

Project partner NDWM

The domestic workers' movement in India

Indian cities show us immense luxury and the most abject poverty at the same time. Children and women do the dirty work in the houses of the upper middle class for a pittance. The Flemish sister Jeanne Devos has taken the faith of these twenty million domestic workers to heart for over twenty years. She does this through the National Domestic Workers' Movement (NDWM), a Broederlijk Delen project partner.



A BETTER LIFE IN THE CITY

Small-scale farmers in the Indian countryside barely earn enough to feed their families. Human traffickers often lure their children to the cities with rosy plans about the future in the city. Once they get to the city, the children are locked up to perform domestic work. They receive a pittance for long working days. They are brutally humiliated and sometimes physically abused.

FROM A DREAM STRAIGHT TO A NIGHTMARE

One harrowing example of such a story is Sunita's, a twelve year old servant girl. She started as a domestic worker at five through child trafficking. Whenever the baby she had to take care of cried, her employer burned her with a hot iron. 'Fortunately, and thanks to the help of an alert neighbour who's a member of the NDWM, we were able to save her, and give her shelter and an education', says sister Jeanne Devos. 'But prevention is better than cure.' 'Therefore, we regularly go to the villages in the countryside to provide information and to warn people and tell them about child trafficking and slavery.'

'At the age of five she was already engaged in domestic work'

TOGETHER WE STAND

The NDWM has over two million members and is active in 23 Indian states. As a consequence, the NDWM has a widespread network. Thanks to its powerful solidarity network its voice is heard. One of its big victories was the 2006 legislation abolishing child labour for under fourteens. Nevertheless, about sixteen million children still work as domestic workers. This legislation should not remain dead letter. Therefore, the movement continues to fight for a full recognition of domestic workers and for a humane life.

Broederlijk Delen supports the NDWM by donating 80.000 euros a year

- One information session in the countryside on child trafficking costs 40 euros.
- Sheltering and counselling a traumatised child costs 19 euros a year.
- Renting a shelter for a year costs 4.500 euros.