

Appendix 3

Case study Ireland

Rana

Rana is from Bangladesh. She is in her mid-twenties and is an experienced child care worker but before coming to Ireland she was working in the textile industry. She is single, her family are not well off and there is high unemployment in the area. People from her locality had emigrated to Europe and the US and there were reports of how they had prospered. As a result emigration is seen as providing a great opportunity. When this opportunity arose for Rana it would have been considered very foolish not to avail herself of it.

While working in the textile industry in Bangladesh Rana met her prospective employer who offered to bring her to Ireland to look after his children. She believed she would be well paid and in a position to send money home to her family. She paid him in the region of €5,000 and he promised to organise her work permit. This money was borrowed from family and friends.

A work permit was organised and Rana entered Ireland legally. She was working minding four children and also had general domestic duties. Her employer had a retail shop and from time to time she had to also work there. She was paid €50 per month after deductions were made for lodgings. Her employer told her that he was sending money home to her father as she had borrowed from friends and relatives to pay him to come to Ireland. Rana subsequently learned that her father had received one payment of €700.

During the two years Rana worked in this house she was constantly verbally abused and at times physically abused. She also locked in a bathroom if her employer felt she had not listened or completed her work properly or if she became upset and cried.

Rana became exhausted and very frightened. She had no English and no one to turn to. She had no knowledge of the Irish work permit system. There was another girl living in this house in the same position. It reached a point where she felt she could not continue to work and live under these

extreme conditions and decided to try to leave. She decided to approach a regular visitor to her employer's home. She believed he was kind and that he might help her if he knew how desperate her position was.

There were dangers in contacting this man as she had to contact him at his work place. She was also very frightened that her employers would hear about this. Eventually she made contact with this man and he agreed to help. Rana calls this man her saviour.

She simply left the house and he took her to his home in another part of Ireland. After two months he obtained a work permit for her to work in his restaurant. She says she is being paid the minimum wage and is given the correct amount of time off.

Her new employer is now offering Rana a job as a childminder in his home to look after his child. The family wish to employ someone from a similar cultural and religious background to instruct their child in their religious beliefs. Rana would like to return to this type of work as this is what she initially came to Ireland to undertake. She wants to work legally in this sector and repay her debt back home and help her family. The MRCI are helping Rana to sort out a new work permit.