

AMKAS ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT 2022/2023

An Organization for by and of Returnee Women Migrant Workers
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Abbreviations ……3

2. Chapter I: Brief description of the organization ……4

2.1. Objectives of AMKAS ……4

2.2. Membership ……5

2.3. Core Activities ……5

2.4. AMKAS Networks……5

2.5. AMKAS Nepal's collective campaigns …… 6

3. Chapter II: Activities and Projects

3.1. Responsible Business Alliance…… 6

3.2. The Asia Foundation. Emergency Fund……9

3.3. Global Alliance on Traffic in Women and Girls ……10

3.4. Women Fund Asia ……11

3.5. Issara Institute ……12

4. Extra Activities.……13

5. Chapter IV: Shelter Home ……16

5.2. Services provided from shelter home ……17

5.3. Major problems of shelter home ……18

5.4. Case Stories……18

5.3. Photo Gallery……22

1. Abbreviations

AMKAS	Aaaprabasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha
RWMWs	Returnee Women Migrant Workers
DW	Domestic Work
TAF	The Asia Foundation
WFA	Women Fund Asia
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Traffic on Women
RBA	Responsible Business Alliance
NNSM	National Network for Safe Migration
NNBN	National Network on Beijing Review Nepal
NNWS	National Network of Women Shelter
MFA	Migrant Forum Asia
MWF	Migrant Women Forum
ANWS	Asian Network of Women Shelter
GNWS	Global Network of Women Shelter
FEA	Foreign Employment Act
FEB	Foreign Employment Board
DoFE	Department of Foreign Employment
MoLESS	Ministry of Labor Employment and Social Security
AHTB	Anti Human Trafficking Beuro
SSF	Social Security Fund
CoD	Country of Destination
ILO	International Labor Organization
CCMC	COVID Crisis Management Committee
APWLD	Asia Pacific Women law and Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
IEC	Information, Education and Communication

2. Chapter I: Brief description of the organization

Aaprabasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha (AMKAS) Nepal, Returnee Women Migrant Worker's Group is a civil society organization established in 2016 led and run by returnee women migrant workers working for the rights of women migrant workers and their family to promote the rights and interests of Nepali migrant workers in both their home and destination countries, based on the idea that "Migrant Rights are Human Rights." AMKAS envisions of a just world where Nepali women workers are self-reliant with full equality, dignity and respect in terms of gender, social, cultural, economic and political aspects in Nepal and elsewhere. Its goal is to create economic systems that enhance skills and employment opportunities without exploiting individuals and their abilities.

AMKAS Nepal has worked in five of the seven provinces: Province 1, Bagmati, Lumbini, Gandaki, and Sudur Paschim, disseminating information about safe migration and raising awareness about human trafficking, as well as helping returnees and aspirant migrants build capacity both at grassroots and local levels. Its mission is to establish itself as a just organization dedicated to the rights of individuals who have been marginalized by society. It imagines a world in which no women migrants are found distressed and vulnerable, no women are trafficked, become victims of modern day slavery and everyone is informed about safe migration protocols, including their rights and responsibilities.

AMKAS Nepal has collaborated with various stakeholders both government, non-government, Trade Unions, private sectors and mobilized media with the goal of pressuring the government to ratify key human rights instruments including ILO C189 and also to lift the discriminatory ban on DWs to the Gulf for the last seven years. This annual summary report documents the outreach, achievements and challenges AMKAS Nepal faced while implementing these various project activities of the fiscal year 2022-2023 supported by different partners and donors.

2.1. Objectives of AMKAS

- To organize returnee women migrant workers so as to strengthen the collective bargaining of migrant workers issues at the local, provincial, national, regional and global level.
- To ensure rights of women workers are respected, fulfilled, guaranteed and protected through women workers friendly policy environment, and its proper implementation.
- To design and implement innovative plans, programs and actions on widening the scope of awareness generation, ethical recruitment practices, research and publications, and strengthening livelihood and re-integration of the women workers at the ground level.
- To develop partnership and liaison with national and international bodies towards a unified voices for the rights and interest of the migrant workers and their families.

2.2. Membership

Membership is the biggest strength of AMKAS Nepal which is maintained through our community outreach of loose networks of returnee women migrants and shelter supported returnee women migrants whom we reach out to support them for dignified reintegration into their community and family. We build their capacity through various community trainings especially through economic their economic empowerment connecting them with local Government led programs and entrepreneurship development trainings with skill trainings and micro grants if projects permits. They become the champions in their own community and continue as change makers. AMKAS has more than 2500 members from all 7 provinces covering more than 60 districts. In fact many members of AMKAS due to the current financial crisis in Nepal have re-migrated who are working as support groups in CoDs.

2.3. Core Activities

The range of activities that AMKAS Nepal has carried out in this year and plans to carry forward to the future years are as follows.

1. Policy Advocacy
2. Capacity Building
3. Information dissemination/ Awareness
4. Rescue, Repatriation and Reintegration
5. Shelter Support
6. Psycho Social Counseling
7. Family Counseling
8. Distance counselling
9. Legal Counseling
10. Referral
11. Networking (National, Regional, International)
12. Research (FPAR)
13. Fund Raising
14. Annual Commemorations

- March 8 – Intl. Women's Day
- 16 June - Intl. Domestic Workers Day
- 30 July – Word Day Against Trafficking of Person
- 16 Days Activism VAW
- 18 Dec. Intl. Migrants Day

2.4. AMKAS Network

AMKAS Nepal's achievements also depends on being member of various national, regional and global networks. AMKAS is member of:

a) National

- NNSM

- NNWS

- NNBN

b) Regional

- MFA

- APWLD

-ANWS

c) Global

- GAATW

- GNWS

2.5. AMKAS Collective Campaigns

AMKAS being an organization of returnee women migrants conducts campaigns for policy changes, a more women friendly policies with our louder voices. The following are some of AMKAS ongoing campaigns:

i) Ratify C189 (Marigold Campaign)

ii) Lift Ban

iii) Wage theft

3. Chapter II: Activities and Projects

3.1. Responsible Business Alliance

The outbreak of COVID-19 has deeply disrupted society and the economy throughout the world, making it one of the greatest disasters in the history of humankind which has severely impacted the workforce, especially the most vulnerable migrant workers around the globe. Many Nepali migrants also lost their jobs due to this pandemic, they returned without any salary and savings which was the biggest challenge for them to reintegrate into their society and family. Most Nepali migrants returned from countries particularly India, Malaysia and the Gulf countries namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Large number of these migrants were unskilled or low skilled workers engaged in elementary and blue-collar occupations such as laborers, cleaners or as

sales and service-related workers. Over the course of 2020 and into 2021, employment in jobs typically held by Nepali migrants declined by 30 percent in the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia and 20 percent in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Due to their overrepresentation in the domestic and hospitality sectors. Female migrant workers have been more vulnerable to unemployment or abuse with longer hour work without being paid during the pandemic. Migrant workers who managed to keep their jobs often faced reduced work hours, deferred wages, unpaid leave, and insufficient access to basic services.

Government of Nepal lacked adequate support to such needy migrant especially vulnerable women migrants. Therefore, women migrant workers being more vulnerable this project with the support from RBA with an objective to support to ensure the economic empowerment and rights of COVID 19 affected returnee women migrants through the RBA's Project Uplift: A Worker –Relief Fund Initiative. The Economic Reintegration of COVID 19 affected women migrants was implemented in four target districts, Sunsari, Morang, Jhapa and Kathmandu through various activities.

Activities Implemented:

i) Organizing and mobilizing covid-19 affected returnee women migrant workers to empower and reintegrate- 1st series of Leadership Training

Six leadership development trainings were conducted in three target districts, Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari from 18th April, 2022 to 28th April, 2022 and from 25th July to 4th August 2022. Altogether 127 covid-19 affected returnee women migrant workers attended the training in terms of building their capacity, skill enhancement, networking, strengthening their networks. Their advocacy skill enhanced them to lobby with government at local, provincial to national level with amplified voices for their rights and demands to bring changes in their own community especially for economic empowerment so that they need not re migrate for employment. Moreover, organizing the community RWMs as leaders was the main objective of this training.

Achievement: The main achievement that the series of leadership development training in three districts has brought in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari is that AMKAS was able to form a stronger network of second line leaders more vocal leaders with knowledge and capacity to advocate on their own issues and demands in their community to national level. Altogether 127 COVID 19 affected RWMS participated in the training who are now contributing their knowledge and time as change makers in their respective communities to minimize unsafe migration resulting to trafficking and modern day slavery.

ii) Entrepreneurship Development Training

Out of the 200 COVID 19 affected RWMS 30 of them were selected from the four target districts for the SIYB training. All 30 selected participants were provided the 5 Day SIYB Entrepreneurship development training, where they were trained to prepare their own business plans. All 30 of them after starting or enhancing their business according to the

business plan submitted were provided with micro grants. This training aimed to provide knowledge, skill, concept and attitude to be an entrepreneur, to establish agriculture based, farm base, shops and other small-scale enterprises, deliver ideas and knowledge to calculate cost of product and selling price and help identify the beneficiaries' field of interest/business in order to expand their enterprises. Out of the 30 participants 24 participants are from three districts from Koshi Province (Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari) while 6 of them are from Kathmandu district. All sessions were delivered through action-oriented teaching approaches. Participants had acquired satisfactory level of competency to start the enterprises by taking reference from evaluation. Training concluded with the business plan of all the participants and well prepared to start their business as per the knowledge they gained in the 5 days training.

Achievement: 30 COVID 19 affected RWMs received the 5 day Training on SIYB, and have started their own small business. They are able to calculate loss and profit of their business. 75% of the participants are now able to earn from 15,000 to 22,000 each month from their business which was proved after the monitoring visit after six months.

iii) Development of IEC materials

Issue based IEC materials were developed for information dissemination on the safer migration and financial literacy through consultative process with returnee women migrants and private sectors. The draft was shared it with community before publication of the materials. Participants now have improved understanding and knowledge on safe migration, labor rights, resource mapping, financial literacy, and business management, business selection based on their capacity/skill and knowledge and legal provisions on migration. To keep track of the 30 micro grant beneficiaries their profile stories are also been documented by AMKAS Nepal as an evidence based advocacy tool for policy change and also for further programs.

iv) Achievements of the project

Through this project activities, AMKAS has successfully organized built capacity and mobilized more than 300 returnee women migrant workers directly and indirectly reached out to around 500 as proposed in four District, Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari and Kathmandu. A network of COVID 19 affected returnee women migrants has been strengthened successfully in these four districts through this project. They are now able to come into action to demand the Government of Nepal to address the rights and make an informed choice to migration. They are now also demanding to lift the discriminatory ban imposed by Nepal Government for women to migrate as domestic workers which is forcing women to migrate through illegal channel and remain as undocumented workers. 30 RWMs who received SIYB training with the micro grant support has established themselves as entrepreneurs an alternative to force migration.

3.2. The Asia Foundation

Since 2008, the Department of Foreign Employment has issued more than 180,000 labor permits to women migrants. The official figures, however, are still dominated by the number of the male migrant workers. The proportion of women migrant workers stands at an average of 4.68 percent ***(The Labor Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal 2019)*** out of the total migrants, but these numbers don't reflect many of the women migrants travelling through unofficial channels. Scholars believe that "80 percent of Nepali women working abroad as domestic help are undocumented and reach destination countries through informal channels due to the discriminatory ban on DWs". The project has been implemented by AMKAS Nepal in support of The Asia Foundation (TAF) from July 2022 to September 2022 to strengthen existing safe house service to female migrant workers by identifying and extending psychosocial, medical and rehabilitation support to the women migrant workers and achieve holistic reintegration.

Activities Implemented

i) Data's on Shelter Support

A total of 57 beneficiaries received shelter service within three month i.e. July 1 to September 25 under TAF project. Among them only thirteen had documented status who had travelled to foreign employment taking labor permit whereas, rest of the clients had travelled to foreign employment on undocumented status.

ii) Post Arrival Orientation

Post arrival orientation was provided to every beneficiaries at Shelter. Still 65 to 75 per cent of the shelter supported RWMs have migrated through illegal channel due to the discriminatory ban on DW. Due to undocumented status they do not have the opportunity to attend any pre departure orientation trainings therefore lack information which makes them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Therefore, this post arrival orientation has been very beneficial to these category of RWMWs as many returns with the aim to re migrate. Sessions provided in the post arrival orientation are information on safe migration, what is human trafficking, legal awareness, financial literacy and local government's initiatives for returnee migrants, role of FEB and DoFE. Altogether 57 shelter supported RWMWs participated and benefitted in the post arrival orientation.

iii) Shelter Management Committee Meeting (SMC)

SMC to improve the operations of the shelter and to provide services to clients organized its meeting on 15th of July and 25th of September respectively. In order to continue the strategy on assisting distressed and vulnerable returnee women migrants, AMKAS organized SMC meeting garnering presence from AHTB, FEB, Ward, Kathmandu Municipality, CCMC, Nepal Police, Journalist, advocate, counselor and its network.

Key decisions and action points agreed upon were: - AHTB urged on helping rescue the trafficking victims and facilitate cases at court. - Support from shelter committee members' in exploring the ways to have permanent airport passage pass to receive the survivors in need is taken. - Representative from FEB shall facilitate the case supporting officers of AMKAS to work from help desk of FEB established at airport. Also, Help Desk to be operated at TIA by AMKAS with support of SMC members. - Access to justice should not be denied for migrant workers only because of their undocumented status. Strong advocacy among legal partners and other stakeholders to protect and prevent them from being more vulnerable.

3.3. Global Alliance on Traffic in Women and Girls

GAATW-IS, along with several other partners in different parts of the world, has started an initiative called the Women Workers Forum (WWF) to support a feminist change agenda by, and for, women workers. The Forum includes low wage women workers who are currently working in destination countries, women who have returned to their home countries after working in a foreign country and may or may not migrate again, and women who are workers in their home country and do not have overseas migration history. This initiative focuses on three key strategies; Educate, Agitate and Organize. The sessions centre the lived experiences and respect the diverse learning styles of women workers. This initiative is aimed at strengthening worker-led advocacy.

AMKAS has been organizing returnee women migrant workers in the communities and working closely with them in some districts of Nepal for several years now. Therefore, this project aimed for AMKAS to strengthen its work with women workers in the communities which started from April 2022 to November 2022. The main objective of this project was to strengthen the groups of returnee women migrant workers by supporting their learning agendas and by helping them to see links between individual experiences of abuse and systemic discrimination. Further, the project encourages the women to build solidarity among like-minded groups and raise their collective voices against injustice and unfair practices in the four districts (Sunsari, Morang, Jhapa and Bardiya)

Activities Implemented

i) Meeting and sharing experiences: The Women Workers Forum meeting South Asia, hosted by GAATW was successfully attended by AMKAS Nepal along with community women leaders and to illuminate and share the story of the journey focusing on their struggle to become leader and reflecting the power shift from being migrant workers or survivors to being a change maker. In order to develop leadership among the returnee women migrant workers and amplify their voices and concerns, the learning facilitators conducted meetings with them every two weeks based on the right-based approach in four districts, Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari and Bardiya. Learning facilitators, Uma Sedai, Amala Chamling, Sarda Maskey and Sangita Mahatara from these four districts were participated in the women workers forum

meeting to recognize women's achievement, challenges, and emphasizes on women's right and development justice in solidarity. AMKAS Nepal and community women have shared the work being done in the women workers forum by talking about and putting different program components into practice as they got to know each other's organizations.

ii) Contribution to E- Magazine: The WWF participants of AMKAS Nepal contributed to the E-Magazine feature *"Our Work, Our Lives"* by GAATW. The focus was on the *Why and How of Organising*. The magazine wanted to hear from women workers about their experiences and strategies for organising. Nine women workers were interviewed. Interviewees were asked about organising: the amount of time they had been doing it for, their group, their experience, challenges, and strategies among other things.

Achievements:

- **Power shifting:** WWF gained knowledge on movement architecture, social media, collaboration with organizations and local government, visual learning through pictures, group activities, and networking with national CSOs and other stakeholders. These served as strengthening factors towards these women's personal and career lives, as well as introduction on how to pass on their new knowledge to other.
- **Sense of community:** By facilitating the interactions with 47 woman workers, discussing topics such as health rights, worker rights, labour rights, safe foreign employment, gender-based violence, organising, human trafficking and child marriage, AMKAS was able to provide a sense of community and mutual understanding to the participating women, as well as providing knowledge about said topics.
- **Platform to share experience:** Was able to voice the migrant women's experiences and challenges on organizing other women, providing a platform for those who wished to participate. This helped to share information on the dos and don'ts of organizing, adding shared knowledge among WWs.

3.4. Women Fund Asia

Uniting, networking, capacity building of RWMWs and advocating for a women migrant friendly policy is an ongoing activity of AMKAS Nepal. For this objective production of second line leaders as Inter-generation Leadership for Change (ILC) champions, is also another important activity of AMKAS Nepal. With the support of WFA, AMKAS has been able to empower its members through a three days training and a one day refresher training on the rights of women migrant, safe migration, human trafficking, legal literacy and international instruments. This project was implemented in the three districts (Sunsari,Morang and Jhapa) of Koshi Province also the hub to women migrants and their family who will internally migrate from the hilly districts before migrating for foreign labor migration. Though this project was implemented from Jan 2022 till Dec.2022 the report only covers the activities performed from July till Dec 2022

according to Nepal fiscal year. With this support AMKAS was able to strengthen our networks in local level through our second line leaders (ILC) from Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari.

Activities Implemented

i) Awareness Program: After receiving the three days capacity building trainings the ILC Champions conducted 4 awareness programs in all project districts. Around 400 community people participated in the program and gained knowledge on safe migration and human trafficking, legal awareness.

ii) Refresher Training: The ILC champions were provided with a refresher training so as to listen to their learnings and challenges and what next and also to update them. These second line leaders are now being invited by local Government office and other organizations as resource persons with their knowledge on migration and human trafficking.

iii) International Commemorations: with the support of WFA, AMKAS also commemorated 16 June, International Domestic Workers Day, 16 Days Activism VAW and 18 Dec. International Migrants Day. To commemorate 18 Dec, AMKAS conducted an interaction program on wage Theft, an analytical report from the case studies of victims of wage theft of our shelter supported RWMWs where more than 50 participated from Governments Representatives, CSOs, TUs, Media and Academia.

3.5 Issara Institute

STRENGTHENING THE CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION TO BUILD ETHICAL RECRUITMENT NETWORKS IN NEPAL: With the invaluable support of the ISSARA Institute, AMKAS Nepal is embarking on a journey towards digital empowerment, aiming to promote the dissemination of the Golden Dreams App. In the fiscal year 2022/2023, specifically on Labor Day, May 1, AMKAS Nepal successfully hosted a soft launch event for the Golden Dreams App. The event saw enthusiastic participation from over 30 attendees, with 85% of them being returnee women migrants and the remaining 15% aspiring migrants. Ms. Krishma Sharma, a representative from the Issara Institute, graced the launch with her presence, guiding and informing participants about the app's functionalities and benefits. The Golden Dreams App is designed to offer essential support and resources to Nepali migrant workers returning home or planning overseas employment. During the launch, attendees promptly downloaded the app and pledged to share it within their respective networks. This significant step in introducing the app holds great promise in empowering and enhancing the lives of Nepali migrant workers.

Following the launch, on May 25, AMKAS Nepal took a significant stride by conducting a training program for 21 community leaders. Under the supervision of AMKAS Nepal's dedicated team, these leaders subsequently organized a two-day training session in June at Biswo-Shanti Chiran Milan Campus, which benefitted 40 students. The training encompassed various aspects,

including an introduction to the Ujwol Sapana App and its functionalities, video demonstrations covering the app's registration, rating, and commenting processes, pre-session questionnaires, revision of the Ujwol Sapana App and its utilities, a comprehensive guide on crafting a CV, and bio-data completion within the Ujwol Sapana App, culminating in post-session questionnaires. This initiative signifies AMKAS Nepal's commitment to digital empowerment and equipping individuals with essential tools and knowledge.

4. Extra Activities

1. **March 8- INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2023:** On the 8th of March, AMKAS Nepal commemorated International Women's Day, celebrating the resilience and contributions of women worldwide. This year, the theme of International Women's Day was 'Digit ALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality,' addressing the digital gender gap's impact on economic and social disparities. AMKAS Nepal organized a series of engaging activities in collaboration with partners, including Amnesty International Nepal, Association of Youth Organizations Nepal, Biswa Shanti Chiran-Milan Campus, Tehra Family, Davu Art Gallery, and Kathmandu Metropolitan City Ward-03. The events included a press release jointly conducted with Amnesty International Nepal, a flash mob symbolizing gender equality, a pop quiz to educate the crowd on essential topics, artistic performances to raise awareness about human trafficking, an art exhibition showcasing women's talents and experiences, a table market featuring products from AMKAS Nepal's micro-grant recipients, food and face painting stalls in line with the theme of equity, and a donation box to support AMKAS Shelter, which has provided aid to over 1500 distressed women migrant workers. This comprehensive celebration aimed to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and raise awareness about critical issues while providing a platform for women to share their stories and visions for a more equitable future.

2. LABORS DAY, 2023: On May 1, 2023, AMKAS Nepal hosted an engaging hybrid sharing session to celebrate Labor Day. The session unfolded at the AMKAS Nepal premises and featured an inspiring talk by Ms. Laxmi Rai, a registered social worker with a wealth of experience in the civic and social organization sector. Ms.Rai, also a gender specialist from the UK and a long-time supporter of AMKAS, shared her remarkable journey from being a mother to becoming a graduate, a story that serves as a source of inspiration for us all. During the session, Ms.Rai shared personal anecdotes and valuable insights on overcoming challenges to achieve success, along with shedding light on her impactful work within the social organization industry. Attendees had the option to participate either in person or virtually, making it an inclusive and informative event.

3. A SPECIAL VISIT: THE ASIA FOUNDATION TRUSTEES AT AMKAS NEPAL: On January 25, 2023, a momentous occasion unfolded at AMKAS Nepal's premises as we had the distinct honor of welcoming esteemed Trustees from The Asia Foundation (TAF). Hosting them was indeed a pleasure. During their visit, our Shelter Coordinator delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting our shelter's initiatives, remarkable achievements, and ongoing challenges. It was not merely a visit; they also had the invaluable

opportunity to interact with some of our shelter clients, gaining firsthand insights into their experiences. Despite their demanding schedules, they took the time to explore our gallery. TAF has been a steadfast supporter of our endeavors in the past, and we look forward to continued collaboration in shaping a brighter future.

4. Fund Raising Programs

i) DEUSI/BHAILO PROGRAM: As we phased out certain projects, AMKAS Nepal seized the opportunity to organize fundraising events, commencing with the Deusi Bhailo program during Tihar on October 28, 2022. The primary objective of this initiative was to raise funds to sustain the AMKAS Shelter. Recognizing the ongoing importance of the shelter despite project changes, our dedicated AMKAS team diligently collected funds. They did so by proactively visiting the homes of our generous donors, providing prior notice of their visits, and successfully securing contributions by singing and dancing to support the shelter's crucial operations.

ii) Photo Gallery/Fundraising: In honor of the dedicated women migrants globally contributing not only to their families but also inadvertently enriching their societies and nations, AMKAS commenced this year's campaign with an early launch. We curated a compelling photo gallery, showcasing AMKAS Nepal's work and the remarkable achievements of Returnee Women Migrant Workers across diverse fields. From December 16th to the 22nd, it drew over 150 visitors, signifying its resounding success. This event served a dual purpose: fundraising to support our programs and expanding our network by introducing AMKAS to a broader audience. The funds collected are dedicated to the operation of AMKAS Nepal’s Shelter. The gallery featured a comprehensive display of AMKAS's initiatives, including localized capacity-building workshops, awareness programs, entrepreneurship training for reintegration and empowerment, meetings with shelter management committee, and our national and international networks. The exhibition also incorporated captivating paintings addressing foreign employment and violence against women on stone and canvas, accompanied by the screening of AMKAS's introductory video through a projector, encapsulating our mission and vision.

Blood Donation Program: As part of its broader campaign efforts, AMKAS Nepal organized a Blood Donation Campaign on December 3, 2023, with a specific focus on Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10), which aims to reduce inequalities within and among countries. SDG 10 strives to address various forms of inequality, including economic, social, and political disparities. The blood donation campaign was conducted in collaboration with the Nepal Red Cross Society and the Kathmandu Metropolitan City, reflecting AMKAS Nepal's commitment to promoting inclusivity and addressing disparities in healthcare access. Through this initiative, AMKAS Nepal contributed to the broader global agenda of fostering more equitable societies while also supporting essential healthcare services.

1) National Conference on International Domestic Workers Day, 16 June.

Globally, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are at least 67 million domestic workers, excluding child laborers (ILO, 2021). Furthermore, statistics show that approximately 80 percent of domestic workers worldwide are female (ILO, 2021). In Nepal specifically, it is estimated that there are around 200,000 domestic workers, with the majority being female (Home Workers' Union Nepal, 2020). This data aligns with the global trend of domestic work being predominantly performed by women. Women migrants in Nepal face significant challenges, including discrimination, poverty, and limited job opportunities. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), around 400,000 Nepali Workers migrate for employment each year, and women account for around 30% of these migrants (ILO, 2020). Most of these women migrate to Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates to work as domestic workers. Despite being a popular employment option, domestic workers often face poor working conditions and low wages, physical and sexual abuse, with limited access to justice or support services.

Nepal government has taken steps to protect the rights of migrant domestic workers, including signing bilateral agreements with destination countries and setting up a welfare fund for returning migrants. However, implementation of these measures has been limited and does not cover for MDWs as majority are undocumented. Despite the government's efforts to protect the rights of domestic workers, implementation has been limited due to the ban on women traveling to Gulf countries for domestic labor raises the risk of exploitation and human trafficking. The ratification of ILO C189 and lifting the ban on women migrant workers are crucial steps towards protecting their rights and ensuring a safe and dignified migration process. The welfare fund set up for returning migrants received only a small amount of funding in 2020, which is insufficient to provide meaningful support to returnees.

In this context International Domestic Workers Day,16 June provides an opportunity to highlight the challenges faced by domestic workers, including women migrants in Nepal, and to advocate for their rights and protections. Thus, usual AMKAS Nepal organized “The National Conference for the Ratification of ILO Convention 189, on the International Domestic Workers’ Day, 16th June 2023 with the same motive to continue what has been being done will continue with the following objectives:

- To raise awareness among the concerned governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on the issues of domestic workers right.
- To pressurize GoN to ratify ILO C189, C095 and C190 and lift gender discriminatory ban on domestic migrant workers
- To commemorate Int’l Domestic Workers Day in a grand way along with domestic workers from all 7 provinces of Nepal and concerned stakeholders.
- Wider dissemination of Marigold Campaign

- Collect data through discussion to file writ petition for the ratification of International Labor Instruments to GoN.

2) 16 Days Activism Violence Against Women (Fund Raising) 16 DAYS ACTIVISM

1. Awareness Campaign: AMKAS Nepal's dedicated efforts during the 16-day Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign are reflected in our comprehensive report. In a world plagued by gender-based violence (GBV) and human trafficking, Nepal faces particularly grim challenges. As an impassioned non-governmental organization, our mission was clear: to cultivate awareness and education as tools to combat these issues. Our campaign unfolded in the cities of Kathmandu and Morang, targeting both returnee and aspiring migrants. Using an array of educational resources, including pre and post-questionnaires, multimedia content, presentations, and interactive sessions, we sought to empower individuals with knowledge. The pre-questionnaire analysis underscored the pressing need for awareness campaigns, revealing that many respondents were unaware of the 16 days of activism or the various forms of GBV. The post-questionnaire analysis, however, painted a different picture, with all respondents demonstrating awareness of the campaign and significantly improved understanding of GBV and human trafficking. These outcomes emphasize the pivotal role of education and awareness in addressing these critical issues. This highlights the impact of our initiatives among students and young aspirant migrants, shedding light on the need for continued efforts to educate and inform. Overall, AMKAS Nepal remains steadfast in its commitment to effecting positive change, as we navigate the challenges posed by GBV and human trafficking, and we look to the future with a determination to further educate and advocate for the rights and safety of all, especially the vulnerable aspirant migrants in Nepal.

3) Coordination, Collaboration and Participation

AMKAS also strongly beliefs in coordination, collaboration and participation to achieve its mission, vision and goals. Therefore, apart from the implementation of project activities and its in-house programs participates in programs organized by like-minded CSOs, Governments, media, Recruitment Agencies, Private Sectors, Donor Agencies, Academia and Regional and International/Global forums to share, learn and advocate for the rights of migrants and families.

5. Chapter IV: Shelter Home

Shelter support to vulnerable needy RWMWs is one of the most needed and important humanitarian activity of AMKAS Nepal since September 2017 providing them the need base supports since the day they in the hands of te organization. They are either rescued by AMKAS, referred by other organizations and embassies or on family request. One of the strategy is that 2 client support officers everyday visits the airport identify the needy ones and escorts them to the shelter for need base support till they are hand over to their family and reintegrated to their family and community. However, this report presents an overview of the shelter services provided by AMKAS covering a period from July 2022 to June 2023.

Client Demographics: During the specified period, AMKAS Nepal provided its services to a total of **154** returnee Nepali migrants. Out of the 154 clients, **30 were documented** migrants, while **124 were undocumented**.

Work Variation in the Destined Country: Out of the 154 RWMWs 144 had worked as DW while only 10 worked in a company related formal sector.

5.2. Services provided from shelter home

During the reporting period, AMKAS Nepal attended to a diverse range of cases from the 154 clients, each classified into specific categories. The types of cases and their respective frequencies were as follows:

1. Regular Counseling provided- 154 clients
2. Post Arrival Training provided-154 clients
3. Pregnancy- 3 clients
4. Health problems- 35 clients
5. Mental Health Issues- 7 clients
6. Returned Empty Handed- 40 clients
7. Legal Support- 17 clients
8. Normal Returnees-19 clients

(#Note: All 154 clients left AMKAS with joyful smiles, having experienced the valuable support and services offered here)

Countrywise Data of the 154 RWMs are as follows:

1. Kuwait: 106 clients
2. Oman: 28 clients
3. Dubai: 6 clients
4. Jordan:5 clients
5. Saudi Arabia: 3
6. Qatar: 1 client
7. Malaysia: 2 client
8. Iraq: 1 client
9. India: 1 client
10. Uganda: 1 client

5.2. Major problems of shelter homes

Running shelter services has always been challenging for AMKAS Nepal since day one in many ways. This year was also a challenging year especially for resources to support our activities for more than 8 months which AMKAS sustained by local fund raising programs. Other challenges faced are; Time-frame for Shelter house/ Safe home: though this is an emergency shelter house there are many women migrant workers in such a condition that we need to keep them for longer period, tracing their family members as some return with severe mental health problem and have lost communication with their family members, there will also be some who have no family member available to come to receive them where AMKAS has to deal it very strategically. Challenges also lies on the sustainability of shelter house with short term projects to support. Among the legal cases of women migrant workers, the number of sexual exploitation and wage theft is big. The challenges become severe to deal with when such cases are of the undocumented migrant workers with no or very few documents to fight their case for evidence. Thus, the laws fails to protect women migrants at home too.

6. Case Stories

Case Story: AKS- 001701

Muna, sixteen years old, used to work in the entertainment sector in Kathmandu including clubs, hotels and restaurants, when a friend who also worked in the same sector suggested that she travel to India to work in the entertainment sector there.After failing a preliminary examination for the S.E.E, (Secondary Education Examination) Muna decided to leave her home in Dhading in order to move to Kathmandu in search of work to support her family financially.

In Kathmandu, she started working in clubs. She recalled being refused to get hired at some of the clubs because of her age. During the time that she worked at these clubs a friend told her about the possibility of working in India in the entertainment sector where she would be able to make more money. Muna decided to move to India and traveled to the Sunauli border from Kathmandu without any bags. Upon reaching the border she met a man who her friend knew with whom she crossed the border on a motorbike. After crossing the border, she got on a bus and traveled to Mumbai. In Mumbai, she found that she had to live with other Nepali women in an apartment. They were not allowed to leave the apartment without permission. From there, she was forced into prostitution. Her friend who suggested and arranged her travel to India would receive calls from clients and would take her to different locations. She was forced to engage with multiple clients every day. One day, she heard from somebody she was living with that she was going to be sold in Delhi. After six months of being

forced into prostitution, she shared with a client what had happened to her and what she had heard, who then gave her transportation fare to return to Nepal.

She was rescued by the Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau on the 26th of March, 2023 and referred to AMKAS Nepal for shelter. She arrived at the shelter on the same day. The friend was arrested by the Nepal Police as she was found to be the main culprit of the trafficking of Muna. At the shelter, she seemed to feel comfortable and was open to sharing what had happened to her. After a few days of being here, she frequently asked when she could go home and when her case at the Kathmandu District Court would end. She said that she wanted to "continue her education back home and wished to have a stable career". She was provided with communication services and help in searching for her family. She is currently with the Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau and will remain there until the case closes.

Case Story: AKS. – 001699

Bipini Pakhrin Tamang, a 23-year-old from Sindhuli was grew up in a home with low socioeconomic level. Due to family debt, she had to start working at the very young age in order to support both herself and her family, as a result, she was denied an education. She was compulsion to earn money which led her in taking a step for foreign employment for the sake of her family.

She went to Kuwait as a cleaning worker in a supply company. She paid 145000 RS to recruitment agency for the visa process fair and her process of migration was documented. However, she only lasted in her destination country for 1 month and 10 days as she found out that she was medical unfit and had to return home without the salary. She underwent a medical examination twice because her initial results were unfavorable. After being called a second time, she was instructed to drink curd to disguise a chest mark in order for her second medical report to be accepted by the listed medical institute of Department of the Foreign employment, during her migration in Kuwait, she went for the labor card process and was told she was medically unfit.

She was driven from the airport to AMKAS shelter home by the client support officer, during her first assessment her condition was found not so well as she had to return home without the money. She looked so much tensed and anxious, AMKAS then provided her counselling and other additional support. AMKAS provided her legal support for her compensation from the recruitment agency in negotiation with Department of Foreign employment. However, she was told by the recruitment company to give the whole money later, so she consented to receive only 65000 RS. And we assisted her in reintegrating into her family and community. She shared us that, ***"I want to go again for the foreign***

employment because I don't have a job or a good working environment in Nepal, and I would go again through all the safe migration processes for a better opportunity and salary."

Case Story: AKS. 001691

A 22-year-old girl from Nuwakot named Chandra Kumari Tamang went to Kuwait in search of a foreign job in order to improve her financial situation and opportunities due to her poor living family status. No one in her family is the breadwinner, therefore she had to support her family.

She went to Kuwait through documented processes as a salesperson in a clothes company, but she was only able to stay for one month due to her experiences with labor exploitation and verbal and mental abuse from a Pilipino super visor. She complained to her boss about her condition, but she got screamed at by her employer for making such a petty complaint. She thought that her place of employment was unhealthy for her, so she once more complained about it. Her employer verbally admonished her, and this time, she responded to her boss in an uncivil manner. As a result, her employer fired her and sent her back to Nepal without the wage.

AMKAS Nepal received her from the airport and provided her shelter support and legal support. AMKAS Nepal negotiated with the Department of Foreign Employment for her reimbursement from the recruitment agency as she paid 13500 RS for her visa processing. She received the 135,000 Rs with the legal assistance of AMKAS Nepal from the recruitment agency. Additionally, after we helped her reintegrate with her family, she said, ***"I will go again for foreign employment, but this time I won't go without the skill training because I was not skilled for work so I had bad experience."***

Case Story: AKS 001690

29 years old Kala was rescued from Tribhuwan International Airport (TIA) on 9th March 2023 and brought under the protection of AMKAS. She was found on her work uniform and had no any other clothes or belongingness with her. She was provided clothes and reintegrated with her family by AMKAS. She was also provided transportation fair as she had no money with her.

Kala BK (name changed), permanent resident of Rupandehi, Butwal couldn't pursue her education above grade 7 because of financial crises and family problems. She married at early age and had a child but separated with husband after few years of marriage consequently, she was responsible to take care of her child. However, because of poverty and unemployment she chossed to go for foreign employment to provide better future for her child.

Kala went to Kuwait via India through an agent of her village, also she refers agent to be her aunty. Her travel was undocumented and she stayed at India for 12 days to process for going abroad. After that she was sent to Kuwait to work.

She worked for a year as domestic worker. Kala though was promised by her agent to work 9 hours and a holiday a week but she found herself in different scenario when reached there. She was made to work for more than 15 hours a day with no holiday/leave. However, she never complained because she was provided salary at the mentioned date as promised. After a year of working at the home as domestic helper she was started to be abused by the employer. She was charged on having photo of employer with her on her room by the wife of employer. She denied it but later told she found it while cleaning the house. Therefore, the employer abused and abandoned her. She was not given shelter and food for 5days. She apologized for the mistake and asked to forgive her. But on the 6th day she was taken to airport without any pre information and sent her back to Nepal.

Kala decided to migrate to break free from a reality of poverty, violence and subjugation. She escaped from the subservient role in the families of husband, which often involved psychological and physical violence. She harnessed migration to escape this reality and renegotiate the role in the families and communities. The story distilled here of Kala, bear witness to the struggle of Nepalese women who are undertaking migration to break a vicious circle of poverty, patriarchy, illiteracy and dispossession

Case Story: AKS-001688

AKS-001688 (**PATIENCE**), 31 was the only daughter and firstborn of her family. She lived with her mother and younger brothers. Her parents were separated and her father did not give them any care or support. She was responsible for running her household and supported her brothers' education on her own. She wished to be able to build a new house for her family. She could not find employment from which she could make her desired amount of money, so she hoped to be able to go work abroad.

She met an agent, Immaculate Nabasumba, also known as Natasha through a friend. She was told by the agent that she would be able to get employed either as a cleaner, a waiter or in a salon in Nepal from which she would make USD 500 per month. She got a Visit Visa to come to Nepal. She arrived in Nepal on the 28th of January, 2023. In Kathmandu, she was forced into prostitution in a hotel called Hotel Journey Home in Thamel. The agent threatened to murder her here in Nepal and her family back home in Uganda if she did not do as told. Over the period of time that she was there, she was forced to engage with multiple clients every day. All payments that were made were taken by the agent and she was never given any shares of the total monetary earnings of USD 600. When she became ill and her visa was about to expire, she left after a month of having to stay there.

On the 26th of February of 2023 at Tribhuvan International Airport, she found that her ticket had been canceled. After inquiring about the identity of the person who did so she found that it was Immaculate Nabasumba. She went to the nearest police station, where the police referred her to the Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau. Since it was necessary for

the client to remain in Nepal for a certain period of time of the investigation, she was referred to AMKAS Nepal by the Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau for shelter.

She arrived at the shelter on the 27th of February of 2023. According to the first assessment, the client did not seem to wish to speak, seemed to be worried, afraid, stressed and did not eat well. The services provided at the shelter were lodging and food, Psycho-social Counseling, Medical support, Legal and Paralegal support, Communication with family at Uganda and was provided clothes as she had none. AMKAS Nepal found an organization in Uganda and reached out and asked for support. The organization funded her journey to Uganda.

The culprit, Immaculate Nabasumba was arrested in Kathmandu on the 27th of February, 2023 by the Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau. The case is under hearing at the Kathmandu District Court. The case of PATIENCE only represents the number of women and girls lost to trafficking in Nepal. There are several other victims in Nepal who have travelled from abroad for foreign employment but are forced for prostitution, labor, slavery or other forms of trafficking.

7. Photo Gallery



Commemorating 18 Dec, Intl Migrant Day -Migrant's Voice



Dharan Mayor, few words to RWMs during capacity building training in Dharan



Visit by Under Secretary MoLESS Mr. Kabiraj Upreti at our photo gallery during 18 Dec.



Visit by Member Ward Office-3, Ms.Sita Thapa at our photo gallery during 18 Dec.



RWMW in Ktm.successfully running her tailoring business with support from AMKAS Nepal



RWMW in Jhapa district successfully running her Dhaka business with support from AMKAS Nepal



5 day Entrepreneurship Dev Training to RWMWs



AMKAS at MFA Retreat in Malaysia



Local Fund-Raising commemorating 16 Days Activism VAW



AMKAS Team Celebrating Teej 2022



Local Fund-Raising on Deusi Bhailo celebrating Deepawali



AMKAS at Regional Program organized jointly by MFA and IOM in Qatar



AMKAS Chair interviewed by Ujjyalo FM



Commemorating National Anti-Human Trafficking Day 2022



Commemorating Intl Women's Day, 8 March in Open air for awareness on safe migration



Shelter Management Committee Meeting