



STORIES OF CHANGE

A new mission

The Vanguard Series

The Vanguard Series: Paving innovative ways to combat trafficking and unsafe migration

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P'Noi was startled by a frantic knock on her door. It was late at night and she wasn't expecting any visitors.

'Who is it?' she asked.

'Please help me. I need a place to hide from my mother,' a pleading voice replied.



P'Noi quickly opened the door and saw that it was the young girl from the family who had recently moved in across the street.

'Why are you hiding from your mother?' she asked the girl.

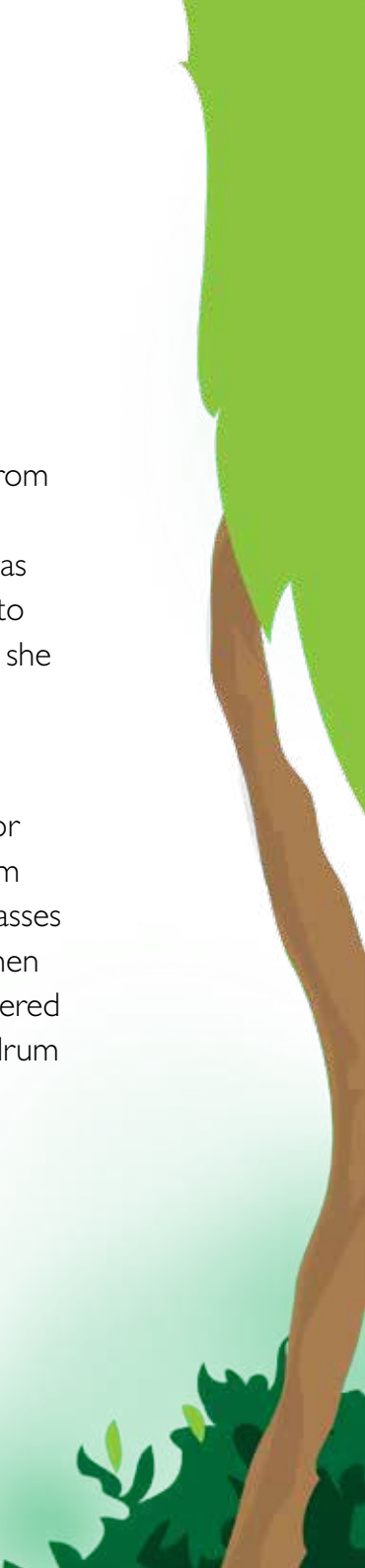
'She's forcing me to sleep with a man again,' the girl replied, crying. 'I'm scared of being abused and I don't want to get pregnant.'





The girl said she was only 13 years old. Her mother had been using her and her three sisters to earn money since their father had left them. Before they came to Sankhla Buri, Thailand, they had lived in many places and, wherever they went, their mother would force them to sleep with men. From her story P'Noi discovered that they were illegal migrants.


P'Noi was horrified. She felt sorry for the girl and let her stay the night. She wanted to talk to the girl's mother, but her husband told her not to get involved. She listened to him but decided to keep an eye on the girl.



P'Noi knew about the migrant workers from neighbouring Myanmar. They would often sneak into her village to find work. She was also aware of people leaving their village to find work illegally in the nearby cities, but she hadn't bothered to talk to them.

She kept herself busy running a project for youth in the village where she taught them about gardening and cooking. She held classes to keep them busy and out of trouble when they were not in school. She also volunteered her time, teaching traditional dance and drum lessons at a local school.





One day, Som, a staff member from World Vision came to visit P'Noi at home. He was looking for volunteers who would help raise awareness about trafficking and safe migration in their village. He explained how she could help identify, prevent and respond to trafficking issues. P'Noi remembered the girl across the street and decided that she wanted to know more about trafficking and migration issues.

She attended training sessions where she learned more about the issue of trafficking, labour laws and safe migration. She came to understand more about the challenges and risks that people are faced with when they leave their homes to find work elsewhere.



As P'Noi learned more in these training sessions, she realised she could teach migrants new skills so that they wouldn't have to leave home to find work.

'I can teach them to grow vegetables or prepare dishes that they can sell to earn money. If they can earn money here then they wouldn't have to migrate elsewhere to find work,' she thought to herself. P'Noi decided to invite adults to her gardening and cooking classes.




One day she decided to introduce herself to the mother, Mya, of the girl across the street. They soon became friends. She encouraged her to think about other possible sources of income for the family. She offered her some ironing jobs at home and invited her to join her cooking class.

‘Today I’ll teach you how to prepare pumpkin crackers,’ she told her new friend. ‘They are easy to make and you can sell them.’

P’Noi also started to take Mya’s daughter to the life skills training sessions where she could meet other children her age.







As Mya and her daughter got more involved in these other activities, the shouting and fighting across the street lessened. One day the girl's father came to the village. He and his wife were reunited and the family moved to another village.

P'Noi didn't hear from them again. 'I hope she remembers everything I've taught her,' P'Noi thought to herself. 'I really hope she uses everything she learned in my cooking classes to earn money.'



P'Noi continues to hold cooking classes at home as well as teaching children and their parents about growing a garden. And her classes are about a lot more than gardening and cooking skills. She uses these opportunities to teach parents and children about trafficking and the dangers of working in the big cities.





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