



GIVING OPPORTUNITY IN ABOLISHING GLOBAL SLAVERY

OF MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS

THROUGH INSAAF COMMUNITY CENTER

OVERVIEW

INSAAF *Justice and Compassion* is one of the few Protestant Christian organizations in Lebanon seeking to serve Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs) who originate from Asia and Africa. They are often exploited, discriminated and expected to work as 'maids' under unreasonable conditions.

Since 2013 INSAAF led by International Ministries (IM) global servant Sarah Chetti, MDWs in Lebanon are provided hope, guidance and advocacy when marginalized and imprisoned. Sarah has been working in Lebanon since 1998 and she has also been an educator at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon.

She has a heart to serve the women in the role of the 'Maids' (MDW Migrant Domestic Workers) in Lebanese society. Since 2001, her work in the prisons was initially help in translating for MDWs. Today she volunteers two days per week to visit the maids in prison.

Sarah has been involved with all aspects of the plight of the maids along with Elma Khoury, a social worker who also visits the prisons in Lebanon. She and Elma cook food for 50 girls in the detention center every week. They go into the prison visit them in their cells, talk, pray and offer counsel.

Even though she is not a trained social worker, Sarah says, "My faith has enabled me to garner wisdom and sensitivity to the plight of the maids in Lebanon, to address their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. My seven years of hands on experience with all aspects of the lives of the maids in Lebanon has given me a unique perspective and abilities.

Migrant domestic workers laboring in Lebanon need physical strength, growth in expanding their knowledge and care and compassion to uplift their spirit in otherwise dismal conditions. It is a widely known fact that this group is marginalized, discriminated against, and abused (verbally, mentally, physically, and emotionally). As MDWs do not fall under the labor laws in Lebanon, there is very little monitoring or enforcement of the Lebanese laws and regulations, or international laws regarding labor, and human rights. MDWs are often imprisoned unjustly, and subjected to unfair trials. MDWs have little support within the country, and are often left without coping mechanisms in order to properly deal with the difficult situation in which they find themselves in Lebanon.

In response, International Ministries, in collaboration with INSAFF is seeking support for funding an ongoing community center program that is one of the most innovative of its kind.

Today we invite you to participate in giving to this opportunity to provide justice, support and compassion to MDWs.

BACKGROUND

Foreign labor is important for both the labor-sending and labor-receiving countries. In labor-receiving countries, labor shortages are filled by foreign nationals. Often these jobs are undesirable to the local population. Remittances provide an important source of income to the labor-sending countries, where there is a lack of meaningful employment for its citizens. Many of the foreign workers who travel abroad, including migrant domestic workers (MDWs), come from low socio-economic backgrounds and depend on this additional income in order to support their families, such as paying for their children's education.

Prior to the civil war in Lebanon, most domestic work was completed by Lebanese women coming from low socio-economic backgrounds, as well as some Syrian, Palestinian and Egyptian women. By the end of the civil war, this profession was seen as unacceptable for Lebanese women, which prompted the influx of foreign migrant workers from many Afro-Asian countries. Since this time there has been a "racialization" of the profession, which is now associated with a particularly low status within the country.

SITUATION

MDWs are recruited from their home countries by agencies, which are usually affiliated with employment agencies in Lebanon. Often times, the recruiting agencies deceive the women regarding working conditions such as the pay, number of hours, holiday time, and other factors. Agencies have even lied to educated women about the types of jobs they will receive upon arrival in Lebanon. Only when they arrive do the women realize they will be limited to domestic work within a household. Cases of recruitment for labor under false pretenses constitute human trafficking!

Employment that takes place in a private home should be governed by a contract between two parties;



however, domestic work is not subject to the Lebanese labor law and is instead governed by the 'kafala' (sponsorship) system. This ties the immigration process, legal documents, and working/living conditions of the MDW to her sponsor, effectively giving the employers control over most, if not all aspects of her life.

Sarah with 'Maids' in Lebanon

General security, the police, the courts, etc. favor the employers over the MDWs when it comes to any type of labor dispute or civil rights case, filed by either party. MDWs often suffer both work place abuse as well as human rights violations at the hands of their employers, most often by the “madames” of the house.

MDWs are frequently expected to work long hours every day and be on-call at any hour of the night. Very rarely are the MDWs given time-off throughout the week, and even if they are, they are usually not permitted to leave the house. Often the sponsors hold the passports of the MDW, which means that her movement is extremely limited.

MDWs exhibit high levels of physical, mental, psychological, and emotional abuse by their employers. They are sometimes hit, beaten, burned and cut for not completing their duties as desired by the sponsors. Some employers have gone so far as to threaten to kill the MDWs for reporting these abuses. All of these mechanisms of control parallel the trauma of trafficked victims and leave the MDW either unable to, or fearful of reporting the situation that she is facing.

If an MDW has the courage to report abuse to the police, they often do not take her seriously and immediately return her to her abusive employers. In cases where MDWs are either plaintiffs or defendants they are often detained, without access to a lawyer or a translator and the courts most often side with the sponsors, regardless of the evidence provided.

These situations create an entire culture of skewed power dynamics, with the employers having both physical and psychological control over their employees. Many MDWs have feelings of depression regarding their situation and helplessness in being unable to change anything. Quite alarming is the number of MDWs who have died in Lebanon through failed escape attempts, suicides, or homicides at the hands of their employers. It is clear that MDWs need further support in order to change their situation.

While some other NGOs have started work in this area, there is still a large gap in the services available for MDWs. The services currently being provided are inadequate for filling the needs of the women, who are often isolated in deplorable conditions. More support is needed in terms of psychological, social, emotional, medical, employment and legal support for the women. The MDWs need to be provided with safe spaces where they are able to socialize, heal, and seek help or counseling.

It is for this reason that INSAAF is seeing funding to develop a full-fledged community center for MDWs. The cost in Lebanon is only \$70,000 per year and will offer guidance, instruction, advocacy and legal counsel.

Thanks to One Great Hour of Sharing, an initial grant was provided to launch and proof test this concept in 2013.

PROPOSAL

Today, we are inviting you to participate in growing and developing women in Lebanon with safeguards to avert labor abuse. With your kind support, many MDWs can also receive professional legal advice and return to their home countries with valuable job skills and dignity in tact.



Operational support for the year	\$16,870
Personnel for social work, administration and two teachers*	\$22,400
\$9,600 for social worker and office administrator 4day/week	
\$6,000 for each part time teacher	
Advocacy and legal counsel	\$20,863
Indirect and program support	\$ 9,867
TOTAL BUDGET	\$70,000/ annually

* Language courses: Both introductory English and Arabic classes will be provided, each session comprising of 1 lesson per week for 3 months; with approximately 12 students per class.

* Computer classes: Basic computer classes will be provided, each session comprising of 1 class per week for one month; with approximately 8 students per class.

In order to prepare for the second year of ministry, it is our endeavor to seek funding of \$140,000 to be fully prepared for two years of ministry.

WOULD YOU PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER A GIFT?

Your generous support is what enables IM to respond to the continuing and growing need of MDWs. Your response with a gift or a multi-year pledge today by returning the enclosed memorandum of acceptance to this proposal will be a tremendous encouragement to us and the migrant domestic workers.

Receiving your gift or knowing your intention now, allows IM to plan and budget for the INSAAF Program Community Center.

This project will be managed and implemented by

- Sarah Chetti** (Director of the Insaaf Community Centre for Migrant Domestic Workers)
- Daniel Chetti** (Educator)
- Hikmat Kashouh** (Educator, Pastor)
- Arthur Brown** (Specialist in Community Development)
- Elma Khoury** (Associate Director, Social Worker)
- Burble Griffieon** (Religious worker experienced with Ethiopian MDWs)

This team brings a wealth of experience and skills from years of working with migrant domestic workers. The project will also include volunteers from various church communities in Lebanon who will be involved with the women during drop-in hours, as well as teaching courses and meeting other needs of the Center.

Thank you for considering your part in this ministry. We look forward to your kind reply.



INSAAF Director, Sarah Chetti is committed to stewarding your gifts and providing regular updates on this ministry.

To contact Sarah email: sarah.chetti@internationalministries.org

If you have any questions, or would like assistance to complete your gift, please contact
Mission Advancement 610-768-2311

The Tax ID number for International Ministries is 13-5563392



International Ministries, also known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, works cross-culturally to invite people to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to proclaim, through both word and deed, God's reign of justice, peace and abundant life for all creation.



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