

Millions of young girls are lured into the lucrative business of sex trafficking. These women are cultivated by older men and sometimes women and forced into prostitution. It happens in every country and almost every city. The average age of the girls brought into this industry is 13. Many enter the business as young as 5. These women are then forced into prostitution or face physical abuse and sometimes torture. These girls are usually lured in by a seemingly nice man and after a few days, the violence begins and they are trapped. Many girls are lured in through chat rooms. Many of the sex traffickers use Craigslist, Backpage, local sites, local publications and magazines with the personals, escorts and other categories to generate business for the girls they have under their control. The sex trafficking industry is a \$39,000,000,000 a year industry. Most of the traffickers get a very high return on their investment (buying them nicer clothes, etc.) This is high profit and low risk enterprise for the traffickers.

Sold by their mothers: Shining a light on the child sex trade in Cambodia

The CNN Freedom Project wants to amplify the voices of the victims of modern-day slavery, highlight success stories and help unravel the tangle of criminal enterprises trading in human life.

(CNN) When Kieu was 12, her mother asked her to take a job. But not just any job. Kieu was first examined by a

doctor, who issued her a "certificate of virginity." She was then delivered to a hotel, where a man raped her for two days.

In 2013, the Freedom Project went to Cambodia with Oscar-winning actress and UNODC Goodwill Ambassador against Human Trafficking, Mira Sorvino. The result was "Every Day in Cambodia: A CNN Freedom Project Documentary," which looked at child sex trafficking in the country.

In Svay Pak, a notorious child sex trafficking hub in Phnom Penh, Sorvino met Kieu, who was then around 14 years old. She had been rescued from sex trafficking by Agape International Missions (AIM), a non-profit for trafficked and at risk children and teenagers.

Kieu told of how she had been sold aged 12 by her mother to a Khmer man of "maybe more than 50" who had three children of his own, Sorvino

explained in her Cambodia journal:

"The price set in advance for her virginity: \$1,500, though she was ultimately only given \$1,000, of which she had to give \$400 to the woman who brought her to the man. Her mother used the money to pay down a debt and for food for the fish they raise under their floating house -- their primary income source.

"Beforehand, Kieu said, 'I did not know what the job was and whether it was good for me. I had no idea what to expect. But now I know the job was not good for me.' After she lost her virginity to the man, she felt 'very heartbroken.' Her mother supposedly felt bad too, but still sent her to work in a brothel. Kieu said she did not want to go, but had to. She said, 'They held me like I was in prison.'"

She was kept there for three days, raped by three to six men a day. When she returned home, her mother sent her away for stints in two other brothels, including one 400 kilometers away on the Thai border. When she learned her mother was planning to sell her again, this time for a six-month stretch, she realized she needed to flee her

home.

[Read her full story here](#)

Her story is all too common in Svay Pak; she was just one of the girls whose stories were told in the film. Fast forward to 2015 and "Everyday in Cambodia" was named "outstanding documentary" by the Alliance for Women

in Media Foundation,
winning a Gracie Allen
award.

Sorvino says the film has
raised awareness of the

issue of child sex trafficking in Svay Pak and Cambodia, helping to raise funds for AIM to build a school that, when completed, will offer hope for more than 1,000 children in the region.

"Primary and especially secondary education is extremely important in preventing trafficking," she says. "It allows children to develop critical thinking skills to be able to defend

themselves from
traffickers and to have
the skills that will
enable them to have
gainful employment to
be able to support their
families in other ways
than being sexually

exploited."

AIM also now works
with an "incorruptible"

police SWAT team to
raid brothels where
children are working.

But Sorvino adds that it's not just about helping the victims. "The demand side really needs to be addressed," she says.

"If people weren't
trying to buy child sex
it wouldn't be being
sold."

There are many
steps we can do as
individuals to
hamper their
recruitment and
make it difficult to

sell the services of
these young girls
through online sites.
There are also steps
we can take to
activate our

communities and
generate much
needed attention for
our young girls.

Steps

1 Look through
online sights like
Backpage and
Craigslislist and look

through their
personals and
escorts categories.

Most will post a
legal age, it's
sometimes

obvious, once you
see their photos,
these ages are not
accurate.

Flag these posts!



2 Keep your

perspective.

Some women
choose to do this
as a business, sex
trafficking victims

are forced.

Regardless of

how you feel

about escorts

being advertised,

try to focus your
attentions to
looking for the
younger girls.

3 Keep a
notebook and
take notes on
those you see
often, similar

descriptions and
wordings but
different images.

The willing
advertisers will

often take
photos of
themselves. Sex
traffickers may
do the picture

taking and pose

the girls in

suggestive

positions. You

may even see

bruising on some
of the girls.

- By

recording details

of certain
posters you can
do web
searches for
certain phrases

they use as well
as email
addresses. It
may help you
discover new

sites to comb.

4 Flag these
post daily.

Some sites will
pull the
advertisement

immediately,
others require
several flags for
inappropriate
content before

they will
remove it.

5 Never
confuse your
activism with
policing. You
should never

attempt to
contact the
girls or the
adults posting
the ads. Never

attempt to bait

or entrap

these

individuals.

Our job is to

make their
online
advertising
more difficult
and make their

business

profits suffer.

6 Dedicate a
few minutes,
whenever you
have some

free internet
time to look
over these
sites and

block
suspicious
users.

7 Look for
local sites
that may not
have the

resources to
catch these
sex traffickers
when they

post their ads.

Notify the site
by flagging or
sending a

message.

8 Contact

your local

law makers.

Find out

what they
are doing to
stop sex
trafficking

and the laws

around it.

What dollars

are available

to provide

re-entry

assistance to

the girls

when they
do get away
from the
traffickers.

9 Investigate Safe Harbor Laws and see if they

affect your
state. If not,
write letters
to your

representativ
es.

Warnings

- A

majority of

trafficked

females will

use fake

photos.

Flagging ads
to interfere
with
business

could have
unintended
consequenc
es for the

very victims

you are

trying to

help (they

could end
up being
abused or
otherwise

punished
for not
making
enough

money, or
for spending
so much
re-posting

their ads
that were
removed).

Manila, Philippines (CNN) --

Birds chirp
outside. A
motorcycle

groans up a

nearby hill.

And in a

small,
warm room
filled with

books and
framed
drawings, a

young

woman

we're

calling

Maria tears

at a tissue

as she

prepares to

tell how

sex

traffickers

corrupted

her life.

"I was 15
when I was
recruited,"

she said.

"I had to
find a job

because

my father

had a lung

problem
and I
needed to

find money

so we

could send

him to the
hospital."

Maria met
a person in
her

province

who said

he could

find her a
job in
Manila.

"I thought I
was going
to work as

a

dishwasher

in a

restaurant,

" she said.

"But when

I arrived I
realized it
was a

'casa.'

" 'Casa' is a
code word

for brothel in the Philippines

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Many
young girls
fall prey

to human
traffickers.

They

often

leave their

homes

and
villages in
the

provinces,
seeking
opportunit

ies to
support
their

families.

The
traffickers
are adept

at

convincing

them to

travel
with
them.

"I traveled
through
the

islands. It
took me
24 hours

to reach

Manila.

When I

got there,
I found 16
girls

staying in
the same
small

place.

Some

were as

young as
13-years-
old," she

said.

Maria was
trapped
and

forced to
have sex
with a

number
of foreign
and

Filipino men.

Although

she was

there for

only a

few

weeks

before the Filipino

police

raided

the

apartmen

t and

freed her

and the
others,
the

damage

had been

done.

Maria

routinely

saw up

to 13

customer

s a day.

Her
captors
forced

her to go

to

extreme

lengths

to

deceive

them

into

thinking

she was

a virgin in

order to

comman
d higher
prices.

"We
were
forced to

take a
cotton
ball and

dip it in
pigeon's
blood,

then put

that in

our sex

organ,"

she says.

As

outrageo

us as

that is, it

is not
unusual.

In some
parts of
Asia,

anti-traffic
king
groups

have

found

that

men

believe

sex with

a virgin

can cure

their

HIV/AIDS.

Social workers

say

that's

led to a
disturbin

g trend

with

tragic

consequ

ences

for the

victims

of

human trafficking

g.

UNICEF

estimate

s as

many as

100,000

children
work in

the

illegal

sex

trade in

the

Philippin

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es.

Sex trafficking

g: The

horror

and the
hope

(CNN)

When

Karla

Jacinto

was

aged

just 12

she fell

for a

22-year-

old

man. S

he ran

away

from

the

small

Mexican

town

where

she

grew up

so she

could

be with

him. At

first he
treated

her

well,

showeri

ng her

with

gifts. It

wasn't

long

before

he was

forcing

her to

work as

a

prostitut

e.

She

says

that for

the best

part of

four

years,

she saw

up to

30 men

a day,

seven

days a
week.

"I had to
close

my eyes

so that

that I

wouldn'

t see

what

they

were

doing to

me, so

that I

wouldn'

t feel

anything

, " she

said.

By her
own

estimat

e, she

was

raped

43,200

times

before

she was

rescued

in 2008.

Her

story is

far from

unique.

There

are

around

4.5

million

victims

of

sexual

exploita tion

around

the

world.

The vast

majORITY

of these

are

women

and
girls.

Sex traffickin

g has

become

a huge

global

industry,
worth

\$99

billion a

year.

For the

criminal

s the

risks are

relatively

y low,

and the

rewards

high. On

average,

each

sex

traffickin

g victim

creates

nearly

\$22,000

in

profits

per year

for their

exploite

rs.

"Gustav

o" is a

convicte

d

human trafficking

r, now

serving

time in

a

Mexican

maximu

m

security

prison.

For

years,

he lured

girls

away

from

their

families

with

gifts and

romanti

C

promise

S,

before

forcing

them

into

prostitut

ion by
threats,

coercio

n

and/or

physical

and

verbal

abuse.

"The

faster

they fall

in love

and

leave

with

you, the
faster

the

business

starts

making

money

and the

less

cash

you

have to

spend

showeri

ng them

with

gifts and
going

out,"

Gustavo

said. "To
me, the

girls

meant a

source

of

income,

mercha

ndise

you can

buy,
trade or

sell."

These

days, he

says

he's a

changed

man, a

born-ag

ain

Christian

. He

says

people

need to

know

that

there

are still

many

men

doing

what he

used to

do:

preying

upon
young,

innocent

t girls

and luring

them

into

prostitut

ion.

"T

hey

don't

know

that

behind

Prince

Charmin

g there's

a

monster

wearing

a mask.

A

monster

that is

going to

lead

them

into a

world of

prostitut

ion and

exploita
tion."

These stories

are

harrowi

ng, but

amidst

the

horror,

there is

hope:

the

women

who

escape

lives of
exploita

tion,

and the

organiza tions

that

help

them.

Women

like

Jennifer

Kempto

n, from

Columb

us,

Ohio,

who

spent

more

than

five

years in
forced

prostitut

ion and

addicte

d to

drugs.

She was

tattoo

done by her

trafficke

rs,

"brande

d" to

mark

her as

proPERT

y. But

she

eventua

lly

escaped

and got

her

tattoos

covered

,

changin

g the

way she

saw

herself.

Kempto

n

wanted

other

survivor

s to

experie
nce the

freedom

she had

found,

so she

started

a

nonprofi

t

organiza
tion --

Survivor!

s Ink --

that

pays for

traffickin

g

survivor

s to

have

their

brandin

sg

tattoos

covered

by new
tattoos

of their
choosin

g.

Or

women

like

Rachel

McCool,

whose

story

shows

there is

a life for survivor

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S.

McCoo

l grew

up in a

small

Georgia

town

and was

forced

to

prostitut

e at a

strip

club.

She

eventua

lly left

that life

behind

her and

enrolled

in a
center

for

traffickin

g

victims

called

Wellspri

ng

Living.

She is

now 28

with a

beautiful

l son

and an

optimis

m

about

the

future.

"I have

a whole

new

apprecia
tion for

the

color of

the sky,
because

when

you're

an

addict

and

when

you're

in

bondag

e, you

see

everythi

ng as

black

and

white,

as gray,"

she

said. "I

didn't

see the
beauty

of this
world,

this

world

we're
living in.

Yeah,
there's a

lot of

hurt

and I

underst

and that

too, but

there's a

lot of

beauty

and

there's a

lot of

freedom

!!

●

{jcomm

ents on}

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