



STOP THE TRAFFIK
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD

TRAFFICKING STORIES

All names have been changed to protect peoples identities.

HEMA'S STORY

Hema is 12-years-old and lives in a remote village in the north of Karantaka, a state on the East coast of India. She is the oldest of five children and has never been to school because she is responsible for doing all the housework and looking after her younger brothers and sisters while her parents are at work.

Hema's mum and dad work on a farm. Their crop was destroyed by a drought and so they were very poor with little to eat. Hema's parents were worried about how they were going to survive. But then a kind man from the city visited with the promise of a well-paid job for Hema.

Hema was taken to Bangalore with five other young girls to work as a housemaid. Her parents were paid a small sum of money and were told that Hema would be able to send back more once she was working. Hema was very excited and was pleased that she could help her family – now her brothers and sisters would have food to eat.

When Hema reached Bangalore, she was taken to a big mansion which had large gates. But the job wasn't what she had expected. Instead of being paid money for her work, she was treated as a slave. She was not paid and was not allowed to leave the grounds of the mansion. She was very badly treated by the man who had seemed so kind when he arrived at her parents' house. Fortunately she was rescued and returned to her family, but the memories of what happened will stay with her for a long time.

Source: Oasis India, **STOP THE TRAFFIK**

SOKHA'S STORY

Sokha and Makara are from Poipet in Cambodia. When they were just 14 and 15 years old, their mother was ill with a liver complaint. The family needed money to pay for drugs to treat her. They also hoped to buy some land to build a home. A man promised good jobs for the girls in nearby Thailand, and offered the family some money if they would let them go. Sokha and Makara were excited at the thought of being able to help the family with the money they earned. The reality turned out to be very different. The man was a trafficker.

There were no 'good jobs' for the girls in Thailand. Sokha's mother died within a year, and the family couldn't afford to buy the land that they had dreamed of. Sokha, who is now 17, says, 'I felt cheated. The traffickers used us for slave jobs, and while they earned lots of money, we only got enough to feed ourselves each day.' She explains how she and Makara, 16, were given jobs selling fruit, but it did not pay enough.



STOP THE TRAFFIK

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD

So they were forced to work even harder and to do work that they didn't enjoy.

Sokha and Makara's story has a happy ending because of the Cambodian Hope Organisation (CHO) that works with Tearfund, a relief and development agency. Sokha and Makara's parents met with CHO and gave them photos to pass on to an organisation in Thailand that rescues trafficked girls from prostitution. The girls were found and rescued about a year after their ordeal started.

Sokha says, 'It's good to be home. We are grateful to CHO who have brought us back to our home, provided us with counselling, taught us the skill of sewing, and brought us into the church.' When asked what they hope for in the future, Sokha says she hopes to set up her own sewing business and employ and help girls in her situation. 'We were scared all the time in Thailand,' she says. 'Now I'm happy, getting support, living with my family and free to work when I want.'

Source: Tearfund, **STOP THE TRAFFIK**

PRJUA AND AJAY'S STORY

Prjua, aged 9 and her brother Ajay, aged 7, lived on Thane train station in Mumbai, India. They lived with their parents who were both alcoholics and were not able to look after them very well. Prjua and Ajay loved to go to the Asha Deep Day Centre, run by Oasis India. They learned to read and write and were given the opportunity to play.

Prjua and Ajay went to the centre every day for about three months and really enjoyed it. But suddenly they disappeared. The staff at the centre were worried about them and so they went looking for them. They found Prjua and Ajay's parents and asked them what had happened. Prjua and Ajay's father said that a man had come and offered money for them and that he had sold them for the equivalent of \$30. That was the last the father and the staff of Asha Deep ever heard of them.

Source: Oasis India, **STOP THE TRAFFIK**

MARY'S STORY

Mary was born in Mexico. When she was about 17 years old, she was persuaded to go to the USA with the promise that she would have a better life and be provided with a job. A man promised to take her and look after her.

However, when she arrived in the USA her life got a lot worse. She was given a job at a factory packing vegetables. But she was escorted there and back every day and was never allowed to go anywhere on her own. She was never paid for the work that she did. She was given drugs and was badly abused. She wasn't allowed to go and see a doctor when she was ill or hurt. She wasn't allowed to leave her apartment except when she went to work.



STOP THE TRAFFIK

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD

The man who took her to the USA threatened her. He said that if she tried to escape she would be deported – sent back to Mexico – or hurt by the immigration authorities – the people who decide who can stay in the country.

Eventually Mary managed to escape with her young son. She is now staying in a special centre that looks after people who have been trafficked or abused. She is being given shelter, food, clothing and advice about what to do next. She is hoping that she will be able to stay in the United States and start a new life.

Source: Salvation Army

SERGEY'S STORY

Sergey is 27 years old and is from Perm in Russia. In 2001, he saw an advert in a local newspaper for a job agency. They were looking for construction workers to work in Spain. The salary offered was US\$1,200 per month. This was much more than his monthly salary of just \$200 and more than he could ever hope to earn in Perm. He applied to the agency who booked his plane ticket to Madrid. They said he would need to pay back the money for the ticket when he started work.

When he arrived in Spain, Sergey was picked up by a person from the “agency” who took his passport. He was taken to Portugal and forced to work on a construction site without pay for several months. The site was surrounded by barbed wire. Without his passport he was afraid that the Portuguese authorities would arrest him. One day Sergey managed to escape and begged his way to Germany. Because he did not have a passport the German authorities arrested him. He says that the police beat him and took away what little money he had. Then they sent him back to Russia.

Now back home, Sergey is very traumatised by his experience. He suffered psychological problems and for several months was unable to work. He received no counselling or support to help him overcome his ordeal. Meanwhile his traffickers remain unpunished.

Source: Anti-Slavery International

CHARLES' STORY

Charles became a soldier in Uganda when he was just eight years old. He didn't have any choice about it. He was taken from his home by men from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA are rebels who are fighting the government in the North of Uganda.

Charles did not go through a well-planned training programme. Some soldiers in the LRA have machine guns, but mostly they use machetes. The LRA does not have a uniform, and sometimes their soldiers have been known to wear stolen uniforms from the Ugandan Army. Children have to stay in the army until they manage to escape or are rescued.



STOP THE TRAFFIK

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD

Conditions are not good in the rebel army. Food is scarce and the children are badly treated. While Charles was a captive he was shot in his leg and lower back and was forced to act against his will. Charles was also regularly beaten. At times they used a machete to punish him. On one later occasion he was whipped 200 times because he left a bomb behind.

The LRA rule their child soldiers by fear, forcing them to commit acts that will haunt them for years. Charles thinks he killed three people. To stop him from escaping, he was also forced to beat someone very badly. Children are told that once they have killed someone they will never be able to go back to normal life with their families.

Charles is now 15 and is no longer a soldier. He managed to escape but he has horrible memories of his time in the army. It will take him a long time to get over it.

Source: Tearfund