

STOP THE TRAFFIK

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



Anyone can be trafficked. We need to be very wise when planning to travel to another country to find work.

Candy's story: "He said I'd have a better life!"

"I was 15 when my parents were persuaded to sell me, so we could all have a better life. Someone in my family told my parents that I could earn a lot of money in England and send it back to them. But that's not what happened.

"When I arrived in England, I soon learned that nothing these people had told me was true. I was taken to a house and forced to have wrong sex with men, sometimes nine times in one day. There was no money, no hope and no life. These men made me do what they wanted by hurting me, which made me very afraid. I was lonely and very unhappy.



One day I managed to escape and found a police station. I told the police everything that had happened. They listened to me and helped me. Now I am living a better life, but it is a long way from the good things I had been promised."

Sadly, there are many people like Candy. Every minute, one person is trafficked: this means, they are taken from one country to another, or to a new place in their own country. There they are badly treated and not given the work that they were promised. In some villages in the country of Belarus, there are few teenage girls, because they have all been taken to other countries to work in the sex trade. Families can be tricked into paying all the money they have saved, to get someone into a western country.

Be careful of:

1. Anyone who seems to be friendly and offers an 'easy job with good pay'. They may not be telling the truth and force you to work for little or no money. If girls are offered jobs in bars or restaurants in another country, their real work will probably be selling their bodies for sex.
2. Anyone who wants to take you to an **employment agency** or says they will find you a new job. They may be getting money for this, which you might have to pay back from what you earn. You could then be left with little or no money. Even if they give you real work in another country, it may be against the law of that country because you have no work permit, so the pay will be very small.
3. Anyone who wants to keep your passport, work permit or ID card. You can become like a prisoner if you do not have these documents. Never let anyone keep your passport or these other papers.
4. Anyone who offers you a free **scholarship** to a western country, often in newspaper adverts. Only government agencies, universities or large official organizations give scholarships. They do not advertise in newspapers. They will not ask for money from you to apply for a scholarship.

Make sure:

1. If you are offered work or study in a different country, ask the embassy of that country for their advice. Most countries give very few work or study permits, and you can only get these from their government's embassy, so any other group who says they can get a permit for you may be lying.

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2. Learn as much as you can about any employer or agency. Does it have a bad reputation? What are the working conditions like? Is it a safe place? Do you know anyone who has worked for the employer or agency, and was happy with their work?
3. Ask what money you have to pay back for travel or other costs. Tell them to write everything down for you.
4. Tell your family and friends the name, number and address of your employer, and stay in regular **contact** with them.
5. If you are trafficked to another country, ask for help from police, STOP THE TRAFFIK or any help organization that can get you back to your own country and family.

STOP THE TRAFFIK is a worldwide group of people who are working to bring an end to people trafficking. Their website (written in many languages) can help you: www.stophetraffik.org
phone numbers —
UK: 0207 921 42 58, Australia: 03 9251 5277,
Bangladesh: 88 02 8022730, India: (22) 2847 2562,
USA: (tollfree) 888 56 62747

Words for English learners

persuade(d): argue strongly so that someone agrees with you
force(d): here it means, make someone do something they do not want to do
employment agency: business which finds jobs for people
scholarship: money to pay for study in a school or university
reputation: what other people think of a person or thing
contact: communicate with someone, such as by letter, email or telephone
illegal: against the law of a country
confiscate(d): officials take away things that belong to a person
eventually: at last, after a long time

My very special birthday

A true story from BJ,
in prison in Thailand



I was born in Myanmar (Burma) in 1961 into a family of the Shan people. In 1988 I moved to Thailand and a few years later married a Thai girl. We had two children, a girl and then a boy.

"I was shot"

At this time, I began selling **illegal** drugs and was finally arrested in 2001. During my

arrest, I was shot twice by the police, and for six months I was in a police hospital. At this time my children were aged just four and two. All that I owned was **confiscated**. It was a very bad time for me and my family.

Eventually I was sent to prison for 50 years. I felt very angry and I thought, "This

story continued on back page

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A new look for SOON

Yes, this is your SOON paper! We hope you like it in full colour. We will still print real life stories and other interesting articles. Please write and tell us what you think of the new paper.

Do you have a story to tell? We are always pleased to hear from you. Do you think your friends would like to read the 'new look' SOON? Write or email and tell us how many copies you could give to them.

Marcia says...



"I love the new colour SOON"

will be the end of my life." I could not forgive the judge for saying I must go to prison for such a long time. I even thought I would kill myself because there was no other way out.

Then one day, I was invited by a follower of Jesus to go to a Christian meeting in the prison. I was very surprised when all the men at the meeting welcomed me. They clapped when I walked in, and gave me a Bible, the Christians' holy book. They sang many Christian songs which I liked very much and then a man began to speak. He told us these words from the Bible: "If any man belongs to Christ (Jesus), he is a new person. His old life has gone. You see, he has begun a new life."* I thought that the speaker was saying these words just to me. I will never forget them.

"I read in secret"

Soon I was going to that meeting every Sunday. I also read my Bible every night, but secretly as I did not want my prison friends to know. I wanted to find out if what it said about Jesus Christ was true.

The more I read, the more I found out about how much God loves us. Nothing is greater than God's love. I was so excited to learn that God loves me, that I did not worry any more what my friends thought about me reading the Bible. Little by little I realised that all I was reading was true.

So, on my birthday, May 21 2002, I asked Jesus Christ to forgive me for all my wrong doing, especially the hurt I had caused my family, and to change my whole life around. I wanted the new life that the man had spoken about when I first went to the Christian meeting. I also wanted to be free from the anger I felt about being in prison.

A new life

I began to find that all the thoughts I had before, even wanting to kill myself, had gone. I realised that prison was not the end of my life but a new beginning. For 41 years I did not know that God was near me and looking after me. I was in the lowest place, in prison, but God was with me even there. Now the most important thing to me is knowing that I have a new friend for ever, Jesus Christ.

Even though I am still in prison, I am happy because I know that happiness does not come from the things around us, it comes from inside us. The last few years have been happier than all the other 41 when I did not know Jesus.

Questions to think about

1. BJ was put in prison for 50 years because of what he had done wrong. Do you think that we should be punished if we break the law of the country we live in?
2. We know we do many wrong things but God never does anything wrong. God is so good that his punishment for any wrong doing, even the smallest thing, is death. That might make us think that God is a very hard judge. But what did BJ learn about God that changed his whole life?
3. God showed how much he loved us when he sent Jesus Christ into the world to take the punishment for all our wrong doing. Now instead of death we can have the gift of life. When BJ learned this he felt free, even though he was still in prison. Do you want to feel free from your wrong doing and from the shame and fear that we can all feel?



* You can find these words in the Bible in the book called 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17

Stories from SOON readers

... who have learned that God helps and looks after them

"I nearly drowned"

This is a true story by Tsegahun from Ethiopia:

One day, when I was thirteen years old, I went with my father to the river. He was washing the clothes, so I went to play with my friends. We played on the stones near the river, but we did not notice that they were wet and slippery.

Suddenly I slipped and fell into a very deep part of the river. The force of the water quickly pushed me down the river away from the place where my father was washing clothes. My friends shouted, "Tsegahun has fallen into the river."

My father thought quickly, "How can I get my son? I must jump into the river myself to save him." He jumped in and caught me in his arms. Picking me up, he pulled me out. At once he gave me artificial respiration and soon I was breathing again. He thanked God for helping him to save me that day when I nearly drowned. I too will always be grateful to God and am glad to be alive.



Eric Lallougue

"I LEARNED TO FORGIVE"

Florence comes from Soroti, Uganda. This is her story:

I was born into a very poor family of eight children. I am the eldest. When things became too hard for us in our home. I began to think that my life had no meaning. Then one day my uncle came and took me to live with him and his wife.

I was very happy as I thought that at last I would have a better life. I did not know then what it would be like for me there. My uncle's wife did not think of me as her child and she made my life so hard that I cried out to God to let me die.

One day my friend came and asked me to go with her to a Christian meeting. There I heard these words, "No matter what you are

going through, God has not forgotten you. Learn to forgive those who hurt you." I had told myself I would never forgive my parents for being poor, or my uncle and his wife for the way they were treating me. But that day God showed me that I must forgive them all!

The words I heard from the speaker at the meeting seemed to be just for me. I realised that I had wrong thoughts about my family. I needed God to forgive me and then I could forgive them too. That night I went down on my knees and cried out to God. I know he has forgiven me and that he will always be a loving friend and helper to me.

"I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE"

My name is Abazu. I am a SOON reader from Nigeria. I am alive today because God saved me from death some years ago.



Abazu today

One Thursday evening, when I was six years old, I was on my own eating my dinner of yam porridge. Suddenly I swallowed a piece of yam which got stuck in my throat. I could not shout or call anyone. I struggled to get the yam out of my throat, but it was no good. I fell to the ground, hardly able to breathe. Then my mother came into the room and saw me. At once she called some of our neighbours. One of them said I should be taken to hospital, but there was no time. I was in danger of death.

My mother and our neighbours cried out, "God please save him." By this time the pupils in my eyes were disappearing into the back of my eye-sockets. I thought I was going to die.

Then something happened – the yam which was stuck at the back of my throat began to melt away and my eyes returned to normal. I was alive! From that day, I have always been thankful to God for saving my life.

Words for English learners

- judge:** person in law court who decides what punishment people will have
- surprise(d):** something that happens that you do not expect
- clap(ped):** bang hands together to show you think something is good
- force:** here it means great power
- artificial respiration:** breathing into a person's mouth to help them to breath again
- forgive:** stop being angry with someone for something they have done to you
- swallow(ed):** cause food or drink to go from the mouth to the stomach
- pupil(s):** round black part in the middle of an eye
- eye sockets:** spaces in the head for the eyes
- melt:** disappear little by little

Exercise for English learners

Many words in English look and sound the same, but mean something different. You will see one of these in the Words for English Learners: the word force. In one place it means 'great power' and in the other 'make someone do something they do not want to do'. Sometimes we know which meaning a word has, because of the words which come before and after it. Make sentences using the following words, showing what they mean by what you write. When you have done this, show your answers to your English teacher. Please do not send them to us.



- Here are two ways of using the word force:
- He hit me with such force that I fell over.
 - I was very afraid because he tried to force me to go with him and steal the farmer's cows.

Here are the words to put into sentences:

- light** 1. brightness of the sun, moon, lamp or fire, by which you can see
2. not heavy
- post** 1. strong pole, standing upright
2. letters, cards, etc that are sent to you
- trip** 1. journey
2. fall because you have caught your foot on something
- flat** 1. smooth, has no bumps
2. a building where people live on one level, with other people living above or below
- train** 1. several railway trucks joined together and pulled by an engine
2. teach or educate
- cross** 1. be angry
2. go over to the other side