



*SEX SELLS. CHILDREN.
HELP STOP IT BEFORE IT BEGINS.
WWW.THESOLDPROJECT.ORG*

The SOLD Project is a grassroots organization dedicated to inspiring and empowering individuals to stop child prostitution before it begins.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

Worldwide

Child prostitution and sex trafficking are global issues. The sex trade is a multi-billion dollar industry in which children are being sold and their bodies used to provide profit and income. Children are often recruited using coercion, deception, fraud, or outright abduction. Threats, violence, and economic leverage such as debt bondage often force a child to consent to this form of exploitation.

Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in our world today. The majority of victims are those who are most vulnerable – children. This is especially true of children found in poverty, with a lack of education, facing migration issues, or left without families.

Child exploitation in the form of prostitution is not a new problem. It has existed for centuries. An unquenchable demand for sex, coupled with an endless supply of vulnerable children, creates a seemingly endless cycle. Though Government agencies, the United Nations, and various non-profit organizations are making efforts to alleviate this major problem, more can and must be done. The SOLD Project stands to break this cycle and infuse this bleak situation with exactly what it needs: individuals bringing hope through prevention.

Thailand

Known as the sex tourism capital of the world, Thailand reached this status with major help from the United States. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. Department of Defense contracted with the Thai government to provide “Recreation & Relaxation” for U.S. soldiers. Thai prostitution later became organized and expanded into a major industry. Today, sex tourism is a leading form of income, and Thailand remains a hub for tourists who can get anything they want at a very low price. Sex tourism is not the only form of prostitution that exists in Thailand, as Thai men are themselves frequent patrons in the industry as well.

Thailand is a significant source, destination, and transit country in the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. With Burma to the north and Cambodia and Laos to the east, many children are trafficked to Thailand for work, or are fleeing from military genocide in their homelands. Thailand, however, has its own share of problems. Many villages in the north and northeast are seen as high-risk areas and breeding grounds for children who fall into prostitution. The number of child prostitutes living in Thailand is estimated to be near 80,000. The sex industry gains its foothold through poverty, lack of education and poor social conditions. Many children are also pressured by family members to contribute to the household income, which in effect feeds the sex trade industry—the industry with an insatiable hunger for children.

THE SOLD PROJECT'S RESPONSE

Awareness

Film:

Our documentary, 'The SOLD Project: Thailand' is a collection of film and media pieces showing the reality of child prostitution in Thailand. The central theme to our media is that hope exists in prevention, though this issue is dark and complex.

Empowerment

Internships:

SOLD Interns are committed to education about child prostitution, helping expand the SOLD network, leading film-screenings, and assisting in public awareness events. For more information on internship dates and expectations, please visit our website.

Direct Care

The SOLD Project Prevention Program:

The SOLD Project Prevention Program is broken into four categories: 1) Education 2) Mentorship 3) Human Trafficking Awareness and 4) After School Programs. We believe that education opportunity is one of the keys to preventing the sale of children. The poverty-stricken villages of Northern Thailand are known as high-risk areas and breeding grounds for children who fall into prostitution. Because of poverty, children in these areas are often forced to drop out of school and begin work. Without proper education, options are few, and children are easily tricked into the sex industry. The SOLD Project has established an education fund that helps put an end to this cycle by providing scholarships to children in need. Supporting the education of one Thai child costs \$1 a day, or \$365 a year.

Partnerships

Volunteers for Children Development Foundation (VCDF): Street Children

VCDF is a Thai run orphanage and urban center that builds relationships with street children and offers them an alternative to selling their body for survival. They provide shelter, food, education, and vocational training to each child. The SOLD Project believes in the work they are doing and has partnered with VCDF to strengthen their work and help them bring more children off the street of despair and into a life of hope.

Whispering Seed: Undocumented Children.

Many children in Myanmar (Burma) are unregistered at birth. They have no birth certificate, no form of identity, and therefore no legal structure for protection. Without legal protection, they are easy prey to traffickers. Many end up trafficked into brothels throughout Thailand. Debt bondage and poverty keep them there, and advocating for their rights is difficult without any citizenship or legal structure. In order to combat this problem, The SOLD Project has partnered with Whispering Seed, an orphanage on the Burmese/Thailand border that provides shelter and education for these undocumented children.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is The SOLD Project targeting the 20-something generation?

The SOLD Project is creating a movement within a generation of people who are currently deciding their vocation as they learn about their passions and place in our world. Today, globalization and technology have brought the world into our living room and young people are looking for ways to have an impact. Although this age group is our target, we hope to reach people of all ages. We see no limit to what can be achieved when we all stand together to confront child prostitution. We do not consider The SOLD Project the only answer to ending child prostitution in the world. We do, however, believe in the truth of the familiar saying, "If you are not a part of the solution, then you are part of the problem."

What are some practical options The SOLD Project offers its viewers to create change?

Our hope is that, after participating in our nationwide tour or viewing our films, each viewer asks, "What can I do?" Everyone has unique talents and skills to offer to this cause, and all of these are needed. The SOLD Project non-profit organization was established in response to the need for preventative work of child prostitution in Thailand. Donating to our prevention program and meeting the needs of our partner organizations in Thailand are a few examples of ways to get involved.

Why Thailand when child prostitution exists in America?

We recognize that child prostitution is a global issue and that it occurs even in The United States. The SOLD Project both acknowledges and partners with organizations working to stop sex trafficking in America, and hopes that those inspired by The SOLD Project will get involved in the issue in their own backyard or overseas.

If I make a donation to The SOLD Project, where is my money going?

All funding goes to the organizational side of The SOLD Project, the groundwork in Thailand, and our partners, VCDF and Whispering Seed. Currently, we have raised funds through the help of individual donors, foundations, and corporations who believe in our mission.

The SOLD Project's projected budget is available upon request

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE SOLD PROJECT

“For quality of production, creativity, and sharpness of content, for being powerfully poignant without in any way exploiting the pain of others, I’ve never seen anything so well done. Even more, though, I’m impressed with your creative approach, and the spirit of your endeavor.

Brian McLaren, Author of 'A Generous Orthodoxy'

“The gifted, young filmmakers of SOLD have a compelling vision to make a documentary that awakens their generation and supplies them with the tools to make a difference in this tragedy. I am inspired and wholeheartedly support them.”

David McFadzean, Wind Dancer Films

“SOLD will bring the heart-wrenching injustice of child prostitution in Thailand into our own backyard, our own social consciousness. I wholeheartedly believe that these filmmakers are up for the task of producing a great piece of film that will bring the experience home.”

Elkin Antoniou, Co-Producer of Oscar nominated short film, MOST, and founder of LA LOVES

“The commitment and passion these filmmakers have for seeing child prostitution end in their lifetime will emerge through this film, and will compel others to join them in the fight.”

Dave Mahanes, President of The Chronicle Project

“The filmmakers of SOLD are uniquely gifted to tell this story in a fashion from which no one can turn away.”

Lisa Swain, Biola Film Department Chair

"The makers of this film present us with a opportunity to do something. You cannot walk away from seeing this and not feel compelled to act. If you would rather not act, do not watch SOLD: Thailand."

Tyler Wasson, Fuller Seminary Student



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CREW BIOS

Rachel Sparks: Founder/Producer

Rachel grew up around film, understanding the impact it has on our culture, through the influence of her father, Jeff Sparks, President of Heartland Truly Moving Pictures. Graduating Magna Cum Laude in Business Administration and Adolescent Ministry from Indiana Wesleyan University in 2006, she moved to New York City to work with children, never imagining film or non-profit work in her future. During that time, her life forever changed when she heard that children were being sold into prostitution all over the world. No longer content to live as she had been, she began wrestling with how to get involved. The result: The SOLD Project. Currently residing in Los Angeles, her full-time job has now become fundraising, networking, building a non-profit organization, and working to complete the film portion of the project.

Rachel Goble: Executive Director

Having grown up in a family passionate about issues of social justice, it was no surprise when Rachel dedicated her life to advocating for sexually exploited women and children. After graduating from Westmont College in 2005 with a Bachelor's Degree in Business and Marketing, she worked in youth ministry before heading back to school at Fuller Seminary to pursue a Master's Degree in Intercultural Studies with a concentration in Children at Risk. It was during her time at Fuller that she heard of the issue of child sex trafficking and knew that something had to be done. Her Master's thesis brought her to India and South Africa, where she spent three months hearing the stories of children who had been trafficked and meeting with organizations doing on-the-ground work for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation. She came on board with The SOLD Project in 2008 to serve as their executive director.

TaWee Donchai: The SOLD Project Prevention Program Director

Taweew Donchai is 30 years old and currently lives in Chiang Mai, Thailand. His bachelors degree is in Chemistry from Mae Jo University, and he completed graduate studies in Biochemistry at Chiang Mai University. Currently, he is working as a scientist in HIV research. TaWee's dream is to start a youth center in his hometown, and have a place for youth to go and become part of a group. He believes in giving these children a broader view of the world, and educating them about the opportunities available to them: increasing their knowledge of career choices, education, preventative health practices, etc. TaWee met The SOLD Project in 2007 and together founded The SOLD Project Scholarship fund that gives the opportunity of education to children at risk of exploitation.

Blah Chermui: The SOLD Project Prevention Program Manager

Having grown up in the northern hills of Chiang Rai, Thailand, Blah has become familiar with many of the issues that force children into prostitution. Blah is Akha (one of the largest hill-tribe people groups in Thailand), and for the past 10 years she has worked for another locally run foundation that provides Akha hill-tribe children with the opportunity to gain an education that they otherwise would not have. Many of these children came from broken homes, were orphaned, or came from villages in locations too remote from any Thai school. Lack of citizenship, one of the biggest issues facing hill-tribe children today, means lack of fair wages, poverty, and is one of the most common reasons these same children end up working in prostitution as a means to support their families. Blah works with The Sold Project in Chiang Rai, Thailand to find more children in need of scholarships to study, and communicates with their families and schools. She is excited to be working alongside an organization she believes in, and one in which she can help to prevent prostitution in a very tangible way.

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