



## Women from Around the World statements\*

"I am 9 years old. When my mother died of pneumonia I had to drop out of school to take care of the household work. My 2 brothers go to the local school but because my family is poor they cannot afford to send all of us to school. My father says I will probably marry in a few years time anyway."

"I am 17 years old and live in a rural town with my grandparents. There is high unemployment here, and many people move away to look for work in the city. A man on the street said he could offer me work as a waitress in a restaurant where I can earn lots of money if I leave my family and go with him. But to secure the job my grandparents have to pay him a fee of \$200."

"I am eight months into my seventh pregnancy but I have only two surviving children, boys aged 5 and 2. Because I live so far away from the health centre, it is very difficult for me to visit the antenatal nurse."

"I live in a rural village with my parents and siblings. We live in a house with only 2 small rooms. Every day I have to wake up before dawn to carry water from a well which is 2 kilometres away. Because it takes so long to fetch the water and carry it back, often I have to miss going to school."

"I am 12 years old and was born blind. I cannot go to school because the local school does not have a teacher or the books and tools to help me learn how to read. I worry about my future and who will take care of me because my parents are very old."

"I am 11 years old and I go to school every day. My parents own a little tailor's shop. When I get home from school, I help in my parent's shop with the sewing. Because they are so busy, I sometimes also cook dinner and look after my younger brothers and sisters. Often I work until 3am in the morning, and only get 2-3 hours sleep. There is hardly any time to do my homework, and I find it hard to concentrate at school because I am so tired."

"I am 26 and have two children aged 10 and 8 years old. My husband died and I was finding it hard to support my family, so I had to move across the border to another country for better employment opportunities. My children are not allowed to enrol in the local school because they aren't from the same country as the other children. None of the teachers there speaks our language-and we are told that we must learn how to speak *their* language."

"In my village there is a Women's Self-Help Group where ladies can go to learn how to manage money and set up small businesses of their own. I would like to join the group, but my husband disapproves. He says I should stay at home to focus on chores and taking care of the children."

"Recently I needed money to pay for an operation for my young child. But I could not secure a loan because I did not have enough collateral. Even though I was married the bank also demanded my

husband's guarantee before they could grant the loan. My husband will not agree because of the huge sum."

"I live in a sea-side town which experienced a large tsunami. When a tsunami hit, we lost many members of the community, including my husband. I have lived in this town ever since I was married, and have no other living relatives. The state government is threatening to take my land away because they will not recognise me as the legitimate owner of the land."

"I am 16 years old and I love to play soccer. I have been competing in a mixed team on the weekends ever since I was young. However, now that I am no longer a junior the local soccer club will not let me register because there is no senior girls team."

\*These statements, although fictional, represent an amalgam of the experiences of real women which aid and development organisations work with in Asia and the Pacific.