

Human trafficking

The older we get the more we realise about the world; the more we realise that maybe the world is not quite what we thought.

With growing numbers of social media influences jetting off to scenic locations worldwide it is easy to forget that that beautiful sandy beach or clean hotel they show off is not an accurate representation of a country. And that although we only see the scenic sun sets there is darkness and evil in every country.

Human trafficking is the trade of **humans** for the purpose of forced labour, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others. It can affect anyone, men women, adults and children.

Here are some facts and statistics about human trafficking that I hope will resonate and shock you as much as they did me ...

27 million people are enslaved right now worldwide.

600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked internationally each year.

1.2 million children are trafficked annually for sex.

Human trafficking generates £19 billion pounds in annual profit, that is twice as much as Coca Cola make.

Around 3,287 new slaves are being kidnapped and sold today. That will mean 10 more have been kidnapped by the time I finish this talk.

Now, there are two main forms of human trafficking, 19% of the human trafficking statistics are from labour. This involves sweat shop workers, servants, child soldiers and agricultural workers.

And 80% of the statistic is sex work, involving working in massage parlours, escorting services, modelling and bar or strip club work.

Now you may wonder why these are forms of human trafficking, well these people are targeted by knowledgeable individuals who pry on less educated people's dreams but also weaknesses such as family illness.

A very sad story that I was told was about a woman named Sokim. She was sold by her mother at the age of 6 to a Chinese family. She was supposed to be waiting on the family for long hours, cleaning and washing for them. But at the age of 6 she had no clue how to clean, cook and wash so was beaten as a punishment. She was later sold to another family who treated her even worse. Eventually with the help of a neighbour she was able to escape and make it to a charity named "Be Free Cambodia."

In 2018, I visited "Be Free" and met Sokim who is now the manager of "Be Free Cambodia" this amazing charity gives girls who have been trafficked another chance in life.

The girls are put on a 12-month programme where they will have the opportunity to heal, learn, study and grow.

They are taught handicrafts such as sewing and making trinkets, they study English and Khmer literacy (the local language) they have counselling and Bible study sessions and also learn about health and parenting.

“Be Free Cambodia” help these girls back on their feet and when the 12-month programme is complete they have a graduation ceremony.

But it does not end there, whilst the girls are at “Be Free” they are provided with a monthly salary, insurance, food and free childcare. And after graduation they are helped to find a job that they enjoy.

This charity is one of many that are making a difference worldwide, but none of them can do this amazing work without help from others.

Many missionaries from other countries go out to charities like “Be Free” and use their skills to help as much as they can.

But what can you do? We cannot all get on a plane and go around the world trying to stop human trafficking. And that would not be necessary because it happens in every country, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Well, first of all, you can raise awareness: be aware of this happening. Talk about it with anyone whether that be sharing posts on social media, asking to talk about it in school, do speeches or assemblies raising awareness on it.

Secondly, get involved in charities that are working to rehabilitate those involved in human trafficking or helping those involved to get out of it. Sign up to their newsletters, sign petitions, give money, organise fundraisers and maybe buy their products.

And finally, educate yourself on the signs of human trafficking. Like I said earlier it happens worldwide no matter the time or day.

Thank you for listening.