

WHERE DREAMS BLOOM



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Part 1:
DREAMS OF OUR DAUGHTERS
"I don't want my daughter to follow in my footsteps."

Part 2:
DARE TO DREAM
"My life has been too hard. I don't dare to dream."



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A word from the founder of Alliance Anti-Traffic



«Number of out-of-school children and young adolescents is on the rise, reaching 124 million in 2013.» (UNESCO-2015)

My work with Vietnamese children started in 1992 and grew to where I was operating 41 projects in 15 provinces, giving marginalized children access to school and vocational training. This education allowed these children to dream of a better future. Having met many of them as adults, they are much more capable of teaching and educating their children for the future than what they envisioned for themselves years ago.

Since I founded Alliance Anti Traffic, the organization has undertaken many initiatives to protect children. We have rescued and repatriated hundreds of children who were trafficked throughout Asia and Europe.

Furthermore, we pioneered a reproductive health and sex education program for teenagers using a learner-centered approach. This program has grown over the years and over 20,000 children have taken part. The Vietnamese government recognized that this program was one of the most efficient in the nation, as it enables children and adolescents to recognize the risk and protect themselves from sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

After 33 years in this field, I am proud to say that I have devoted my professional life to future generations. I have two lovely daughters and as any father, I am responsible for the world where they will live in the future.

Unfortunately, children around the world are still in danger and may fall victim to traffickers and other criminals. We are all responsible for their safety, security, and a future where they can realize their dreams. We all must continue the fight against criminals, predators and governments that do not provide education and the freedom for children to grow and develop to their full potential.

We are publishing this booklet to remind us that all children, no matter who their parents are, where they live and what their income level is, have great dreams for the future. To quote Sir Ken Robinson, *"We may not see the future, but they will, and our job is to help them make something of it."*

***Together we can help them
make their dreams come
true!***

FOREWORD

"I don't want my daughter to follow in my footsteps. I want her to have a better future than mine. The only way to do so is for me to keep her in school as long as I can."

Over 60 million girls in the world are out of school (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - OHCHR). Luckily, the 15 girls in the first part in this book are still in school and continue to be thanks to AAT's program to support high-risk children.

They are from seven to eighteen years old, from second grade to twelfth grade. Each story they share is about their hope for a better future which depends on their continuing access to education.

By participating in the program, the children receive support for school fees, uniforms, school supplies, monthly follow-ups, training and many other initiatives to enhance their life skills, self-esteem and confidence.

Among those we are supporting, fifty percent do not have a stable place to live. They live in houses and rooms for rent with rundown conditions. Ninety-two percent of the families have to rely on usury and loans to send their kids to school. Some parents are drug addicts and are HIV positive. The chances for the families being able to support their children to finish high school are low.

Most of the children are not aware of their mothers' involvement in prostitution or that their fathers are drug addicts, HIV positive or serving time in prison. They are very hopeful about their lives. We would like to support these hopes to keep them alive and realized.

The second part of the book is about some women who are seeking to quit prostitution with a loan for vocational training from AAT. Many of them grew up in financially challenged families and did not have a chance to complete their education. They had beautiful dreams which were crushed the day they quit school to start making their living. *"My life has been so hard. I don't dare to dream."*

The sex trade industry, along with all of its arms of debt bondage, violence, abuse, dependency, stigma and poor social capital, keeps those who fall in it long enough to accept it as their fate. Admirably, some do fight back.

For these women, AAT provides a loan program to help to reduce sexual labor, to be financially stable enough to say no to sexual abuse and the risk of sexual violence, to see a way out of the business and not to be involved in the business of the sex trade, such as becoming a pimp or a trafficker themselves. With AAT's assistance, these women can gradually withdraw from this exploitative industry.

The women herein did not only share their stories with us, they also have shared their innermost emotions, and we are honored to witness them. Many stories were told in tears. These are rare moments when we see the soft side of these women. They are always strong and resilient to survive and to compete in their world. Taking them out of their world for a moment and asking them how they feel is such a simple way to treat them dignity which they have not experienced for so long.

The names of all of those within have been changed.





Acknowledgement

First and foremost, we would like to thank our beautiful girls and women whose participation and sharing have made this book possible.

We also would like express our deep appreciation to the following:

- The Hoa Mặt Trời Outreach Team for their excellent work in the field. The trust they have built with their service clients has allowed AAT to access and to connect with the girls and women in this book. .
 - Mr. Georges Blanchard, AAT founder and CEO, for his constant moral support and encouragement.
 - The AAT Vietnam Team for their strong commitment to the completion of the book and their ongoing effort to run the programs to support the girls and women in this book.
 - Mr. Robert Eric Burdette for his editing help.
- Our gratitude to the donors for supporting our work.

Thank you!

My-Ngan Ta

Program Director - AAT Vietnam



Part 1: *DREAMS OF OUR DAUGHTERS*

Picture by Nicolas Lainez



CHILDREN WHOSE RELATIVES ARE INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION IN VIETNAM

A small portion of this group has been identified as a very high-risk group of contracting HIV/AIDS when their mothers happen to engage in prostitution and have HIV. These children are supported through HIV/AIDS prevention programs which are being gradually withdrawn from Vietnam. These support programs leave a big a gap where the children of women involved in prostitution who do not have HIV do not receive appropriate attention. There are documented cases of mothers, grandmothers and other male relatives forcing their daughters, granddaughters and nieces into the sex trade.



THE RISK OF CHILDREN WHOSE RELATIVES ARE INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION


Due to their unique living environment and social relations, younger girls such as daughters and young sisters of women involved into prostitution face higher risk of sexual abuse, early sex debut and sex trafficking.

Rose



Born in 2008.

Currently in the second grade.

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: Fried chicken.

Favorite subjects: Math.

Favorite season: Winter.

Country I would like to travel to : The USA.

If studying abroad, I would choose: The USA.

Hobbies: Watching movies.

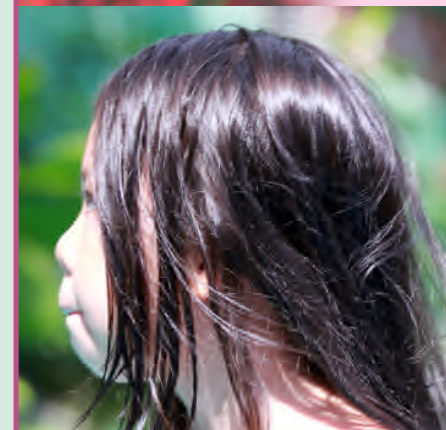
The person I admire the most: Mom and dad.

My dream: I want to study very well and become a doctor.

Favorite saying: “Có công mài sắt có ngày nên kim” – Practice makes perfect.

I live with my mother, my father and my little sister in District 2 in Ho Chi Minh City. When I was 4, my mother was pregnant with my little sister. That was also the time when my father had to work far away from home for a while. My father is home now and he is not healthy. My mother has to work many jobs to support the family. On weekends, she often takes us to the supermarket, the swimming pool and playgrounds in big shopping malls. My mother is strict but we also have a great time together.

If I were rich, I would use the money to study abroad, pay my mom's debt and pay for my father's medical treatment.



"The future must not belong to those who bully women. It must be shaped by girls who go to school and those who stand for a world where our daughters can live their dreams just like our sons."

- President Barack Obama

Daffodil

Born in 2008.

Currently in the second grade.

Favorite color:



Favorite food: Hamburgers.

Favorite subject: Math.

Favorite season: Winter.

Country I would like to travel to : The USA.

If studying abroad, I would choose: the USA.

Hobbies: Watching cartoons.

The person I admire the most: My mom.

My dream: I want to become a doctor.



I like reading Doremon*. I'm very proud of myself because I study very well. The most difficult thing that happened to me was when my house was flooded. I had to move around the house on chairs.

I love my mom because she cooks for me and washes my clothes. When I grow up, I will become a doctor. I will make money to take care of my mom. I will cure illnesses for people.

This Christmas, I wish that Santa will give me a bicycle. I will ride the bicycle to school.

I think that if I don't go to school, I cannot read and cannot become a doctor. I think that children shouldn't stop going to school to work because there is no future doing that.

If I had a lot of money, I would buy a house for my mom, my grandma, my brother and me.

** A Japanese comic book series for kids featuring a cat from the future.*



Claver

Born in 2005.

Currently in the fifth grade.

Favorite color:



Favorite food: Chicken.

Favorite subjects: Drawing.

Favorite season: Spring.

Country I would like to travel to: Japan.

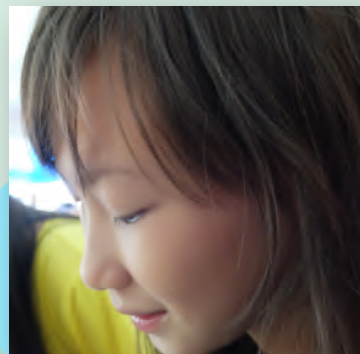
If studying abroad, I would choose: the USA.

Hobbies: Reading.

The person I admire the most: My mom.

Favorite saying: “Không có việc gì khó, chỉ sợ lòng không bền” – There is nothing difficult if you are resilient enough.

My dream: I want to become an actress.



My parents are divorced. My mother borrows money to pay for my school fees. My health has not been so good. I suffer from stomach problems. I just recovered in time for the new school year. Twice a month, I have to see a doctor and it costs us a fortune. I haven't been able to help my mom much. I would be so proud of myself if I could help her more. She has done everything she can for me. She loves me and sacrifices for me a lot. I really love and respect her. If I had a lot of money now, I would use it to help those who are sick and poor.



Acacia

Born in 2004.

Currently in the sixth grade.

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: Fried chicken.

Favorite subjects: Vietnamese literature.

Favorite season: Spring.

Country I would like to travel to : France.

If studying abroad, I would choose: Australia.

Hobbies: Watching TV.

The person I admire the most: Teacher Nguyen Ngoc Ky*.

Favorite saying: “Có công mài sắt có ngày nên kim” – Practice makes perfect.

My dream: I want to become a fashion designer.

Favorite saying: “Có công mài sắt có ngày nên kim.”

**Teacher Nguyen Ngoc Ky, born in 1947, contracted polio when he was four and lost the use of his arms. In spite of his disability, he trained himself to write with his feet and became a teacher.*



My father passed away two years ago in 2013. He was very sick. I loved him very much. Since my father's death, my mother, my brother and I moved out from my grandparents house to a house for rent. It is pretty far away from the city center. The house is right next to a canal and it doesn't smell very nice, especially during low tide. Since the first grade, I have always been an excellent student.

That makes mother very happy and myself very proud. My mother's health is not very good. She's often sick. When she's sick, she's very sad because she cannot go to work. Recently, she had a small bike accident. She had to stay at home for a week. I love my mom for the great love she has for me. She's there for me anytime and anywhere.


This Christmas, I would like to ask Santa Claus for my mom to be healthier and will live with me forever because I love her very much.



Prinrose



Born in 2003. Currently in the seventh grade.

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: rice with stewed pork, Chinese sausage and fried pork.

Favorite subjects: Drawing, music, English, Math and biology.

Favorite season: Spring.

Country I would like to travel to: Singapore and the UK.

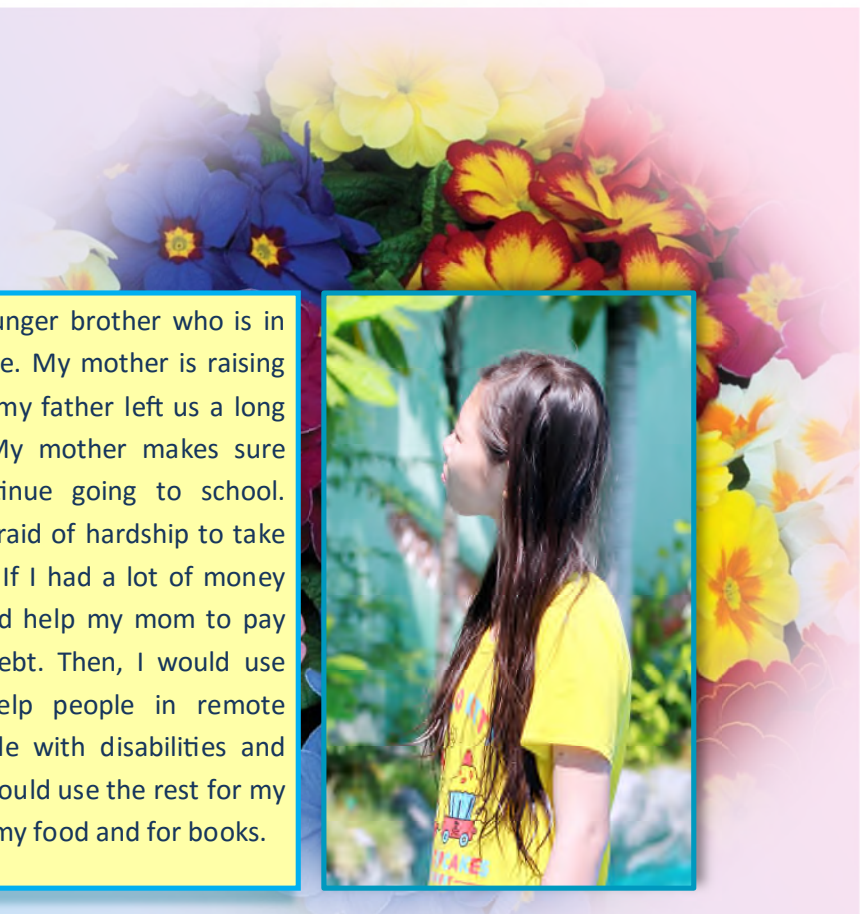
If studying abroad, I would choose: The UK.

Hobbies: I like drawing, singing and watching TV.

The person I admire the most: Đông Nhi (a singer), Xa Thi Mạn and Dương Di. (actresses)

Favorite saying: “Nhất tự vi sư, bán tự vi sư.” – Those who teach you a word are your teachers. Those who teach you half a word are also your teacher.

My dream: I want to become a fashion designer.



I have a younger brother who is in second grade. My mother is raising us because my father left us a long time ago. My mother makes sure that I continue going to school. She's not afraid of hardship to take care of me. If I had a lot of money now, I would help my mom to pay all of her debt. Then, I would use some to help people in remote areas, people with disabilities and orphans. I would use the rest for my studies, for my food and for books.

“Educate a boy, and you educate an individual. Educate a girl, and you educate a community.”


Greg Mortenson

Lily



Born in 2003

Currently in the seventh grade

Favorite colors: 

Favorite food: Hot pots.

Favorite subjects: Music.

Country I would like to travel to: The UK.

If studying abroad, I would choose: The USA.

Hobbies: Playing with my phone, playing hide and seek with my friends in the neighborhood.

The person I admire the most: My grandma because she cares about me the most. She cooks for me and takes care of me when I'm sick.

My dream: To become a famous businessperson.

My sister Sunset Safari

(Next page)



Lily and I (Sunset Safari) are going to the same school. We live with our mom and our grandparents. Our grandpa had a stroke. He cannot stand or move around by himself. If we had a lot of money, we would use it to make our grandpa healthy again.

Our mother is also very sick sometimes. Two years ago, our father started to work far away. He comes back once or twice a month. We love him but we love our mother more because she has to work to support us. She helps our grandma sell grilled rice paper* on the street. Sometimes, she has to borrow money (tiền đứng and tiền góp) to pay our school fees.

We are very shy kids. We don't like talking to strangers

Sunset Safari

Born in 2002.

Currently in the eighth grade.

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: Rice with frog legs.

Favorite subjects: Music.



Country I would like to travel to: France. I want to visit people in Paris after the attack. I'm scared but I would like to visit them.

If studying abroad, I would choose: Japan or Korea. I like their languages and I think that their cultures and their customs are very nice.

Hobbies: Singing songs by Son Tung MTP.

The person I admire the most: Son Tung because he sings very well and he is handsome.

My dream: I don't have a dream. I just want to be healthy and live well.

My young sister Lily



Sunset Safari would like to buy a house for her mom. Now they have to live with 11 people in a house. She doesn't like it very much because she doesn't have privacy or quiet. Lily, on the contrary, likes living with a big family. She thinks that it is fun.



Iris

Born in 2003.

Currently in the seventh grade.

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: Beef, chicken and fish

Favorite subjects: Math.

Favorite season: Summer.

Country I would like to travel to :
France.

If studying abroad, I would choose: France.

Hobbies: Watching movies, playing games and going out with friends.

The person I admire the most: I love my mom the most because she is so gentle and close to me.

My dream: I want to be come a successful and well-known person.



My mother and I are living in a house for rent now. My father passed away. My mother works and borrows money to pay my school fees. She is often in debt.

I can do math very quickly and I'm very proud about that. When people ask me what most challenging thing that I have ever experienced is, I think that if I have overcome it, it is not a challenge anymore. For me, the most challenging things are things that I don't want to do but are forced to.


If I had 1 billion VND, I would give it to my mom. She would open a business and then buy a house and a bike. I would tell my mom to buy things she likes but she has never had before. I would buy more clothes. I would help those who are poorer than me.



Daisy

Born in 2001.

Currently in the ninth grade.

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: Spaghetti and seaweed

Favorite subjects: Physic.

Favorite season: Summer.

Country I would like to travel to : Singapore.

If studying abroad, I would choose: The USA.

Hobbies: Helping my mom around the house.

The person I admire the most: Mom. She takes care of me and teaches me right from wrong.

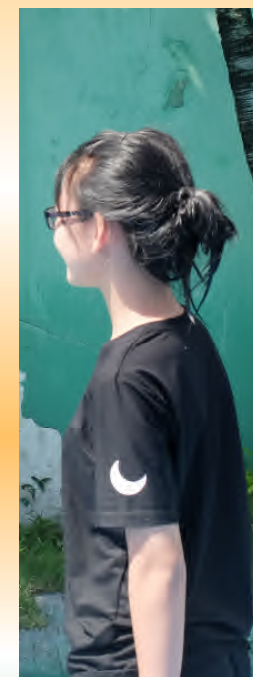
My dream: I want to be a chef or a pharmacist.

Favorite saying: “Đói cho sạch, rách cho thơm” - A clean fast is better than a dirty breakfast.



I want to go to school because that is the only way to make my dream come true. My family (my parents, my two siblings and I) are living in a house for rent in District 4 in Ho Chi Minh City. What makes me sad the most is when we don't have enough money to pay school fees. In order to support my schooling, my mother has to borrow money from money lenders with an interest of 20% a month. When I was late to pay my school fees, my teacher would call out the names of those haven't paid in front of the class. I felt very embarrassed. This year, I'm very happy that I don't have to experience that anymore thanks to the scholarship from AAT.

In November 2015, the scholarship program invited me to a water park. It was a long time since I had that much fun. I don't often have chance to play like that. I would love more activities like that.



Magnolia



Born in 2001.

Currently in the ninth grade.

Favorite color: ●

Favorite food: Fried chicken.

Favorite subject: Math.

Favorite season: Spring.

Country I would like to travel to:
The USA.

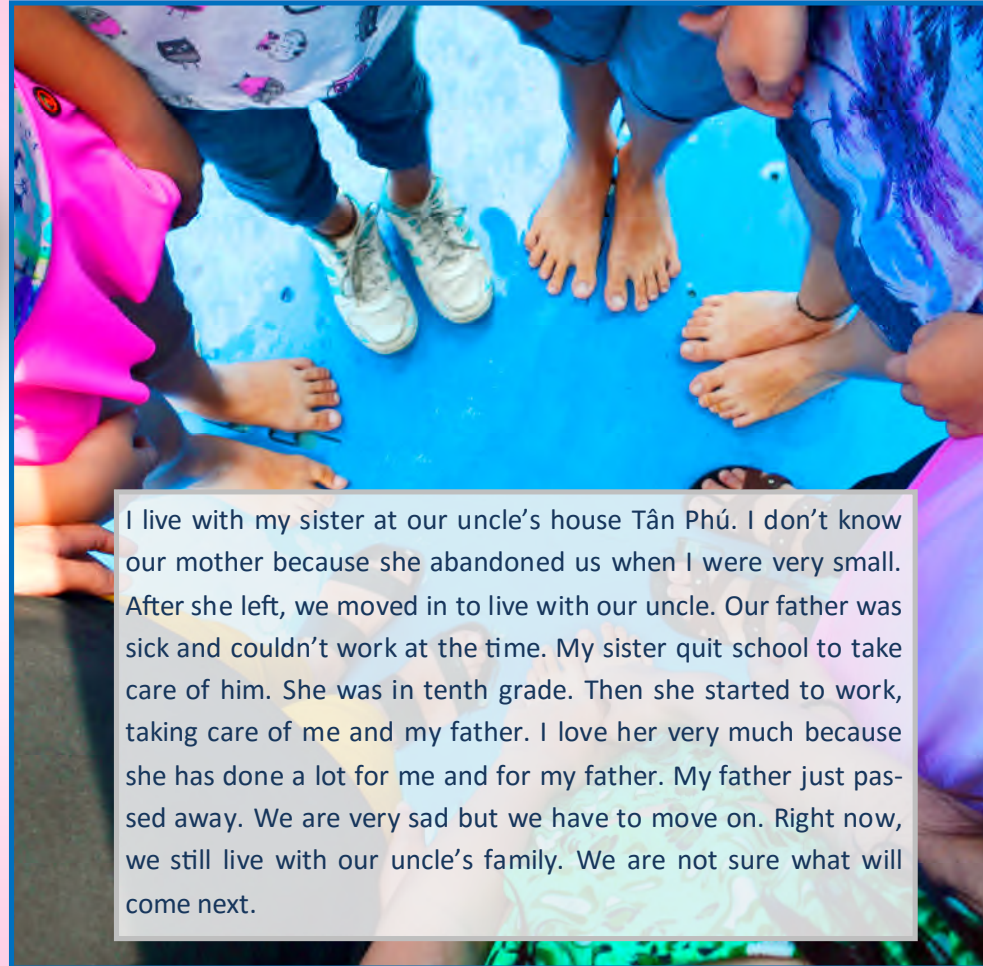
If studying abroad, I would choose:
The USA.

Hobbies: Watching movies.

The person I admire the most: My sister. She has to take care of me and my father.

My dream: I want to become a flight attendant so I can travel to many countries.

Favorite saying: One day of travel will bring you a wealth of wisdom.



I live with my sister at our uncle's house Tân Phú. I don't know our mother because she abandoned us when I were very small. After she left, we moved in to live with our uncle. Our father was sick and couldn't work at the time. My sister quit school to take care of him. She was in tenth grade. Then she started to work, taking care of me and my father. I love her very much because she has done a lot for me and for my father. My father just passed away. We are very sad but we have to move on. Right now, we still live with our uncle's family. We are not sure what will come next.

Hyacinth



Born in 2000. Currently in the tenth grade.

Favorite color: 🍷

Favorite food: Pizza, sushi, beef noodle (phở).

Favorite subjects: English and Math.

Favorite season: Spring.

Favorite book: Chicken soup for thought.

Country I would like to travel to: The USA, Australia, Singapore and Thailand. I love travelling although I don't travel much. I love travelling although I don't travel much. I would like to travel by airplane. I have never been on one.

If studying abroad, I would choose: The USA, France and Singapore.

Hobbies: I help my mom to cook, do the dishes and listen to music.

The person I admire the most: I admire Bill Gates because I heard that he has worked very hard from zero and become very wealthy.

Favorite saying: "We can't choose where we come from, but we can choose where we go from there."

I'm living with my mother, my grandma and my aunt in District 4 in Ho Chi Minh City. My mom is a hardworking and gentle person. Mom is always there for me. She always reminds me not to give up. She says that it is important that I be able to stand up on my own. I was born into a family that is not wealthy but I'm surrounded by those who love and care about me. That makes me very happy and proud.

When my grandfather passed away. It was a great loss to me. He was the person I loved and respected the most in my life. He was the one who always encouraged me to overcome difficulties.

Being able to go to school is very important for me. Going to school helps me explore new things in the world. It opens new roads and new doors for my future. I would like to study English more so that I can become a tour guide.



"A girl child who is even a little bit educated is more conscious of family planning, health care and, in turn, her children's own education." - Azim Premji

Bluebell

Born in 2000, currently in the tenth grade.

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: Ice cream and snacks.

Favorite subjects: Physical education, Math, drawing and music.

Favorite season: Spring and winter.

Country I would like to travel to: Korea, Japan, the USA and Canada.

If studying abroad, I would choose: Korea and Japan.

Hobbies: Reading comic books and listening to music.



The person I admire the most: Sister Hai Xuân and the ARA band.

Favorite saying: Playing while learning.

My dream: I wish I could study abroad and have the freedom to do whatever I want.



My father passed away when I was five. Before that, he was very ill. My mother had to sell our house to have money for dad's treatment. He still couldn't make it. I live with my mother and another sibling in a house for rent in District 5 in Ho Chi Minh City. In order for me to go to school, my mother has to borrow from money lenders. This year, she is in a debt of 10 million VND. She has to pay 100,000 VND a day until she pays it off.

My mother would like me to go to university and become a teacher because she thinks that a teacher has a stable salary and when I retire, I will have a pension.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela.



Lilac

Born in 1999.

Currently in the eleventh grade.

Favorite color: 🟢

Favorite food: food cooked by mom.

Favorite subjects: Math and English.

Favorite season: Rainy season.

Country I would like to travel to: Korea. I watch Korean dramas and find that Korea is very beautiful. Their food looks delicious too, in the drama.

If studying abroad, I would choose: France. I heard about the shooting and bombing in Paris. I'm a little scared.

Hobbies: Watching TV. I spend most of my time studying at school and taking extra classes. I like social activities and helping people in difficulties.

The person I admire the most: My mother, of course. She has to work very hard for me to have a comfortable life.

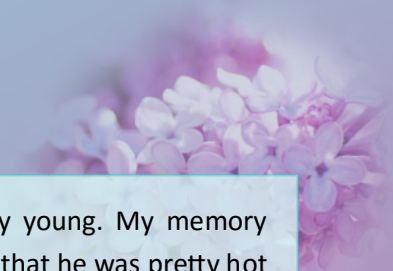
Favorite saying: "Study or die," that's what my teacher often says.

My dream: I want to become a teacher of English. I love teaching.



My father passed away when I was very young. My memory about him is very vague. I only remember that he was pretty hot -tempered. I'm living with my grandparents in Cu Chi. My mother works in Ho Chi Minh City to support my schooling. Once in a while, I take the bus to visit her. She seldom comes to visit me because she cannot take time off. Sometimes she has to borrow money to pay for my school fees. She said that because I study well, she will try her best to keep me in school.

I'm very proud that I have never given up. I always try to study the best I can so that I can make enough money to take care of my mother in the future. The end of ninth grade was terrifying for me. I was afraid that I couldn't pass the exam to continue to tenth grade. I wouldn't know what to do if I failed the test. Luckily, I passed the exam and enrolled in the class for gifted students. I was so happy.



Daniel

Born in 1998, currently in the twelfth grade

Favorite color: 

Favorite food: Everything.

Favorite subjects: English.

Favorite season: Winter.

Country I would like to travel to:

The USA, especially Los Angeles. When I and my friends wander in parks in district 1, we often talk to foreigners and overseas Vietnamese. They tell us about Los Angeles.

If studying abroad, I would choose: The USA.

Hobbies: Listening to music. I like Beyoncé and her song Distance.

The person I admire the most: my dad. He was so loving and caring. He loves his children unconditionally. I will not be able to find any man that is as good as my father.

My dream: I want to open a street style coffee shop where you sell coffee and other things such as clothes. You can also have a hair salon combined with the coffee shop.

-38-



I live with my mom and my little sister in my grandparents house. My sister has been disabled since she was one. She has some mental health problems and cannot attend school. My father passed away 6 years ago when he was 36 years old after being electrocuted. Since then, my mother has been the one who takes care of the family.

I'm proud to be able to do what I like for myself. I cut my hair very short. Other people wouldn't dare to do so because it doesn't go very well with áo dài*. I don't care. I like it and I did it. I don't think appearance is as important as who you are inside. I'm also proud that I'm very economical. I spend money very carefully because I haven't made money myself. I rely on my mother. I have to remember how hard my mother is working to make money.

I want to enroll in university to study communications next year. I'm not so sure how to do it. I will try to find a scholarship. If not, I may have to quit studying and do something else.

**Vietnamese traditional costume which is used as high school uniforms in many schools in Vietnam.*

Marigold

Born in 1995.

Currently in the twelfth grade.

Favorite color: ●

Favorite food: Grilled chicken.

Favorite subjects: Vietnamese literature.

Favorite season: Winter.

Country I would like to travel to: Korea.

If studying abroad, I would choose: The UK.

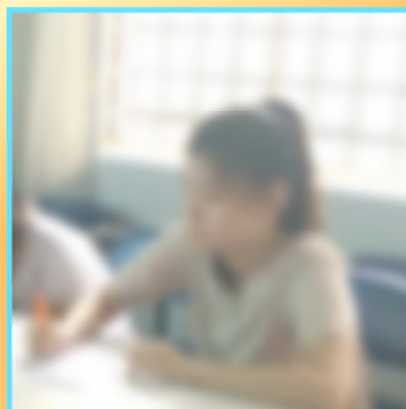
Hobbies: Watching movies online.

Favorite book: Chicken soup for the soul.

The person I admire the most: Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge.

Favorite saying: "If you are born poor its not your mistake, but if you die poor its your mistake." (Bill Gates)

My dream: I want to be a successful person.



I quit school when I was in the tenth grade. I didn't go to school for several years because my family was too poor. Then last year, I went back to school. I don't want my life to be difficult anymore. I want to go to school so that I will have a proper job. I want to become a teacher at a primary school because it doesn't cost much to become a teacher and it isn't very competitive to enroll in that program. My mother is not very healthy. She works to support my expenses. I was born into a poor family, witnessing my mom struggling and dropping out of school twice, but I still came back to school. That makes me very proud of myself. I don't give up.

The hardest time for me was when I stopped going to school. Every day, I fought with the thoughts of abandoning my dreams and my future. I was jealous with friends who were still going to school.

I treasure what my mother has done to make sure I have what I have. No one would know how much she has to give in order for me to have a good life.

I wish I had enough money to buy my mom a house so that she doesn't have to worry about paying the rent every month anymore.



Picture by Laurent Weyl / Argos.

Part 2: DARE TO DREAM

“My life has been too hard. I don’t dare to dream.”

Aster

«I don't want to prostitute myself anymore.»

«I don't want to harm myself anymore.»

I was born in 1993. I am the eldest child and have two brothers. The older one is in the army and the younger one is in eighth grade. In 2011, I went to Saigon when I passed the university entrance exam to study business administration. I also applied to the school for stage art but I was rejected. After one month studying the business administration program, I was bored and quit. I started to work for many restaurants but the work was too hard. I switched to working for cafes. My parents were furious. Last year, I fell in love with a guy. Later I found out that he just wanted to take advantage of me; to have sex with me. I was heartbroken. I hated him and I hated myself. I started to sleep with men for money. In desperation, I once tried to commit suicide. I survived and realized what a fool I was. I want to come back to my hometown of Dalat. That's where I belong. I applied for a loan from AAT to take a vocational course in hair dressing. I don't want to prostitute myself anymore. I don't want to harm myself anymore. I love making people pretty, although my true passion is to become a performing artist, like a dancer.

Tulip

*« I don't want to work as a prostitute anymore
...I'm too young.»*

I'm from Ben Tre and was born in 1997. I'm the oldest child and have two brothers. I quit school when I was in tenth grade in 2013. My family couldn't afford my schooling. I voluntarily did it so that my parents would be able to support my two brothers to continue to go to school. It wasn't because my parents asked me to quit or because I'm a girl. After quitting school, I came to Ho Chi Minh City to look for a job. I started to work for a cafe. The salary was low, 1.5 million VND a month (~67 USD). I switched to work for a restaurant for 2 million VND a month (~89 USD). At first, I didn't think that I would provide prostitution services, but the salary was not enough to support myself and my family. To help me, the restaurant owner introduced me to customers who wanted sexual services. The owner takes 30% of the money I make for each service. I keep 70%. Every month, I send my parents about 2 million VND (~89 USD). They don't know that I work for a drinking restaurant. They would not be happy because there are many male customers in a drinking restaurant. I told them that I work for a cafe.

I'm sharing a house for rent with my aunt. She works as a prostitute too.

She told me not to get too involved in prostitution because I'm still very young. I could have a better future than prostitution.

If I had finished twelfth grade, I don't think I would have been any different from now. One would need a university degree to have good job in this city. I have never dared to dream of going to university. I know for a fact that my family cannot afford it. But if we could, I would love to go on to university to study accounting.

I always wanted to learn a career to be able to work properly but I have never been able to afford it. I believe that I would do much better if I'm trained for a career. I'm very fortunate to learn more about nail art with the support from AAT. After finishing my vocational training, I will find a job and save up to open a salon of my own. I don't want to work as a prostitute anymore. I'm too young.

I like travelling but I have never travelled. I wish I could travel to the US because I heard that people make beautiful nail art there. Sometimes I dream that I would get married to an American so that I can go to the US to work in a nail salon.

I have nothing to be proud about myself. When I have a career, I will be. People often praise me for being responsible with my parents. I was so happy when I got my first salary and sent it to my parents.

Senna

I was born in 1982 in Ho Chi Minh City. I stopped going to school when I was in seventh grade. None of my other three siblings has a good education either. The income from my father working in a factory and my mother planting and selling vegetables was not enough to send any of us to school. If I had continued to university, I would have become a teacher.

My husband left me when I had my second child who is not healthy. His head is too big compared to his body and at 3 years old, he still cannot speak. My daughter is 9 years old now and she also has a health condition. Doctors said that there is something wrong with her veins. She often has nose bleeds. She had an operation three years ago. Her health is better but her personality is very strange. To get rid of the burden of taking care of two sick children, my husband just left us.

I'm living in a house for rent with my children and my mother. My little one is going to kindergarten and my older one is in third grade. I enjoy cooking for my kids. I learned from my neighbor to make beefsteak and my kids love it. Once in a while, I buy 300 grams of beef (10.5 ounces) for about 50,000 VND (~2.2 USD) and my kids have a lovely meal.

I'm working in a cafe now. Before that I worked as a housemaid. I quit because the employers didn't trust me. They always suspected that I would steal something. I didn't like that. I found a job in a cafe. Soon, I started to provide sex services because the salary from the cafe alone is not enough to send my kids to school, to pay for their medical treatment and to provide for my mother. I don't want to work as prostitute because I'm afraid of AIDS. Some men don't want to use condoms. If I had another career, I would quit doing this. There is no future in this work.

Once, I tried to learn about cutting hair but I didn't learn a lot because the place where I learned didn't want to teach me much. They made me wash hair and do manicures and pedicures all the time.

I plan to finish my vocational training and find a job in a hair salon near where I live. I hope that the extra income coming from this new career will help me to quit prostitution, or at least I won't be too desperate to risk my health and my life to have unsafe sex with clients.

I don't dream. My life has been so hard. I don't dare to dream. Right now is the most difficult time in my life. Often, I find myself dealing with all kinds of costs (school fees, milk, debt, house rent) in a day which sometimes can be 4 million VND (~179.24 USD). I cannot sleep many nights, thinking about where to find the money. In desperate times like that, I would accept to have sex with clients without condoms to make more money.

Poppy

I was born in 1989. When my mother was pregnant with me, my father left the family. I always wanted to have a father so that kids at school would stop calling me “fatherless child.” When I was 12, he came back. I couldn’t imagine how horrible it was to have him back. It was not as I imagined. He was violent and addicted to gambling. He often beat me and my mom. He didn’t believe that I was his daughter because when he left, he didn’t know that my mother was pregnant. My mother encouraged me to escape my family. I went to Saigon when I was 14, all by myself. I came back to visit my family once during the last 12 years. I stopped going to school ninth grade. My older brother and sister didn’t finish elementary school. If I had a chance to go to university, I would like to become a police officer. I would clean up all of the gambling places. I hate those places so much.

My husband and I have just separated. My five year old son is living with his grandparents in Vung Tau. I send them money to take care of my son. I’m living in a house for rent in Binh Tan.

I would like to have the proper skills to find proper jobs so that my income will more stable. I have experience working for hair salons. I can do manicures and wash hair. Now, with AAT’s loan, I’m going to learn more about make-up and cutting hair. My goal is to find extra income and withdraw completely from prostitution.



USURY

“Tiền vay” – “Loan”: For every one million VND, the creditor has to pay 200,000 VND of the interest a month (20% a month). One mother mentioned that she borrowed 5 million VND this year and every month, she has to pay one million VND of interest.

“Tiền góp” – “Collecting loan”: For every one million VND, the creditor has to pay 60,000 VND a day for 20 days, which makes 1,2 million VND (interest and the original loan)

“Tiền đứng” – “Standing loan”: For every one million VND, the creditor has to pay 10,000 VND a day of interest, which makes the interest 30% a month. A mother owes 10 million VND of “standing loan”. She is paying 100,000 VND a day of interest.



Picture by Laurent Weyl /Argos.

“In some parts of the world, students are going to school every day. It's their normal life. But in other parts of the world, we are starving for education... it's like a precious gift. It's like a diamond.”

- Malala Yousafzai



“Vocational education programs have made a real difference in the lives of countless young people nationwide; they build self-confidence and leadership skills by allowing students to utilize their unique gifts and talents.”

- Conrad Burns





AAT is a French non-governmental organization with one foundation in Thailand and two regional offices in Thailand and Vietnam. Collectively, **AAT** has more than twenty years of professional experience and lessons learned from the field.

AAT is unique thanks to its international task force network with local partners in fifteen countries worldwide, its direct field actions in five countries of South-east Asia and its relationship and partnership with regional governments.

AAT Vietnam is a pioneering NGO, establishing the first models of action to tackle the causes and consequences of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Vietnam over the past fifteen years.

AAT Vietnam is an organization run by four qualified professionals on human science research and social work and eight peer-educators who are capable of understanding the situation of the persons supported by **AAT**'s programs and projects.

Our goal:

. To eliminate forced sexual exploitation in all its forms, especially sexual abuse, forced prostitution and trafficking in women and minors.

Our mission:

- . To fight against sexual exploitation of women and minors.
- . To protect women and minors.
- . To prevent and reduce the risk of sexual exploitation.
- . To build positive attitudes on gender issues.
- . To research and understand the root causes of sexual exploitation.

AAT'S PROGRAMS FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND AT-RISK POPULATION IN VIETNAM

At the local level :

- **Education** on reproductive health and on sex related risks, providing tools for self-protection from sexual abuse, exploitation and the risks of human trafficking.

- **Outreach** program with skilled peer educators approaching women and teenagers involved in prostitution on the streets, in parks, cafes, karaoke parlors and restaurants. **AAT** supports mental and physical health, education on safe sex practices, condoms and reconversion through vocational training and micro loans.

- **Follow up, education and support** for children at risk to become victims of sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.

At the national level:

- **Rehabilitation and reintegration** for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation through micro loan programs for vocational training and small businesses.

- **Advocacy and capacity building** and for governmental officials whose work is to support returned trafficking victims in the community.

- **Hotline service** to collect and transfer information related to trafficking cases to competent agencies: **+84 902 944 334**

At the international level:

- **Rescue and repatriation** of trafficking victims, as well as supporting services for trafficking victims. For further information, please visit:<http://allianceantitrafic.org/aatvietnam/aat-service-proposed>



*"Let us
make our
future now,
and let us
make our
dreams
tomorrow's
reality."
M a l a l a
Yousafzai*

Picture by Laurent Weyl / Argos.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED
IN SPONSORING ANY
OF THESE CHILDREN
AND/OR WOMEN,
PLEASE CONTACT US AT:**

VNACTION@ALLIANCEANTITRAFFIC.ORG

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