

HUMAN FACES

2020
SPECIAL
ISSUE 2



IMPACT STORIES ON THE FRONTLINE: CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS AMID COVID-19

- UNVTF-supported NGO: Blue Dragon Children's Foundation
- Location: Viet Nam

Despite challenging lockdown measures in Viet Nam in response to COVID-19, [Blue Dragon Children's Foundation](#), a charity in Hanoi is continuing its vital work in rescuing and repatriating trafficked girls and women.

The UNVTF-funded NGO works closely with local communities, schools and authorities to identify suspicious hot spots and stop the tragedy before it happens. Its goal is to bring those who have already been trafficked back to safety and on the path towards recovery amid lockdown measures which have led to the closure of many businesses, particularly in the tourism, hospitality, and beauty industries.

CASE STUDY:

Lan is a hard-working university student in southern Viet Nam. Ever since she started college, the 21-year-old has been balancing classes and part-time jobs. It wasn't easy, but she managed to get by; until the coronavirus hit. When Viet Nam started putting in place social isolation measures to contain the spread of the virus in February, many businesses had to close, and many jobs were lost. Like many others, Lan's part-time position was severed.

Several months passed and Lan's money was running out. Some nights, she would go to bed with an empty stomach, as she could no longer afford to buy food to cook herself dinner.

When the restrictions were lifted, Lan desperately needed to find work, and that made her an easy target for human traffickers.

When she was offered a position as a waitress in the outskirts of the city, Lan saw an opportunity to finally fill her belly and pay her bills, and she eagerly accepted.

But there was no such job. The cafe was actually a brothel. And Lan was not their “employee”; she had been sold. She’d fallen prey to modern-day slavery.

During three long and horrific days spent at the brothel, Lan had to fight to protect herself. The moment she saw a chance to call for help, terrified but filled with bravery, Lan seized it.

Immediately after learning about her situation, Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation coordinated with the local authorities to set in motion a rescue operation. Within 12 hours, Lan was set free and the brothel was shut down.

Lan is now safe and recovering from her ordeal. Blue Dragon will be by her side to provide her with everything she needs to heal and get back on her feet.

However, many others like her, still remain at risk. The financial crisis brought about by this pandemic has made thousands of girls and women in Vietnam more vulnerable to human trafficking. The desperation this financial hardship causes, makes them even more likely to fall victim to traffickers’ deceptions and tricks.

“In the short term, we’re providing food and support to pay rent. In the long term, we will work with these young women to help them get another job or undertake vocational training. But this will be an additional challenge for our staff and financial resources.” said Caitlin Wyndham, Blue Dragon’s Resources and Partnerships Leader.



LEFT: Blue Dragon Rescue Team amid COVID-19

© Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation

CONTACT US

