



# **Tearfund Ireland No Child Taken Church Talks Autumn**

## **Background**

1.2 million children are trafficked globally every year. But how does it happen? Who's at risk? What can be done about it?

- lack of education or industry leaves young people with few prospects
- men come from neighbouring Thailand to find cheap labour
- families may see only opportunity, not danger
- one in three girls who are trafficked from this area become sex workers

## **Nang**

Nang is 12 years old. She lives in a village close to the Thai border in South-East Asia. Life isn't easy for Nang and her family. Desperately poor and hungry for life's opportunities, Nang is an easy target for traffickers.

Just across the border in Thailand, men are looking for girls to 'staff' their karaoke bars – brothels where men can pay for drinks, singing and sex. Girls from rural villages are popular in Thai karaoke bars, where they are considered fresh, pure and provincial.

## **Easy prey**

A job offer from Thailand can seem like a golden ticket for a girl like Nang. It promises to end the hunger she feels, give her a livelihood, and allow her to send money back to her family.

But she might not find out until too late the danger of her decision. 'These girls are so vulnerable... most don't know the dangers,' says Tearfund partner Anne. 'One girl told me how her [Thai] employer seemed so kind, but then brought her to a room and told her to take off her clothes...'

One in every three young girls leaving Nang's village to work in Thailand will be trafficked into the sex trade.

But we can change this! Tearfund partner Cambodia CHO – a Christian agency working in Cambodia – works in villages like Nang's. Staff members know how high the stakes are for girls like Nang, and are rolling out trafficking awareness workshops – the first in the area – to equip girls, families and whole communities to stay safe and make good decisions.

They also offer vocational training to young school leavers, providing them with skills such as sewing, cooking and repairing motorbikes so they can make a safe living close to home. Consequently, poverty – the very thing that leaves Nang vulnerable to trafficking – begins to lose its grip.

**Watch Nang's Story on our 5 minute video**



# WHAT DOES NANG'S FUTURE HOLD?

## Nang's Village

No industry or job prospects

With one rice harvest a year, her family lives close to the poverty line

At 13, Nang has no access to secondary school

TRAFFICKING

PATH TO SAFETY

Nang's family warned about traffickers by Tearfund partner

Nang is taught skills that can grow into business...

and her parents receive training to grow better crops

Nang's family is released from poverty and stays safe together

Nang is lured to Thailand and separated from her family

Nang is hurt and damaged

Nang is trapped, never to see her family again

WILL YOU AND YOUR CHURCH HELP PROTECT VULNERABLE CHILDREN LIKE NANG?

## 5 Minute Church Talk

Do you remember being a child and realising you were lost in a supermarket? Can you remember the rising anxiety as you looked around, desperate to find your parents? Do you remember the panic you felt, not knowing what would happen to you... wondering: would you be left all alone?

For you and me that feeling might only last for a few minutes, but imagine if you were lost with no way of finding your way back home. Worse still, what if you were taken away under the pretence of a dream opportunity only to discover that your dream had turned into a nightmare?

This is the reality for 1.2 million children who are trafficked every year. That's the population of Dublin city and county combined or five times the population of Belfast gone every year.

Nang is a 12-year-old girl living in a village on the Thai border in South-East Asia, and she is at risk of joining those 1.2 million trafficked children. The village in which Nang lives has very little to offer her. Once she reaches the age of 13 she will no longer be able to attend school. She'll then be at risk of being lured to Thailand by the offer of a good job. It's only when she arrives that she will discover she has to work very hard with little or no pay. One in three girls from Nang's village who leave for Thailand end up in the sex trade. Nang could be one of these.

As God's people, we are called to challenge this abuse. Care for the vulnerable has always been on God's heart, and we know he values children highly. We see this by Jesus' references to children in the Bible, as in **Matthew 18:3-6**, where Jesus says:

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven... Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Jesus feels pain for trafficked children far more than we do. It enrages him to see adults causing them to stumble and pains him to see others standing by and doing nothing.

Trafficking is an injustice that must stop. The good news: trafficking is preventable. Through local partners, Tearfund is protecting children and valuing them just as Jesus does. Christians like Anne in Laos are teaching children in the community about the risks of trafficking and helping them to stay safe. Not only that, Anne also provides families with skills-training and starter kits, so that they can learn a new trade to support themselves.

## You Can Help

You can help fund training and starter kits, enabling more children to be kept safe from the plans of traffickers. It costs just €32 to ensure a girl like Nang is protected in this way.

That pays for:

**Trafficking-awareness training** So that Nang can see through the lies of the traffickers

**A livelihoods kit** To help Nang get a small business off the ground

**Practical help** For Nang's family, eg, a school uniform to keep Nang's younger siblings in school for as long as possible

They say a society can be judged by how it cares for its most vulnerable members. When it comes to this, surely these children are the most vulnerable?

Or can you give €22 a month to help these children and others like them, all over the world?

I really urge you, if you're moved by this, and you want to be part of preventing trafficking, give just €22 a month or a once off gift of €32 to help a child to see the future God has planned for them.

**There's nothing like caring for a child to bring out our innate sense of protectiveness. Please give what you can, and know that your gift is making a huge difference.**

## Full Church Talk

Do you remember being a child and realising you were lost in a supermarket? Can you remember the rising anxiety as you looked around, desperate to find your parents? Do you remember the panic you felt, not knowing what would happen to you... wondering: would you be left all alone?

For you and me that feeling might only last for a few minutes, but imagine if you were lost with no way of finding your way back home. Worse still, what if you were taken away under the pretence of a dream opportunity only to discover that your dream had turned into a nightmare?

This is the reality for 1.2 million children who are trafficked every year. That's the population of Dublin city and county or five times the population of Belfast gone every year.

Nang (who we will meet shortly in the video) is a 12-year-old girl living in a village on the border with Thailand in South-East Asia, and she is at risk of joining those 1.2 million trafficked children. The village in which Nang lives has very little to offer her. Once she reaches the age of 13 she will no longer be able to attend school. She'll then be at risk of being lured to Thailand by the offer of a good job. It's only when she arrives that she will discover she has to work very hard with little or no pay. One in three girls from Nang's village who leave for Thailand end up in the sex trade. Nang could be one of these.

As God's people, we are called to challenge this abuse.

Care for the vulnerable has always been on God's heart, and we know he values children highly.

Choice of Bible Readings:

### **Matthew 18:3-6**

We see this by Jesus' references to children in the Bible, as in **Matthew 18:3-6**:

'He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Jesus is pretty clear in this reading, isn't he? Children and those with childlike humility and faith are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. It's a message that puts everything into perspective. Kings are not the greatest, neither are presidents nor the rich, the famous, the best-looking or cleverest, but children, and those like them: innocent, humble, trusting, pure. Children are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And so the penalty, Jesus says, for bringing suffering to one of these 'greatest', or causing them to stumble, is very grave. It's so grave, Jesus doesn't even describe it, but only says that to drown in the depths of the sea, dragged down by a heavy weight, would be a preferable option for anyone who commits such a heinous crime against his most cherished, precious, vulnerable children.

We get a glimpse of this righteous passion inside us too. Our hearts twist in pain

when we hear about the horror of something as appalling as child trafficking.

It goes against every decent human instinct. Children need to be protected, nurtured, given space to grow, safely under the shelter of innocence. That's what we hope for our own children and we pray for it for others too, but for millions of children this is not what life is like.

Today, trafficking is the fastest growing crime in the world. In fact, one child is trafficked every 30 seconds. One child. Every 30 seconds. But, there is hope.

Tearfund has incredible partners around the world who are working right now to rescue children from unimaginable situations of captivity in brothels – all kinds of horrendous places no child should ever see, let alone be found in. That work is essential. But it's not enough. We need to stop this awful suffering from happening, and we can.

Christians in Cambodia in South-East Asia, are working in communities close to the Thai border, where many children are at risk of being trafficked. In poor communities in South East Asia - like Nang's – life is hard.

Communities like Nang's live and work together, most busily weaving baskets or making brooms from grass. But they're extremely poor and can only sell the baskets for 1c each. Life is hard. Many people lack ready access to clean water or have any kind of toilet. Life is also hard for the children. Access to secondary education is almost impossible. There's very little hope or future.

If these were their only problems, maybe the situation wouldn't be so urgent for them. They're surviving after all. They're together. But their problems are bigger than that.

Men from Thailand are coming to Cambodian villages, close to the border, and cashing in on desperation. They are persuading children and young people: 'You have a better life waiting, with a good job and good money, just over the border.' It is all too easy. People don't know how dangerous these offers are that seem too good to be true.

But the stats tell us: for every three girls that leave these villages to go to Thailand, one will end up in the sex trade.

So - What can we do? How can we stop it? How can we intervene in a way that stops the suffering before it starts?

Tearfund partners like Anne, who you'll meet soon in the film, are making a way. They're raising awareness of the dangers. They're giving people new options by providing vocational skills training and starter kits to support people to set up new businesses, so that they can improve their lives. They're also helping to heal the children and families scarred by experiences when a child comes back from a nightmare in Thailand. They're standing between vulnerable communities and the encroaching forces which will cause their little ones to stumble.



We can support that. It costs just €32 to make sure a child like Nang is protected from traffickers. That pays for:

**Trafficking-awareness training** So that Nang can see through the lies of the traffickers

**A livelihoods kit** To help Nang get a small business off the ground

**Practical help** For Nang's family, eg, a school uniform to keep Nang's younger siblings in school for as long as possible

They say a society can be judged by how it cares for its most vulnerable members. When it comes to this, surely these children are the most vulnerable?

Or can you give €22 a month to help these children and others like them, all over the world?

I really urge you, if you're moved by this, and you want to be part of preventing trafficking, give just €22 a month or a once off gift of €32 to help a child to see the future God has planned for them.

**There's nothing like caring for a child to bring out our innate sense of protectiveness. Please give what you can, and know that your gift is making a huge difference.**



## Prayer

*This prayer was written by Tearfund UK staff member, Isobel Peaty. Isobel is the mother of four children and visited the work of a Tearfund partner in Laos in January 2014.*

### **Loving Father,**

We open our hands in prayer. We come to you today with nothing of our own to give, powerless and dependent. You made your world to be perfect, to be filled with good things: perfect love, peace, relationship with you. Nothing speaks more of the brokenness of this world than the horror of human trafficking. Lord, we lay this darkness down before you. We ask you to come in power. We ask for your help. Shine your light, Lord.

You desire that all people live in love and truth with each other, but there is cruelty and self-interest, hatred, lies – people pursue wealth at the cost of human suffering.

You made your people to be free, but they have been enslaved.

You desire children to be cherished and protected, but they have been exploited and abused.

Lord God, forgive us for our part in the distortions of this world. Look with mercy on all you have made. Redeem us and remake us. Shine your light.

We pray for the places in the world where poverty and desperation make people vulnerable to being trafficked. We pray for an end to the injustice that makes people feel they have no choice but to sell themselves, put themselves in danger, even sell their children. Dear Lord, into this darkness, shine your light.

Loving Father, we pray for those who are committing the crime of trafficking today. We know you have the power to influence hearts and minds. Transform them, Lord, open their eyes and let them see the pain they are causing.

Lord, we pray for those who have the power to influence policies and laws. Equip them with a passion for justice and sustain them with your energy and compassion.

And Lord, we pray for all those who are slaves today. We know you have promised to set captives free. Until that day, give them your hope, your strength, your healing and your grace. Help them to know that you are with them and comfort them in their suffering.

We lift these prayers in your powerful name, Jesus.

**Amen**

## Alternative Bible Passages to consider

### Exodus 3:1-12 - Moses and the burning bush

**3** Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. **3** So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.'

**4** When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!'

And Moses said, 'Here I am.'

**5** 'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' **6** Then he said, 'I am the God of your father,<sup>[a]</sup> the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

**7** The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. **8** So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey – the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. **9** And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. **10** So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.'

**11** But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'

**12** And God said, 'I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you<sup>[b]</sup> will worship God on this mountain.'

### Questions to consider:

- What was God's reaction to seeing His people trapped in slavery? (v7-8)
- What was Moses's reaction to being asked to help free the slaves? (v11)
- What's your reaction when you hear about the suffering of children like Nang?
- In what ways can you relate to Moses who asked 'Who am I to free these people'?
- What is the key encouragement that God gives Moses?(v12)
- What does it mean that God is with us as we fight against injustice and slavery?

**John 10:10:**

'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'

**Questions to consider:**

- What do you think a full life looks like?
- What is being stolen from children like Nang?
- How do you think God feels about that?
- What was Jesus' intention for Nang? What would a full life look like for her?
- How can we be a part of bringing God's kingdom to earth and seeing children like Nang given life in all its fullness?