

# Love for Family Led Her Into the Darkness of Exploitation and Back Out

A girl who sacrificed her body for her family is given another option.



They had to act fast. A child was under imminent threat of exploitation.

But she had a chance to stop it.

It all started with a conversation at church. After the service, a worried friend approached the Cambodian caseworker. She knew of a 16-year-old girl named Reasmey who'd been sent to work in a beer garden to support her family. Many Cambodian girls take jobs in such locations that seem innocent enough, serving fruit or waiting tables. But all too often, the proprietors end up selling the children to their clients for sex.

"She was working to support her family," said Marcus, one of our rescue agents in Cambodia. "She was living with her grandma and her (elderly) auntie, so all the pressure of the bills, the debt, fell onto her."

To make matters worse, Reasmey was beautiful. The delicate features and bright smile, a blessing in most circumstances, had become a curse. Like a

butterfly amongst spiders, she would be singled out and pursued by predators in the bar.



*Pressure to provide for the family is a common factor in exploitation in Southeast Asia*

They quickly contacted two of our rescue agents, giving them the bar's location and a description of Reasmey. That evening, they went to the beer garden and asked the proprietor if the girl could join them at their table. After confirming that Reasmey was being offered for sex, the two men spent the evening playing games with the child at the table, rather than molesting her as many other clients had in the past. Their actions gave her an evening of innocent laughter rather than abuse.

For girls who are providing for their families, leaving the beer garden for their own sake feels grossly selfish and irresponsible.

But when agents explained that our holistic approach to rescue and post-rescue care in Cambodia also included her family's welfare, the first glimmer of real hope came into Reasmey's eyes. Marcus said that she was "like a flower blossoming. She lit up after we explained that we'll help you, we'll help your family."

Reasmey was rescued soon after. During her post-rescue training, she expressed interest in becoming a hairdresser. Thary and the other caseworkers looked for a business that could help the survivor achieve this dream, but no reputable ones had openings.

Days into their search, Thary got an unexpected call.

It was an old friend of Thary's, a salon owner. She had a position to fill and wondered if Thary knew of anyone who'd like to become a trainee.

Thary praised God for the timely call and told Reasmey the good news. Empowered by her post-rescue training and the support of her caseworkers, Reasmey aced her interview and practical test. One agent said that "within a week, the business owner gave her a pay raise and said, 'I don't want to lose her.'" She was so impressive that the owner predicted Reasmey would own her own salon someday.



*Reamsey smiles while practicing her skills with a Destiny Rescue caseworker*

Reasmey is free now. She is happily washing hair and learning the ropes of running a salon under the guidance of her new boss, as well as Thary and the other caseworkers.