**Ana's story**

When Ana was 11 years old, she got married.

That’s what her mother told Ana when she handed her daughter over to a man nearly twice her age. In reality, Ana had been sold—an all too common scenario in the Roma communities of Serbia, which serves as a source, transit, and destination country for women and girls who are trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Ana’s husband forced her to work on the streets as a prostitute. If he was not satisfied with her earnings he would beat her, often using thick electrical cables. After a few years, Ana was sold again. She ran away to Montenegro with two of her clients, only to be sold a third time.

Ana finally escaped when she was sent on an errand. After two days of running—tired, frozen, hungry—she turned to the police. Her abuser had reported her missing, but she managed to convince the police that she was a victim of human trafficking.

Upon Ana’s return to Serbia, she was referred to Atina—the organization that would empower Ana to turn her life around. Atina's main objective is to help trafficking survivors overcome trauma and regain confidence, and this is done by working with each individual in all aspects of his or her life to ensure full recovery and a sustainable reintegration. Every detail is taken care of—from helping victims file police reports, to covering legal fees, to helping with family mediation.

In Ana’s case, Atina found her a safe placement in a foster home, and made sure she got identity papers and health insurance. The organization provided her with referrals for medical assistance—she had multiple surgeries to address physical ailments caused by sexual abuse—and provided her with extensive psychological support to help her heal emotionally. Atina also offered legal support to prepare Ana to testify against her abuser, who was convicted and sent to prison.

Today, Ana has learned to read and write, thanks to Atina’s literacy program. She enrolled in primary school for older students and has finished seven grades so far. Atina helped her find a job as kitchen staff, and Ana is now living independently.

Ana also participates in peer support activities organized by Atina, so she can share her experience and help other girls. Though she acknowledges that her sense of fear will never fully disappear, her life has been transformed. “I finally feel like a person,” she says. “Like a human being.”

**About Atina**

Atina’s trafficking reintegration program provides educational, social, psychological, and legal assistance

for victims of trafficking. Atina’s dedication to human rights promotes gender empowerment, reducing the damage caused by trafficking and helping to prevent re-victimization.