

Eradicate sex slavery

Educate sex workers

Empower women

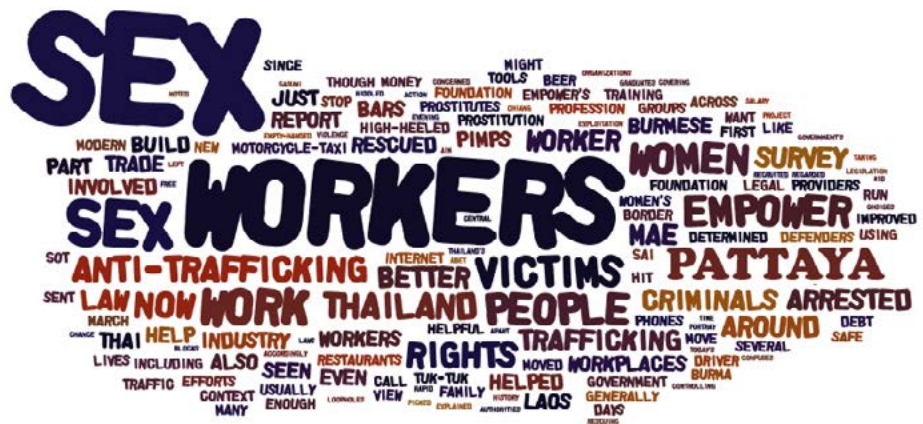
The sex industry has become a business worth an estimated 34 billion dollars a year. The demand for women and girls for personal gratification has caused developing countries like Thailand to become tourist destinations for the sexual exploitation of women. This demand has resulted in the rise of traffickers and pimps who coerce and force women into working in brothels through prostitution and sex slavery. Women and girls fall victims as a result of poverty, lack of job opportunities, and low levels of education. The issue of sexual exploitation results in the abuse and inhumane treatment of women around the world. Organizations such as Arya Tara are devoted to the mission of ending these human rights violations against women.

As a non-profit organization based in Pattaya, Thailand, Arya Tara rescues and rehabilitates women and girls who have been forced into prostitution and sex slavery. We aim to eradicate sexual exploitation and decrease vulnerability to poverty through education and empowerment. Upon arriving at the Pattaya headquarters, women are provided physical and psychological health services. In addition, they receive primary education and vocational training to promote their economic independence. Arya Tara's ultimate goal is to reintegrate women and girls into society and provide them with alternative forms of economic empowerment.

Arya Tara works to foster economic empowerment for women and girls in Pattaya. Through Arya Tara's two-year program, women not only learn new skills and experiences, but also learn vital information regarding finance management. Arya Tara provides the resources necessary for these women to succeed economically, socially, and individually through enhancing self-confidence.

Arya Tara's two-year program gives women vocational training and job experience skills through the creation of Tara Bags. Vocational training allows these women therapeutic means and hope that there is a better tomorrow. During their two years in the program, each woman will complete approximately 150 bags. For every bag created, a portion of the profit is returned to the woman who created it. By giving women and girls the opportunity and skills necessary to advance themselves, both financially and personally, we are ensuring the successful reintegration of women into society.

At Arya Tara, we believe that there is a better tomorrow for all women who go through its program. It is this passion and dedication that will one day help end the sexual exploitation of women and girls around the world.



Plan of Action

Section 3.0



Keanna Cohen

3.1 Introduction to the Plan of Action

Arya Tara has used the Somaly Mam Foundation as a model for the program. The Somaly Mam Foundation works to eradicate sex slavery in Cambodia through the rehabilitation and reintegration of women and girls who have been abused by the sex industry. The mission of the Somaly Mam Foundation is to “give victims and survivors a voice in their lives, liberate victims, end slavery, and empower survivors as they create and sustain lives of dignity”.

Similar to the Somaly Mam Foundation, Arya Tara works to eradicate sex slavery and promote economic empowerment for women and girls through our two-year program in Pattaya, Thailand. Arya Tara’s recovery and reintegration center is a large group home that can house up to 120 people at a time, including 100 women and 20 staff members.

A portion of the home is dedicated to the business side of Arya Tara and includes offices and a conference room. The majority of the home is used for rehabilitation services and includes 50 rooms

where individuals sleep, a kitchen, two classrooms, a multipurpose room, and two exam rooms, one for medical support and one for psychological support. In addition, the home has an outdoor space with a garden and furniture.



The women are taught to cook traditional Thai meals, among many other types of food.



The Arya Tara group home provides a welcoming atmosphere that is ideal for maintaining a healthy mind-body-spirit.

Not only do the women live at our headquarters, but they also contribute to every aspect of their environment and are expected to work together to maintain a close-knit community that becomes their home. Each woman offers a lending hand whether that is through cooking, cleaning, or other household chores. We believe that this community, built by the women, for the women, will foster solidarity, respect, trust, reliability, confidence, and leadership necessary to encourage confidence and empowerment among women.

At Arya Tara, we focus on the following seven areas in order to promote the rehabilitation of physically, emotionally, and mentally abused sex workers and encourage their economic empowerment.

3.2 Emancipation from Exploitation

Women and girls who are sexually exploited in Thailand live primarily in brothels. Though the brothels are technically illegal, they remain popular due to a corrupt government and tourists’ demand. In response, Arya Tara has chosen to take matters into our own hands. Through community members and word-of-mouth, staff members are constantly gathering information regarding the location of brothels

and the number of girls who are being exploited. Once enough intelligence is gathered including location, names, ages, and appearance, Arya Tara organizes a brothel raid.



These young sex workers avoid the violence that surrounds the violence of the brothel raid that rescues them from an abusive environment.

Sometimes, brothel owners will receive word of a potential brothel raid and will call upon other traffickers and use weapons to ward against a raid. Due to the threat of violence and danger, Arya Tara has partnered with certain individuals in Pattaya's police force who have shown interest and dedication to eradicating sex slavery. These police officers provide protection as well as reinforce the anti-prostitution law by arresting the brothel owners. During this time, Arya Tara works to locate the women and girls within the brothels. Sometimes they are simply located in a bedroom and easy to reach; however, other times their owners may have locked them away somewhere in anticipation of the raid. Regardless, Arya Tara's goals are to remove as

many women and girls from the brothel as possible. However, Arya Tara never removes a sex worker without her consent.

It is not uncommon for Arya Tara to find young girls between the ages of 4-14 in the brothels. Though Arya Tara does not treat girls under the age of 14, we feel that it is our duty to remove all children under the age of 14 from the harmful environment that encompasses the sex industry. We have partnered with Thrive Rescue Home, a non-profit organization that rescues child sex workers in Pattaya. Thrive Rescue Home not only houses child sex workers, but provides basic education and encourages each child to pursue education further.

3.3 Mental and Physical Health Services

Arya Tara has onsite doctors and nurses to assess the sex workers' physical, mental, and emotional health upon arrival. Through medical supply donations from Direct Relief International, each individual who arrives at Arya Tara is given a thorough medical exam. The medical information gathered is collected in a file that not only includes current medical status, but additional medical history as reported by the patient. We strongly encourage the women to report as much of their past as they can remember including, but not limited to, as many of the broken bones, sprains, and pregnancies as they can remember. We record everything the patient recalls in hope to create a patient profile that we can use to measure progress.

As a result of their line of work, sex workers may have or have had sexually transmitted infections. The medical assessment each woman receives upon arrival pays special attention to any signs or symptoms of sexually transmitted infection. In addition, each woman is required to undergo HIV testing. If she

tests positive for any sexually transmitted infection, she is treated accordingly.

Many of the women and girls held in brothels have been drugged since their arrival into the industry and may have developed a drug dependency. We at Arya Tara believe in a healthy, drug-free lifestyle and our health team is available 24/7 for women and girls who are working to overcome their addiction. Though this detoxification process is very difficult, the women have demonstrated great strength to overcome their illness.

Most women who have been sexually exploited suffer from severe abuse in all forms. Though physical abuse is damaging, it is the mental and emotional abuse that takes the largest toll. As a result, many sex workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Our trained nurses and psychiatrists work with the women 24/7 to help them restore a healthy mental state and self-image. Arya Tara works to create both professional and personal relationships with the women and girls we provide health services to. We believe that these personal relationships encourage trust between individuals, a bond that is hard to establish for people who have experienced extreme abuse.

Finally, we encourage the women to overcome their past and rebuild their lives through therapeutic activities such as exercise and gardening. Arya Tara offers daily exercise activities for women to work on relaxation and physical strength. Furthermore, the women are encouraged to pursue creative hobbies such as gardening. Arya Tara has a relatively large garden that is cultivated by the women and provides approximately 30% of the food that Arya Tara serves. The contribution of food from the Arya Tara garden instills a sense of pride in the women. At Arya Tara, we believe in the holistic health of the mind-body-spirit. Engaging in therapeutic activities such as yoga and gardening helps the women find inner-peace and integrate an active lifestyle into their everyday lives. We hope that these women adopt an active lifestyle and will continue these healthy habits upon their reintegration into society.



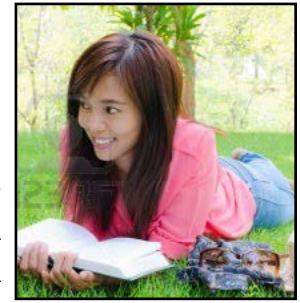
The women engage in daily exercise such as kick-boxing, yoga, Pilates, and self-defense.

3.4 Sex Education

Throughout her time with Arya Tara, each woman receives a one-hour, weekly training on sex education by our certified health professionals. We feel that in order for a woman to truly know herself, she must know her body. Thus, the sex education course starts with basic anatomy and progresses through healthy sexual practices and the risks associated with being sexually active. The final portion of the sex education course trains the women to be sex educators. Ideally, Arya Tara would like to establish relationships in the community where we can provide sex education to locals including both community members as well as sex workers.

3.5 Primary Education

Arya Tara believes that education opens doors to economic empowerment. In hope of opening these doors, Arya Tara's partnership with UNFPA provides trained teachers who offer teachings in basic education to all women and girls who take part in our program. The curriculum includes math skills up to basic algebra as well as reading and writing skills in both Thai and English. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, Arya Tara believes that by providing a dual language program, their graduates will be more competitive in the workforce. In addition, the women are taught computer skills including typing and Microsoft Office. With basic skills in math, reading, writing, and computers, women are equipped to pursue higher education or advanced trade school training.



The women are encouraged to form book clubs to discuss weekly assignments.

3.6 Vocational Training

To better serve their future careers, the women are provided basic vocational skills such as sewing, jewelry making, and hairdressing. By offering special trainings in a variety of vocational skills, Arya Tara helps women to build a skillset that is marketable for the sector they choose in the professional workforce.



We encourage the women to master typing skills as well as Microsoft Office so to help them with their professional development.

As they begin to master their vocational skills, each woman learns management and leadership skills that prepare her to work in a formal, professional setting and in a team environment. During their final stage of training, the women are provided with entrepreneurial tools such as learning how to write a resume and cover letter, how to interview effectively, how to manage finances and how to market their products. It is important that Arya Tara provide the women with a variety of tools so to prepare them for reintegration into society and the pursuit of a formal job. Though each woman is provided the same basic skills, they are encouraged to pursue the field that they excel in and are passionate about. At Arya Tara, we believe that success is a direct result of passion and dedication. Thus, we strive to support each woman to pursue a field that she is passionate about.

3.7 Tara Bags

During their vocational training, the women and girls in Arya Tara learn sewing skills. Chakhong Sewing Company, a local business, donated sewing machines to Arya Tara in support of women's empowerment. Learning to sew not only provides future employment opportunities, but it is also a therapeutic outlet since it demands the use of multiple senses and engages the creative and emotional mind. During the two-year program, each woman completes 150 bags, approximately one bag per week for the first year and two bags per week for the second year. We believe that making each bag is a process that represents the many different emotions that women encounter when trying to overcome their abusive past.

We feel that one of the main steps to eradicate sex slavery is through raising awareness. For us to contin-



Sample Tara Bag

ue our efforts to stop the exploitation of women and girls, people have to understand the physical, mental, and emotional abuse sex workers experience. Thus, each bag contains a patch that has the name of the woman who created it. The buyer of the bag can type in the creator's name into our database and will find the biography of the woman who created it, allowing him/her to feel connected to the bag's creator and sympathize with the emotions that are wrapped into the bag's essence. Furthermore, the color of each bag represents a different virtue that is reminiscent of the woman who made the bag. See Public Relations section 5.5 for a more detailed description of each virtue color and the meaning behind Arya Tara.

For each bag completed and sold, the women get a share of the profit into a personal account. The share is small, but they add up. Their profits not only provide women with a small amount of start-up money, but also instill a sense of responsibility and pride. The money may be used for entrepreneurial purposes, housing, university expenses, and other expenses that facilitate her reintegration in society.

3.8 Reintegration

After the women complete the two-year program, they are encouraged to pursue a professional career. This career may be anything from working as a seamstress or a taxi cab driver, to an administrative assistant or on to higher education. Our ground crew in Pattaya works with local businesses and schools to find job positions for our women to earn a living.



This Arya Tara woman has started her own business selling goods at the local market.

In addition, we contact their family to determine what kind of environment the woman or girl would be living in if they returned home. Other organizations such as the Somaly Mam Foundation have found this to be a key factor in determining the success of a woman's reintegration in society. Sometimes, in cases of extreme poverty, family members will, once



Some Arya Tara women choose to pursue higher education.

again, sell their daughter or sister back into sex slavery as a form of income. If we assess the situation and determine that it would be detrimental to the woman's health to return home, we seek other options for her living arrangements.

We consider ourselves successful as long as the woman or girl does not return the sex industry. To ensure a healthy reintegration, each woman receives a bi-monthly check-in for her first year of integration and a 6-month check up during her second year. After that, we are always available for support and service, but do not perform house visits after

the second year. Nevertheless, Arya Tara women often return to the group home for visits and to volunteer their time with the women who are currently in the program. Seeing the success of women who have graduated from Arya Tara provides a sense of hope for the women who are currently involved in the intense program and who have suffered from an abusive past.

3.9 The Daily Routine of an Arya Tara Woman

6:00 am: Wake up call

6:30-7:45: Exercise and Meditation

This may vary from low-intensity, low-energy activities such as yoga and Pilates, to high-intensity, high-energy activities such as kickboxing and self-defense. We believe that in order to maintain a healthy mind, you must maintain a healthy body through exercise that helps to provide a physical outlet for emotional stress.

7:45-8:30: Chores

These various duties such as cooking, washing clothes and linens, and cleaning facilities, are rotated weekly. Each woman is expected to contribute to the household through helping with various chores. Encouraging cleanliness and organization in the household sets a precedent for women's lifestyles upon reintegration.

8:30-9:15: Shower and Dress

Each woman is given five changes of clothes and three sets of pajamas. We encourage donations for supplying our women with clothing. In addition, many women choose to spend profits from Tara Bags on the occasional purchase of clothing.

9:15-10:15: Educational Instruction

Instruction varies depending on the day and the progress of the women. Topics of instruction include math, reading and writing (both Thai and English), and computer skills.

10:15-11:30: Educational Practice

During this time, the women are expected to complete an assignment that is associated with the educational instruction for that day. Instructors are available during this time to offer help. If a woman finishes her practice assignment early, she is expected to either continue practicing the content for that day, or practice other educational skills.

11:30-12:00: Lunch Preparation/Vocational Set-Up

Interns and volunteers take care of the majority of the cooking. However, the women are expected to participate as well. Lunch preparation duties and vocational skill set-up duties alternate weekly.

12:00-1:00: Lunch

1:00-1:45: Rest & Relaxation

This is an opportunity for the women to take a break. They may choose to nap, or they may choose a variety of other activities such as reading or gardening. Regardless, this time is set aside for solitary activity to decompress from social responsibilities.

1:45-2:45: Vocational Training

This training varies depending on the skill level of the women. It may include jewelry making, sewing, hairdressing, and other skills. However, at least once a week, women are lectured on

management and leadership skills to help prepare them for the professional field.

2:45-4:45: Vocational Practice

Hands on experience with previous instruction.

4:45-5:30: Dinner Preparation & Evening Chores

Similar to Lunch Preparation.

5:30-6:30: Dinner

Dinner is always served family style. Though traditional Thai dishes are most often served, diverse genres of foods are prepared.

6:30-8:30: Community Tara Bag Sewing

This time is set aside for the creation of Tara Bags, which provides a therapeutic outlet for physical and emotional tension. It also serves as a “story-time” environment where the women can share past experiences and future goals.

8:30-10:00: Free Time

The women can choose to use this time as they please. Many choose to cultivate the community garden that supplies 30% of the produce served for meals. Others choose to play games, read books, or exercise.

10:00: Lights Out

Each woman receives a medical exam at least bi-monthly depending on the results of her exam upon arrival. In addition, every woman has a weekly, 30-minute appointment with a psychiatrist to discuss her mental and emotional health. These appointments vary depending on the woman.

Finally, the Arya Tara team is very sensitive to the needs of the women. We encourage an open-door policy where the women can bring questions, comments, and concerns to each staff member. If a woman desires to learn a specific skill or attend a specific community event, she can approach a staff member. We do our best to provide Arya Tara women unique and useful opportunities.

3.10 Conclusion

At Arya Tara we focus on seven main steps that will help economically empower women and remove them from the abusive sex industry. Each step is just as important as the next; however, each woman will define her route within each step. Some women will need more psychological counseling than others, and some women will prefer jewelry making to sewing. Our job is not to herd the women through our program; our job is to foster a sense of community solidarity that is built on trust, respect, and love. By using the seven aspects of the program coupled with a tight-knit community, Arya Tara hopes to help economically empower women and provide them with a better tomorrow.