



CHILDIMPACT
INTERNATIONAL

Feature Story:
**How The Freedom
Project India is
Working to Transform
Victims into Survivors**
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World Day Against
Human Trafficking

Empowering Education.
Eradicating Exploitation.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Greetings friends and supporters of Child Impact International,

Last year, a significant increase in awareness about the underground crime of human trafficking was brought about thanks to the release of “The Sound of Freedom.” With nearly nine million tickets sold, the movie far surpassed box-office expectations. Merchandise with the tremendously impactful tag line from the movie, “God’s children are not for sale” was printed to further propagate the film’s powerful message.

Human trafficking is an underground crime that many people in a first-world context will never directly encounter, and according to a January 2024 report on The Exodus Road website, ninety-five percent of human trafficking takes place outside of North America.

As I reflect on how the impact of “The Sound of Freedom” is making a difference in the fight against human trafficking, I keep coming back to one word: awareness. Yes, awareness has increased, but what next? How much difference does awareness make for a trafficking victim? Awareness is a first step. Without necessary next steps, however, very little will change.

In this special issue focused on the global initiatives of Operation Child Rescue, Child Impact extends the invitation for you to transition from awareness to action. Ten years ago, The Freedom Project- India became the first Child Impact partnership in the fight against human trafficking. Today, our reach has expanded dramatically and beyond expectation. We are grateful to our generous donors who continue to make this possible.

I invite you to partner with Child Impact International to support the Operation Child Rescue initiatives through either a one-time donation or ongoing monthly contributions. July 30th is World Day Against Human Trafficking. I welcome a joint commitment to go beyond awareness to make a life-saving difference in the lives of the most vulnerable around the world.

Thank you for partnering with us to set the captives free (Isaiah 58:6-8)!

Dr. Tom L. Evans, CEO



Mara visiting girls at the Freedom Project.



Mara eating a meal with the kids.

A SLEEPOVER IN BANGALORE

By: Tom & Mara Evans

I'm planning a sleepover with the girls tonight." My wife, Mara, had joined me on a trip to visit and film projects in India in November of 2023. We arrived in the early hours of the morning and were battling jetlag. Our first stop was at The Freedom Project- India in Bangalore. As Mara interacted with the group of rescued girls, she was overwhelmed by their exuberance and welcoming hearts and plans were made for a sleepover where they could stay up and play games, socialize, and enjoy snacks. While I went back to my comfortable room at the hotel, Mara embarked on an adventure that continues to this day.

The following morning when we stopped to pick Mara up before heading to our next location, I learned that the girls had invited Mara to come back the following year to spend vacation with them. In April 2024, she traveled back to India and spent nine wonderful days with the girls who now feel like family.

During her time there in April, Mara met and got to spend precious time getting to know a newly arrived resident of the Freedom Project's Azadi Shelter Home. Rudra is a twelve-year-old little girl who came from living and sleeping on the streets with no ability to attend school. Rudra's father worked as a guard in the market for a watermelon farmer but due to severe alcoholism, left Rudra vulnerable to regular abuse by strangers on the streets of Bangalore. Thankfully, her case was reported, and she was rescued. Seeing the transformation begin in her life was incredibly inspiring for Mara and she and the girls are making plans for the next time they can be together.

Child Impact projects and the children they serve capture the hearts of those who hear them and become involved. The stories can be heartbreaking, but healing is possible and hope for a bright future is both encouraging and empowering. The greatest reward is in having a front row seat to the miraculous transformation of the lives of the children and women we serve. Many of the children we sponsor serve as living reminders of the purpose behind the mission of Child Impact.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

BECOMING A MISSION PILOT

By: Beaver Eller

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8,9)

As I ponder God’s amazing work in my life and the life of my family, the message of this verse has become more meaningful to me.

My dream to fly and be a missionary began in my youth. Mission stories were plentiful in our home, and family mission trips to Borneo, Peru, and Mexico helped fan the flame of my interest in becoming a mission pilot. In addition to seeing how flying could impact missions, I also realized the importance of medical training. Immediately after high school I began by getting my airplane mechanic degree, followed by EMT license, and then a Bachelor of Science in nursing. Between all this and more, I actually fit in a little flying, working slowly but surely toward my pilot’s license.

During this time, I met and married my wife Rebecca, who also has a heart for missions. We moved to Phoenix, AZ where I finally got my private pilot’s license, and then my instrument rating, commercial rating and finally my CFI and CFII (flight instructor ratings). We were active in missions during these years and obtained an airplane that we planned to employ in the work in Mongolia.

Despite the obvious needs there, the government is very communist-minded and thus the doors for the airplane’s use in Mongolia closed completely. The plan shifted to put the plane to work in the Philippines instead, and we returned to the United States for me to complete my license as Nurse Practitioner.

Shortly after my graduation, my father passed away and we moved to Montana to be of support to my mother. By that time Rebecca and I had three children, and I accepted that the aviation part of my life was over. From time to time, I would wonder why God had allowed me to get so much training only to allow it to go un-used. Little did I know, God was working to put us in just the right place.

Five years later, mom remarried, and we again began praying that, if it were His will, God would lead us into overseas missions. God led us to Zambia, and in September 2023, we moved to Riverside Farm to direct the wellness program and conduct medical clinics. Located on the banks of the Kafue River, Riverside is an almost 3,000-acre farm producing bananas, wheat, soy, and other crops. It is also home to primary and secondary schools of over 700 students (many sponsored by Child Impact), post-secondary education, a wellness center, and other forms of industry.

A few months into our Riverside experience, we traveled to visit a remote

church on the Kafue River. Starting well before dawn, we first drove up the highway, then off-road for a couple of hours. Afterward, we climbed into motorboats for the next two and a half hours of travel. We found the island church people to be vibrant, warm, and welcoming. Several years previous, a church had been erected there as part of a series of meetings – but the need for more help was obvious. Over 500 people live on this island with no school, no medical clinic, and lacking proper sanitation. A large portion of the population are children who are at extreme risk for disease, abuse, and a life without education leading to generational repetition. Many other islands and villages along the river and its banks are enduring similar challenges.

The burden for this and the other unreached villages on the Kafue River weighed heavily on our hearts, as well as that of Craig Harding, the Riverside Director, and the leaders of Child Impact International. We asked two simple yet loaded questions, “How can we reach these people with the gospel? How can we provide medical care and educational support?” United, we were all individually praying for guidance and discussing the best course of action.

With very little mapping of the river available, we made an exploratory boat trip up the river. We spent five hours traveling in a speedboat (burning a lot of fuel!) only to find that we were still several of hours away from our destination. The obvious conclusion was that a more efficient mode of transportation was needed.

One day, Craig Harding called me and said, “What about a float plane?” My initial reaction was, “That isn’t possible. Planes are expensive,



governmental approval is too difficult to procure, and it is just such a big idea! After all, there are hippos and crocodiles in that river!" We decided to start praying and doing research, which led us to enact a two-year plan to work out details, raise funds, and search for a plane. One morning soon after, I opened an email that I normally would have deleted, and a sales listing for a float plane was staring me in the face.

I was worried about obtaining government approval for a float plane in Zambia because the venture would be unique in the country. Again, however, God showed that He is in control. Craig had a scheduled meeting with a government official about the current drought and the farm's involvement in food distribution during which he mentioned the airplane idea. The official was thrilled. "Do you want to meet with the commander of the Zambian Air Force?" he asked. He picked up the phone and within a few minutes Craig was racing across the capitol city for the impromptu meeting. The commander was extremely positive and promised his support in the permits and approvals process!

God's blessings have continued by providing financial help from many sources. The purchase of a 1976 Cessna 185 Amphib was recently made and modifications specific to the new mission of the plane are underway. Soon I'll have my sea plane/amphib rating!

This airplane wasn't even on my radar. This is God's airplane, this is God's mission, and I am beginning to get a glimpse into His ways. They are truly so much higher than mine. I am beyond excited to play just a little part in His plan to help reach His children on the Kafue River.





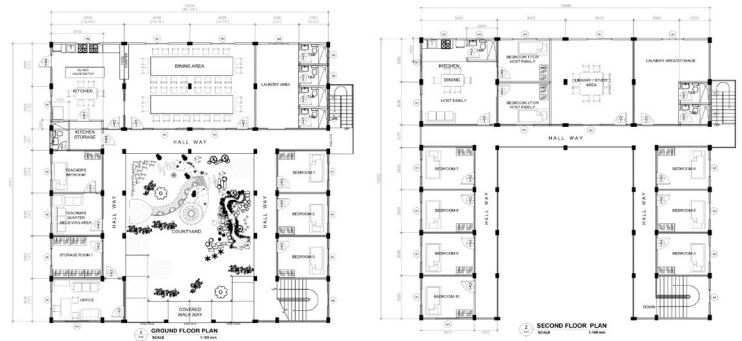
WHEN GREAT NEED MEETS GREAT OPPORTUNITY

By: Sean Knapp, PAMAS

Working with indigenous jungle tribes has been an adventure that has broadened my worldview. It has taught me positive things like the joy that can be found in a much simpler way of life. But my heart has been broken as I have observed the extreme superstitions that cause fear to govern their lives or the evils that are perpetuated from generation to generation through the free course of lawlessness and lack of accountability deep in the mountains.

Yet it is these very same people who asked PAMAS, Philippine Adventist Medical Aviation Services, to start literacy programs within their villages fourteen years ago. Watching the changes that have occurred as a result of the jungle schools has been exciting! We teach the most basic levels of ethics and morality, like letting them know that calling your neighbors together with their children to watch pornography on a smart phone is NOT science. We also teach subjects such as reading, writing and religion, and the differences being made are truly astounding!

We believe God is leading us to further expand our ministry to the Palawan people through a new project aimed at protecting young girls from child marriage and human trafficking. I recently heard the story of a young girl named Angee* who was forced into an arranged marriage at the age of 12. She was living a life of sexual servitude to an older man before she managed to escape and showed up at one of our jungle schools. Now her father and villagers are angry because she is not following their customs and unless she has a safe place to live, where can she go?



Young girls are often sexually abused in their homes and I have heard many stories of rampant incest and unwanted pregnancies by brothers and cousins. My eyes have been recently opened to the spiritual warfare happening in these girls' lives. If a girl protests against being married, quite often the family of her prospective husband will have a spell cast on the young girl to make her more willing to marry the man. One of our single teachers found out that she had a spell cast on her, but by God's grace and with His protection it did not work.

*Name changed for protection of the individual.



Child Impact International and PAMAS formed a partnership two years ago to bring education to unreached indigenous tribes living in the mountains of Palawan. We currently support 265 students studying in five jungle schools. These schools serve children from animist tribes who, like Angee*, often get married at extremely young ages! These schools operate as a safe haven for girls, protecting them from forced child marriage, one of the most prevalent forms of human trafficking in the world today.

Each jungle school currently provides educational training up to grade 10. After graduation, the girls face intense pressure to get married and start a family so that their parents can collect a dowry and no longer have to feed them. These girls need a safe place to live where they can continue

their 11th and 12th grade studies and not be sold as child brides.

Child Impact's major Operation Child Rescue project this year is to build a safe house for girls like Angee and prevent them from being trafficked through child marriage. We have been divinely led to secure a piece of land that will be connected to the PAMAS airbase, where the girls can receive medical and dental care from onsite missionaries. This home will be staffed by dedicated Seventh-day Adventists who will provide Biblical counseling and therapeutic interventions for the girls, as well as assist them in completing their studies.

Please prayerfully consider how you can be a part of this exciting project protecting children in Palawan.

*Name changed for the protection of the individual.



You can go to childimpact.org/donate or call our office at (423) 910-0667.



\$75,000

Land Purchase



\$200,000

Safe House



\$275,000

Total Needed

Azadi (ä-zä-dē) noun; liberty, liberation, freedom

By: Anita Kanaiya and Julia Bellman



The Freedom Project-India has been working among the urban poor and slum communities in the city of Bangalore, India, addressing the crisis of human trafficking through rescue and rehabilitation of victims since 2013. At that time, the city of Bangalore had become a source, destination, and transit city for human traffickers. The plight of the victims, the ruthlessness of the traffickers, and their desperate stories served as the motivation for the team of seven original staff to begin actively searching for these precious souls. More pressing concerns for the state meant such initiatives were left to NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to create, fund, and maintain rescue operations. Child Impact became one of our first partners and has supported our rescue project for more than ten years.

The rescues were frequent and included women and girls from brothels, trafficked children forced to beg in open view, and child laborers stashed away in the terrible conditions of exploitation in illegal factories and manufacturing units. Often the rescue efforts were frustrated by compromised law enforcement accompanying The Freedom Project team. They would alert the brothels and

victims would simply vanish, or law enforcement would accompany the team, but without weapons into dangerous, heavily guarded places. The girls were often terrified, in different stages of undress, and extremely vulnerable after rescue as they endured long hours at understaffed police stations with no place of refuge. The joy of freedom for those exploited, justice for them with the closure of the places of exploitation, and perpetrators imprisoned served as a source of encouragement through very challenging times.

The Freedom Project has been recognized for its expertise in the field of human trafficking rescue and prevention, and has been empanelled by the State Government of Karnataka as one of only seven organizations to address human trafficking in the state. The Azadi Shelter Home has been recognized as a model rehabilitation home by the Department of Women and Child Development under which the licence and recognition were granted. Many of the women and girls who have received care at Azadi since its inception have come by way of referral from this department and its staff.

Based on the reality that rescued victims of trafficking are vulnerable to further abuse or being “re-trafficked,” The Freedom Project made plans to open a shelter home for these vulnerable women and children. The Azadi Shelter Home was started as a safe house and training centre for survivors of trafficking with a special focus on single, unwed mothers and their young children. Most girls and women who are rescued are unskilled and in desperate need of protection and counseling. The Azadi Shelter Home was conceptualized as an interim home for a two-to-three-year period after rescue. This project seeks to address the gap between intervention and the rehabilitation of survivors of the horrors of human trafficking.

The Shelter Home employs a multidisciplinary approach to address the trauma of those victimized through trafficking and strives to meet the specific needs of survivors, preparing them for independent living. The facility includes a skill-training unit and in-house counseling program, which is tailored to suit the needs of each individual. The project focuses on physical, mental and spiritual healing along with vocational training and counseling to ensure those in recovery from the trauma of trafficking are cared for in a safe, secure, and loving environment.

Today, The Freedom Project operates with a team of twenty-three staff and five volunteers. Recent social enterprise initiatives empower survivors to become entrepreneurs with projects including a bakery serving healthy baked snacks, a microgreens unit encouraging healthy greens and salad consumption, and an upcycling unit making bags from gently used sarees. Each of these businesses have been well received and have the potential to become successful business ventures for the women who are in the rehabilitation projects. Looking back at the challenging journey with incalculable risk, we are happy to report that through the efforts of our dedicated team, over 300 women and children have been rescued and rehabilitated.

One example is a young woman, Rashmi* who lived at a government girls’ home in Davangere from ten to eighteen-years-old after the death of her parents. Sadly, we do not have many details on those first eighteen years of Rashmi’s life as they have likely been too traumatic for her to recall. At eighteen-years-old, she went to live with her sister and her husband. Due to the extreme abuse at her sister’s house, Rashmi ran away and admitted herself to the Azadi Shelter Home.

To Rashmi the bakery course is the only training and education she has received. She has expressed a desire to earn a living and build a life with her developing skills. The Azadi Shelter Home exists to

provide a safe place to heal and recover from a painful past but also to learn and be empowered for a better future.

Azadi means freedom. The reward for the work of The Freedom Project is the ability to watch victims become survivors, and create wonderful market-worthy products with confidence and skill while living a life of hope and fulfilment. This is what has made the journey of the Freedom Project worth every moment, in spite of the challenges and risks involved. Because of the generous support of Child Impact through the Operation Child Rescue initiative, we continue to play a major role in the stories of transformation and empowerment that are written every day.

*Name changed for the protection of the individual.



GET INVOLVED.
Join Operation Child Rescue Today!



Scan here for more information, visit childimpact.org
or call 423-910-0667 to reach the
Child Impact office directly.

**“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to them who are chained.” (Isaiah 61:1 KJVER)**

RESCUE CENTER FOR INDIGENOUS GIRLS IN GUAVIARE, COLOMBIA

By Jason Churchwell with Michael Melkersen and Andrea Verdi

One of Child Impact's newest projects is a rescue campus for indigenous girls from the highly vulnerable Nukak and Jiw tribes in Colombia. These tribes were some of the last to be contacted in Colombia and are now critically endangered. Their ancestral lands have been taken by armed militias and their once nomadic lifestyle has all but disappeared. Our campus opened with over 30 mothers and their daughters who are escaping sexual violence and human trafficking. I recently had the opportunity to visit the grand opening of this rescue center with two of the donors to this project, Mike and Andrea.

We had the privilege of visiting the Tejiendo Sueños project for its grand opening in April 2024. Located at the edges of the Amazon jungle in Guaviare, Colombia, we chartered a small plane to make the distant trek. The project consists of a large compound at the center of which sits the main building that serves as a dormitory, school, and cafeteria. We were greeted upon arrival by scores of children ranging in age from 7-17 years old, many wearing shirts that read, "Los Niños de Dios NO ESTÁN EN VENTA" ("The Children of God are NOT FOR SALE").

It was gut-wrenching to learn their stories: extreme poverty, abandoned by their parents, and forced into child-sex-labor were common themes to many of their plights. The psychological and physical trauma they endured and continue to suffer from such mistreatment is unspeakable. It quickly became apparent, however, that this darkness is now tempered by the hope that we also saw in their eyes and the smiles on their faces as they interacted with each other and their loving teachers within the safety and security provided by the Tejiendo Sueños.

We cannot think of a more worthy cause than rescuing the most vulnerable among us – innocent children – from such evil. Child Impact is a true leader in this worldwide effort. This effort does not end with just the construction of buildings but must continue year-to-year to also fund the operations of these facilities until the girls reach adulthood. We strongly encourage each of you reading this to join us in contributing to Child Impact to enable it to continue its invaluable work that is making such a positive mark on the lives of children in Guaviare, Colombia and around the world.



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IN COLOMBIA

By Jason Churchwell

By God's grace, Child Impact International now has the largest network of projects within the Seventh-day Adventist Church reaching vulnerable and trafficked children around the world. This network allows us to share best practices, resources, and contacts to continually improve our efforts to eradicate exploitation. On my recent trip to Colombia, I saw God working in miraculous ways through our partner network of ministries.

After landing in Bogotá, I was immediately greeted by the Chief of Police and the governor of the state of Guaviare, who had come specifically to meet with our team and express their gratitude and appreciation for the work that Child Impact is doing in their state. The governor relayed to me that although he had lived his entire life in Guaviare, he had no idea that human trafficking among indigenous tribes was such a big problem. Over the previous few months, he had learned from our staff on the ground about the issues facing young girls and he has since pledged his entire support to our project! He even told us that the President of Colombia had heard about our rescue home and was trying to arrange a personal visit! Praise God! When we met, I was traveling with one of our other partners, Maikel, who is working in a different state in the Amazon. I introduced the Police Chief and the Governor to Maikel and told them we are trying to do a similar project in Mitú Vaupés but were having trouble finding land. The Governor of Guaviare said that he was good friends with the governor of Mitú and he called him right then in the middle of our conversation. The Governor of Mitú said he would be happy to help us find land to rescue children in his state and pledged his full support! Additionally, the Police Chief said he was good friends with the Police Chief in Mitú and he called him immediately and asked him to provide support and protection for our team in Mitú, which was immediately granted.

Only God could have arranged such a divine appointment, and we can't wait to see what doors He will open next. I want to thank you for your support of Operation Child Rescue that makes these projects possible. Children's lives are being saved every day because of YOU!





FROM CRADLE OF LOVE TO FALCO'S CHILDREN'S HOME; A LETTER FROM JERRY AND VALERIE BACKUS

Dear Friends and Supporters of Child Impact,

As we reconnect, I am overwhelmed with emotions to share our journey—a path marked by profound blessings and significant new beginnings.

On a memorable day, April 4th, we welcomed thirty-three tiny souls from Arusha, Tanzania, into our loving embrace. These infants, filled with potential and promise, were entrusted to us by the devoted founders of Cradle of Love, a haven for abandoned and marginalized children for over two decades. Due to health challenges, they could no longer sustain the care these babies so desperately need.

Accompanying these little ones, nine compassionate caregivers have joined our team, dedicating themselves to nurturing and providing for our extended family. As our family grows, so does the opportunity to trust in the provision of God.

Your ongoing support has been nothing short of a lifeline, allowing us to create a nurturing and loving environment for each child. We are profoundly grateful to every donor and volunteer who has been part of our journey. Additionally, we honor Davona Church and the visionary leadership of Cradle of Love, whose commitment has impacted countless lives.

With our family expanding rapidly, we feel the immense trust and responsibility placed upon us by God. We earnestly invite you to deepen your involvement in this sacred endeavor. From the depths of our hearts, we thank you for your prayers, your contributions, and your steadfast support. Together, we can continue to make a significant difference in the lives of these beautiful children.

With heartfelt thanks,
Jerry and Valerie Backus



If you would like to sponsor a baby at Falco's Children Village, please contact the Child Impact office for assistance. 423-910-0667

PARTNER CHURCH SPOTLIGHT

Tom Evans was invited to speak at the New Market Church in September 2023 where he cast the vision and shared details about the ongoing and upcoming projects of Child Impact. The church members rose to meet the challenges set forth in the messages. Six months later, in February 2024, Tom was invited back to share project updates and speak to a broader audience of the need to reach at-risk individuals and communities around the world. The result: The New Market and Valley Fellowship Churches sponsor a total of sixty-seven children through Child Impact, in addition to their support of Operation Child Rescue projects. Pastor Reed Richardi sent the following testimony to be highlighted in this issue's Partner Church Spotlight:

A huge part of the mission for both the New Market and Valley Fellowship Churches is ministering to children and youth. When Tom Evans came and shared his messages from the fields of mission of both tragedy and hope, they really resonated with our hearts. Many of our members were inspired to become actively involved. Not only was I personally moved, but I had the privilege of witnessing the impact on my oldest daughter, Faith. After becoming familiar with the mission of Child Impact, Faith is looking forward to spending a week of her summer volunteering for Child Impact. There is nothing that touches my father's heart more than seeing my own child inspired to serve Jesus by serving the vulnerable. Here is Faith's experience in her own words: "I have always known that I wanted to do something to help people who have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked so when Tom Evans came to my church and shared this ministry, I knew I wanted to be a part of it."



Pastor Reed Richardi and his daughter, Faith



If you would like your church or organization to schedule a Child Impact event or speaking engagement, we are currently filling our 2025 events calendar. Contact the Child Impact office for details 423-910-0667.

OUR **IMPACT** AROUND THE WORLD

SPONSORSHIP SCHOOLS & OPERATION CHILD RESCUE PROJECTS



SECRET PROJECT - IS THERE ANY RISK NOT WORTH TAKING TO SAVE A SINGLE SOUL?

Child Impact operates safe houses and schools in undisclosed locations in highly volatile regions of the world. In one of these high-risk projects, we have rescued girls ages six to eighteen who were either for sale by their families or forced to work as child laborers to survive. One of the rescued girls, Mariah* was only eleven years old when we met her. She was about to be traded for a piece of property to a 38-year-old man and forced to become his wife. We offered to pay the dowry for Mariah and give her an education instead of her being sold as a child bride. By God's grace, her father agreed to the arrangement. In these regions of the world, the safe homes and schools operate in complete secrecy. We do not openly discuss the location of these projects to protect our teams on the ground and the precious souls for whom they are putting their very lives at risk. Please join us in praying for their continued safety.

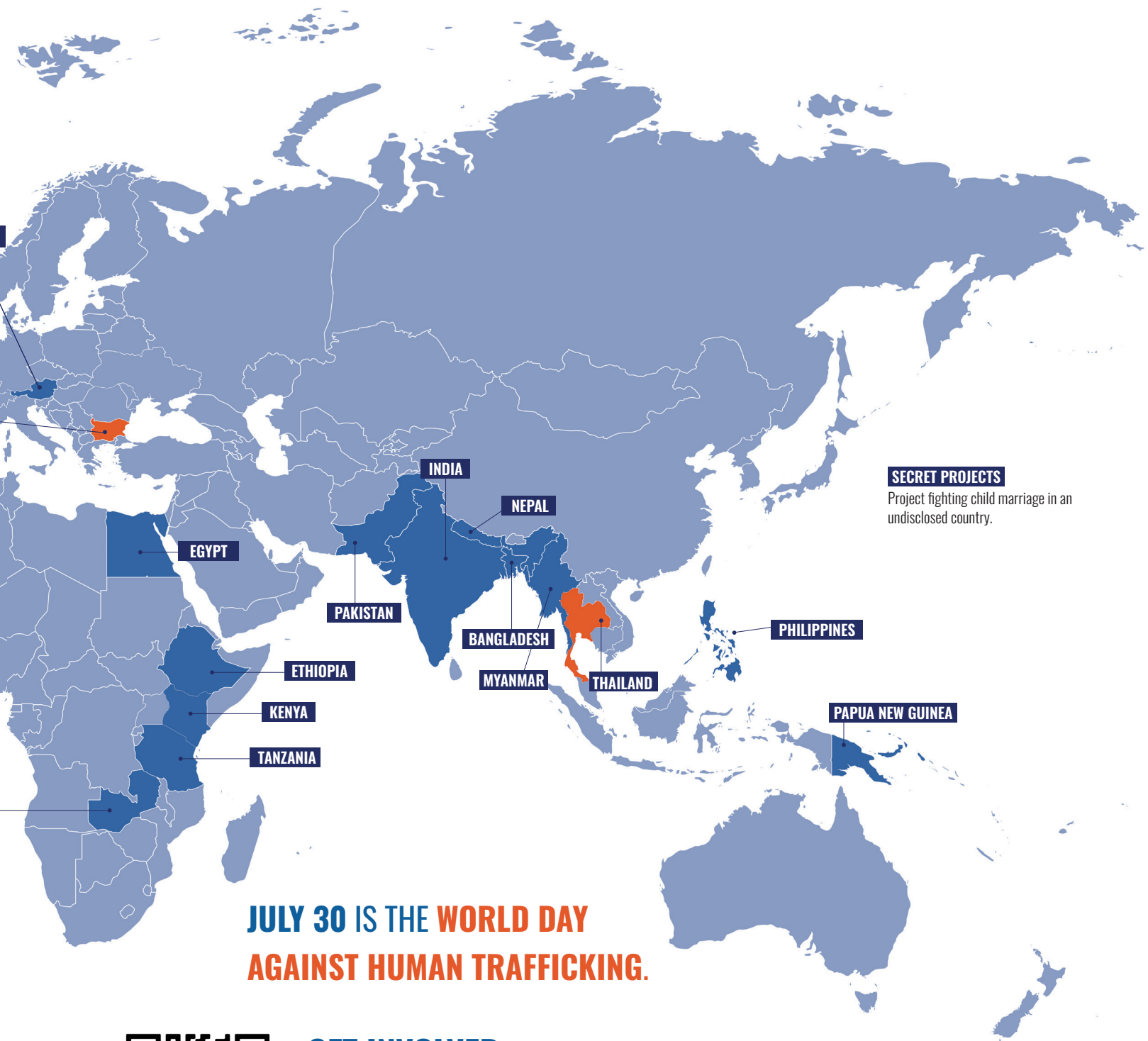
*Name changed for the protection of the individual.



New in 2024



Established countries



**JULY 30 IS THE WORLD DAY
AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING.**



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JOIN THE RESCUE PARTY

THE RESCUE PARTY IS A GROUP OF MONTHLY SUPPORTERS WHO COMMIT TO FUND PROJECTS RESCUING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION.



TO JOIN

Scan the QR code or visit childimpact.org/ donate to set up a recurring donation to Operation Child Rescue.

RECEIVE UPDATES

Once you become a member, you will receive exclusive updates on rescue operations and ongoing projects each month.

GET INVOLVED. Join Operation Child Rescue Today! Scan here for more information.

