Survivor Stories: Adya

MODULES 1, 2, 4, & 6

MEET ADYA

Adya (whose name means “first” in Sanskrit) grew up in a small village in India. After her father’s death, her mother struggled to make ends meet. Then Adya’s mother hurt her leg and couldn’t work anymore. At age 15, Adya suggested to her mother that she should leave school and move to the big city where she heard she could earn enough money to help both of them. After one year away, she promised she would return to the village finish her studies. At first her mother was reluctant, but when a distant cousin said he knew of a good house-servant’s job, both Adya and her mother agreed. Once Adya entered her employer’s house, however, she realized he had other – more illicit – intentions. He kept the doors locked, denied Adya access to a phone, and said that he paid a large sum for Adya’s transportation so he didn’t owe her any money for the work she did. “I bought you,” he said. “Now you belong to me.”

Module 2

When Adya’s employer said that he now owns her because he paid for her transport, at first, she had no idea what that meant. Soon he started approaching her at night, however, and her worst nightmares became real. Twice she tried to escape but corrupt police brought her back to her employer, who then unleashed his rage on her.

Module 4

Eventually a new house-servant joined the household and she linked Adya to the local ChildLine telephone hotline (NGO) who contacted an advocate, and a rescue-raid was arranged. Fortunately, Adya’s mother accepted her back home; many times, girls who had experienced this kind of misfortune were stigmatized and forced to live in isolation for the rest of their lives.

Module 6

What can you do to help Adya and others like her? Advocate for implementation of the Palermo Protocol, for the enforcement of child protection legislation, and for foreign assistance to help families in greatest need.