



Dining for Women

## Program Fact Sheet: September 2007

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### Featured Program: Prevent Human Trafficking Institute (PHI)

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**Web Site:** <http://www.preventhumantrafficking.org/>

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**Mission:** Prevent Human Trafficking Institute is a D.C. based non-profit working to build a bridge between South East Asia and the United States to prevent human trafficking. PHI empowers individuals, organizations and governments to tackle the root causes of human trafficking through direct support and technical assistance. PHI uses its expertise and networks to promote best practice and inspire sustainable solutions in the movement to prevent human trafficking.

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**History:** Prevent Human Trafficking developed from the passion of its founding members in addressing widespread child exploitation in Southeast Asia. Dedicated individuals were drawn together through their mutual commitment to these issues and formed Project Hope International in 1999. Members had already been actively engaged in independently combating child exploitation in the region, either through non-profit work, academic research, or teaching.

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Christina Arnold, founder, spent the first 21 years of her life in South and Southeast Asia, where she encountered exploited children on a daily basis. Her desire to channel her early experiences with trafficking victims led her to establish Project HOPE International, Inc. in 1999. She has been invited to the White House; lectured internationally at conferences, think tanks, embassies, and universities; published articles; and has a forthcoming book chapter. She holds a B.A. in Political Science with honors from American University, is a Truman Scholar, and is also a Presidential Scholar-in-Residence at American University.

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**Where They Work:** Southeast Asia (The program DFW will support is located in the Muang, Mae Sai, and Mae Chan districts of the Chiang Rai province, in northern Thailand)

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**The Need:** Millions of people around the world are exploited as a consequence of a lack of opportunities in their villages; if a woman does not have the opportunity for gainful employment in her village, she may feel enticed by the possibility of higher income and the lure of an exciting life that come from living in a city. In the case of Thailand, many women in the sex industry chose to enter into it because there were not enough opportunities for them to earn money back home; none of them would have chosen to enter this risky field of work if they had the opportunity back home to earn sufficient income to take care of their families. When a jewel-clad person drives into a village in a fancy car and offers deals to the young women that seem too good to be true, if the women do not know any better and have no other options for employment in the village, then of course they are going to take what seems like easy money. Most of us would do the same if we were in their situation.

Certainly, around the world, many women have been kidnapped, but more often than not women chose to enter the trade or were sold into the sex industry by their families. In the former case, it is likely that the woman would choose to go back to the establishment or at least into the same line of work; in the latter case, however, what does it mean to have a contractual obligation between a trafficker and the woman's family? Though the contract is not legally binding in a court of law, families know better than to cross the traffickers. If the women are removed from an outside party with little attention paid to the consequences, these "saved" women know that if they do not return to the brothel to work, the brothel owner will go to their village and their younger sister or cousin would then have the burden of completing the contract that her parents signed. So when brothels are "busted", what we see on TV and what happens after the cameras go away are two completely different things; most of the time, the brothel owners get by with just a slap on the wrist and a broken front door, free to reclaim their lost workers and be back in business within a few weeks.

In South East Asia, the challenges of HIV/AIDS and sex trafficking overlap at times. Many of the victims who survived being trafficked find themselves living with HIV/AIDS. Sex trafficked persons living with HIV/AIDS

(STPWAs) face stigma and discrimination within the community, where they often find it difficult to maintain financial security and access to appropriate healthcare.

Long-term solutions are needed to combat trafficking and exploitation before it even begins to take shape in each individual case. Economic and social conditions in the communities must be improved so that young women will know better than to take a chance with some stranger, and will not have to do so because they already have a good job right there in their communities.

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**How They Work:** PHI understands that the most effective way to bring around an end to the horror of human trafficking is to deal with the issues of poverty, gender inequality, lack of education and citizenship that make people vulnerable to being trafficked in the first place. They are working to support some of the pioneers in the anti-trafficking movement in South East Asia offering them financial and technical assistance to help them in their work to tackle the root causes of human trafficking.

PHI supports the courageous, innovative work of grassroots organizers with a proven track record for success and heartfelt service over many years in the field. They provide technical assistance, fundraising opportunities, trained volunteers and advocacy for a handful of organizations in Thailand and Cambodia.

Ultimately, the only cure for trafficking is prevention. In Thailand, it has been seen that by providing access to education and local income opportunities, women are at a much lower risk to be exploited.

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**Program DFW Supports:** The proposed project will be implemented by PHI's Thailand-based partner, the Population and Community Development Association (PDA). In operation since 1974, PDA sponsors a variety of innovative programs to benefit Thailand's rural poor, and is a leading innovator in combating HIV/AIDS through community-based prevention and education solutions. PDA has 18 community centers throughout Thailand, and is well established in the proposed region.

The project addresses both the income earning opportunities for at-risk trafficking populations and the reduction of discrimination and stigmatization for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. The objectives of the proposed project are as follow:

- Prevent sex trafficked persons living with HIV/AIDS (STPWAs)
- Decrease the risk of re-trafficking of STPWAs
- Reduce internal migration and breakdown of family structures
- Decrease stigma and discrimination toward STPWAs
- Increase understanding of sex trafficking and HIV/AIDS
- Develop income-generating opportunities for STPWAs
- Establish sustainable Youth Banks
- Improve the management of healthcare for STPWAs

The project's theory of change is that when a partnership consisting of an STPWA and an HIV-negative community member is supported (through a financial loan) to develop and run a business venture together, the combined impact includes not only a reduction in poverty for both partners, but also stigma reduction and an improvement in health care access for the STPWAs. In addition, when the families of those most at risk for being trafficked are provided with an alternative income source, the chances of being trafficked are decreased.

In the proposed project, participant pairs choose a business venture from a variety of income generating activities (ie. raising animals, laundry service, hair salon), and PDA staff will provide related skills and business training. This program has built in sustainability with full utilization of Village Banks. As loan amounts are repaid, new partnerships are then supported.

The role of the negative partner is also one of support to their HIV+ partner in the form of mental, physical, and medical assistance. An advocate role placed on the negative partner will work to reduce the stigma and discrimination that exists within the community. STPWAs will also be connected to support groups for victims of trafficking.

Throughout the project PDA will hold seminars and training sessions, on HIV/AIDS and healthcare management, for healthcare and social workers, doctors, and nurses from local and district hospitals, and local health centers.

There are three components of the project:

**Component 1: Trafficking Prevention**

Part (a): Families in Need: Child is still in school

The goal is to provide an income source for families so that they do not end a child's education to provide

additional income for the family. Appropriate business opportunities are discussed with the family in relation to a potential loan of \$600 per family. The collateral is that the child stays in school. Occupational training will be provided and the family will be partnered with another family that is not "at risk".

**Part (b): Families in Need: Child has already left school**

The goal is to provide an economic alternative for girls, preventing them from being trafficked. A group of 4 to 6 girls participates in non-formal education in exchange for occupational training and participation in the loan fund. Each girl receives \$US250 for the collateral of promising to stay in the village and obtain adult education.

**Component 2: Trafficked Women**

The goal is to provide trafficked persons with an option to their current situation. They are asked to start businesses in groups, and each group receives US\$600. They are provided with HIV/AIDS prevention and STI education.

**Component 3: Education and Setting up of Youth Banks**

The goal is to educate and provide income so youth learn about business and initiative, and thus stay in villages and not migrate to earn an income. There is one Village Youth Bank per district, and each bank receives \$5,000 for youth-initiated businesses. Initial funding for the banks is provided through an environmental awareness campaign, for each tree planted, \$1 is contributed to the bank.

*Note: The program DFW is supporting is only one of many PHI efforts. Please visit their web site for additional information.*

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**Evaluating Program Success:** A combination of surveys and loan repayment measures will be used to monitor the program's success. Details of the evaluation process are available on the PHI web site.

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**Project Budget:** The **two year** project budget is US \$100,000. Pledges are being secured for future program implementation for the years following the original budget period.

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**Fiscal Efficiency:** Overall, Prevent Human Trafficking operated with total revenue of \$ 56,722 in 2006. Approximately 85% was directed to programs and 15% to administrative and fund raising expenses.

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**DFW Giving History with Program:** New Program

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