



THE MISSING FACE

Neha (red blouse) and her friend Pooja were both seven years old. They lived in a remote village of north India. Neha's papa labored daily in the fields but still could barely provide food for the family. Pooja's papa had died and her mother had almost no income. Both girls often went hungry. But when they played together, they forgot their sorrows. "When I grow up," said Neha, "I want to be a teacher." Pooja laughed. "Oh, that's nice. But when I grow up, I want to be a flight attendant!" Pooja spread her arms like an airplane and ran, black hair flying in the breeze. "I want to go high in the sky and serve lots of nice food to the movie stars."

Neha's mother began attending one of TellAsia's house churches. Coming to know of the family's desperate condition, we brought her to Blue haven Children's Home. From then on, Neha never went hungry again. Enrolled in a good English medium school, she is now well on her way to fulfilling her dream of becoming a teacher.

At around the same time some ladies visited Pooja's ailing mother. "We'll give your daughter nice food and enroll her in a good school," they promised. With that Pooja's mother handed her over. But the ladies turned out to be traffickers. Pooja was taken to a brothel. After enduring a year of hell, one day she climbed to the roof of the four-story building, and spread her arms like an airplane. Her black hair flew in the breeze once more... as she plummeted to her death on the street below.

Pooja is the missing girl in our children's home. She too could have had a bright future if we could have rescued her before she was trafficked. There are thousands more little girls across north India in similar danger, waiting for someone to help them.

India accounts for 45% of global slavery and 35% of sex trafficking. With its massive population of 350 Million and some of the world's worst poverty coupled with illiteracy, the northern Ganges River area is a hotspot for trafficking. Tens of thousands of girls are trafficked from the India-Nepal border and surrounding villages. Yet little is being done to prevent and to rescue these girls. TellAsia's heart cry is to rescue more little girls before they are trafficked, and to educate rural parents and children so they will not fall victim to traffickers. Our network of native leaders stand ready and waiting to be mobilized for the task.

Help us get to them before the traffickers do.

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