a next step, we will share a full report on the discussions by January 2026.

At night, we were delighted to invite filmmaker and writer Paromita Vohra, to screen her latest film “Working Girls”. This piece is a vivid, genre-defying documentary that traverses India to uncover the invisible yet essential work performed by women — from care work and domestic work to surrogacy and sex work. Filmed around many cities in India, the film meets domestic workers, farmers, mothers, ASHA workers, dancers, and organisers whose labour sustains society but is rarely acknowledged. This film was made in collaboration with the Laws of Social Reproduction Project hosted by the Dickson Poon School of Law, King’s College London.

Reviewing the 2020-2030 Strategic Plan and Thematic Programmes of GAATW International Secretariat



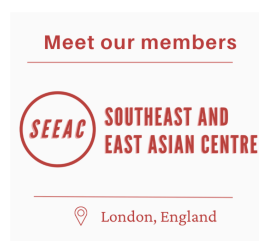
Between 19–20 November 2025, GAATW-IS brought together the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) members and its Board members with the aim of reviewing the implementation of the Theory of Change and the 2020–2030 Strategic Plan, as

well as identifying any necessary adjustments in light of the new thematic programmes. The review reflected on the Theory of Change’s implementation during the pandemic, the learning generated through 30 years of feminist research, and the shifting global dynamics around trafficking, migration, and labour rights.

Sessions on the thematic programmes such as Human Trafficking and Forced Labour (HTFL), Women on the Move (WoM), and Women Workers for Change (WW4C), created space to review approaches, recent findings, gaps, and priorities for the next five years, while strengthening inter-thematic collaboration. There was also a session with consultants from the FPAR Academy who are currently supporting the development of GAATW’s institutional Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework.

Resources

Members' Spotlight (MOM Interviews)



"We feel confident that even though we're not an organisation that can do research and write policy papers, our evidence comes out of lived experience (of migrants)"
Interview with Mariko Hayashi

In October, Vivian Cartagena from the GAATW Secretariat spoke with Mariko Hayashi, Executive Director and founding member of the [Southeast and East Asian Centre \(SEEAC\)](#), to learn more about how the organisation came to life, how its work has evolved, and the collective care and resistance shaping its 5-years journey. SEEAC is a migrant-led organisation in the UK that grew from years of community organising among diverse East and Southeast Asian migrants seeking culturally grounded support and solidarity.

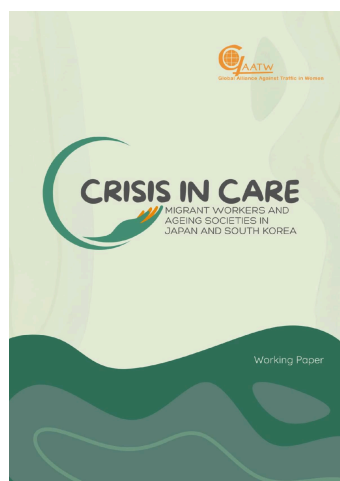


"The risk that workers take in speaking out, in connecting, and joining this work is significant, so they are very invested in seeing real answers and real change."
Interview with Valeria Ragni

In November, GAATW Secretariat spoke with Valeria, Policy and Advocacy Lead from [Worker Support Centre \(WSC\)](#), to learn more about how the organisation's intensive grassroots outreach takes place in some of the UK's most isolated rural areas, how workers' lived experiences directly inform advocacy and policy change, and how trust-building, anonymity, and solidarity remain at the core of WSC's work with migrant workers and local communities.

GAATW's Working Paper on the Crisis in Care

Crisis in Care: Migrant Workers and Ageing Societies in Japan and South Korea



As more and more countries confront the challenges posed by ageing populations and evolving family structures, there is an increasing reliance on migrant workers to fill essential roles within the care sector. However, state programs often categorise this form of labour as low-skilled and temporary, providing limited labour protections and exacerbating the precariousness faced by migrant workers.

This working paper examines how care work is defined, structured, and governed in Japan and South Korea, and how these frameworks shape the experiences of migrant care workers. It unpacks the demographics driving the

demand, the policies and pathways governing migrant labour for care work, and the

difficult working conditions that result from the devaluation of care. It also emphasises the crucial role of civil society in offering support and broadening its advocacy for migrant rights.

The paper calls for stronger labour protections, equitable care systems, and sustained solidarity to advance the rights and well-being of migrant care workers. [Click here](#), to read the Working Paper.

Launch of our new podcast: Migration and Care

This November, we were excited to launch **Migration and Care**, our new podcast series exploring care systems and policies, community-led care initiatives, and the vital role of migrant care workers.



In this first episode, we spoke with Pedro Moreno of ANEM Per Feina, who reflected on how people's movements in Barcelona helped put Care on the political agenda. Pedro discussed the precariousness of care provision for families, the vision behind the City of Care project, and how ANEM Per Feina supports both families in need and fair labour relations for care workers — including migrants.

Pedro highlighted the need for self-organising, especially in a sector where workers often face isolation in private homes. You can listen to the full episode [here](#).

"Climate Change, Migration, and Exploitation in Southeast Asia" event in Bangkok



On 4th December, we organised the event "Climate Change, Migration, and Exploitation in Southeast Asia", hosted by SEA-Junction, in Bangkok. Speakers highlighted how slow-onset and rapid-onset weather events, exacerbated by ClimateChange, destroys people's livelihoods and forces many to migrate

under unsafe conditions and to accept exploitative work. For others, rising temperatures make their already precarious working conditions unbearable.

You can see a recording of the session [here](#).

Among the invited speakers were: Ruta Nimkar, co-director of Meraki Labs; Sallie Yea, Associate Professor of Human Geography at Charles Sturt University in Australia; David A. Feingold, Research Anthropologist and Director of the Ophidian

Research Institute. This session was moderated by our colleague Borislav Gerasimov, Editor of the Anti-Trafficking Review. For further reading, can check [here](#) our latest issue “Climate Emergency and Work on a Heated Planet”.

Call for Papers

‘Engaging Impacted Communities’, an upcoming ATR Issue

The Anti-Trafficking Review calls for papers for a special issue themed [‘Engaging Impacted Communities’](#).

The aim of this issue of *Anti-Trafficking Review* is to examine engagement with impacted communities. We welcome submissions on community engagement within the anti-trafficking sector as well as models of engagement in other fields from which anti-trafficking practitioners can learn. ‘Impacted communities’ is conceptualised broadly, including both people with lived experience of trafficking, communities regularly targeted for exploitation, and people impacted by anti-trafficking policy and interventions. We invite submissions that address community engagement in research as well as policy and practice.

In addition to full-length conceptual, research-based, or case study thematic papers, we invite book reviews, collaborative interviews, and short, blog-style articles related to the issue’s theme. We particularly encourage contributions from service providers, advocates, and people with lived experience.

The deadline for submissions is **1 June 2026**.



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