

HAGAR

Australia Winter 2011

news

social rehabilitation
economic empowerment

Every Dollar Makes a Difference

Sometimes I have had donors say to me, "I can't give a lot. I hope this can make some difference." It does! Larger grants and donations are of course welcome and essential, but they can be volatile. What Hagar needs is a strong foundation of many faithful, regular supporters to provide a stable, reliable funding base for our work. Each regular donation, no matter how small, is an essential part of this foundation.

Please consider supporting Hagar's work with vulnerable and abused women and children by making regular monthly donations. You can do this by ticking "Monthly" on the donation slip or online at www.hagaraustralia.org.au.

Thank you for your partnership with Hagar.

Harvey Collins
Chairman, Hagar International



Oun Srey's story

My name is Oun and I am now 16 years old. When I was 6 years old I was raped by a man in our community. I came to Hagar in 2001 and I started Career Pathways on 13 June 2011.

I was born in a very poor family. My parents are farmers and I could not go to school regularly because I needed to work on the farm during the farming season. Both my parents were heavy drinkers. My mom would get drunk and pass out in the fields and my dad would get drunk and come home and physically abuse me and my brothers and sisters. My mom and dad never really cared about us. It was heartbreaking having parents that never cared about you. No one in the community wanted anything to do with us. They said that our family was a bad family and a bad example so we weren't even allowed to play with other children in our community.

I remember the night of the rape clearly. My grandmother took me to her own house because she was afraid that my parents would hit me. That night she put me on the bed under her house and she went to the toilet quite a distance away from the house. While I was sleeping I felt two hands on me trying to wake me up. I didn't open my eyes as I was very tired. I could feel myself being picked up and carried away. I thought it was my mother or father who had come to take me home, but it was not. I woke up to this man raping me. He threatened to kill me if I screamed. I was not strong enough to get him off me. He raped me three times that night. He then tried to kill me by dropping me twice to the ground from a statue in the Pagoda. When I didn't die from these falls, he took me to the lake nearby and held me under the water. I was weak and became unconscious. He thought that I had died and so took me from the water and discarded my lifeless body in the funeral monument near the Pagoda. I could not find any words that could express my pain and suffering at this time. I did not feel like a human or even an animal, I just felt like rubbish thrown away.

I was found 3 days later by police and my relatives. Everyone thought that I was dead as I was pale and soaked in blood from the rapes and torture. I was taken to hospital immediately by a human rights organisation.

I really did not want to survive. What also hurt so much was that my parents didn't even come to see me in the hospital. They didn't want to know whether I was ok or if I was going to live. They didn't even care. It was the final betrayal. They blamed me and felt I had brought shame on our family. I could not believe that my parents did not want me at all. My own parents rejected me. Only my aunty came and took care of me.

I was referred to Hagar in 2001 where for the first time I received love, care and encouragement from everyone around me. I had a safe loving home to live in and I received much needed education.

This was 10 years ago. I started the Career Pathways Program on 13 June 2011 to receive job readiness and hard skills training. Now that I am studying in the Career Pathways Program I have hopes and dreams for the future. I have lots of friends and my trainer encourages me to learn and share with my peers. In the future I want to be a tailor and hopefully I will be able to have my own shop and have a lot of money to support my brothers and sisters.



Hagar Afghanistan's Next Step

What we learned from Shukria...

When Shukria (not her real name) was just 14, her father promised her to a 45 year old man in marriage. While they were engaged, the man raped Shukria and she became pregnant. This brought shame upon the whole family, and they poisoned her. By God's grace, she lived. Understanding that if she remained at home she would be killed, Shukria ran away. Pregnant and alone at the age of 14, she had nowhere to go and no one to ask for help. A policeman found her living on the street and they fell in love. Soon after, both were arrested. Shukria was convicted of running away from her husband as well as having an affair with another man. Without a trial, she was put in prison. Shukria and her daughter have now served two years of a seven year sentence.

When Shukria is released, she will once again have nowhere to go and no one to support her. She is illiterate and has no education. She has no home, no money, and no support services to fall back on. Shukria is a 'Hagar'. And just as God heard Hagar's cry in the desert, God hears Shukria's cries for help.

But Shukria is not yet a Hagar client. In the course of a qualitative research process, Hagar staff met her in prison. The interview began with "tell us your story." The answer was heartbreaking. Our research goal was to identify groups of women and children who are most forgotten and rejected by Afghan society. Women in prison, and women soon to be released from prison, are among them.

Over four months, we listened to more than 200 stories. Our hearts were broken, again and again. As a result of this research period, we have defined our next step. A Transitional Care Center will serve women and girls who cannot go home due to the threat of violence. When Shukria is released, she'll have many needs: safety, counseling, education, and training. Hagar Afghanistan looks forward to providing it. Join us in bringing hope and healing to hurting women and girls in Afghanistan.



Fundraising around Australia Toowoomba

Each year the Youth at the HumeRidge Church of Christ, with the help of lots of adult volunteers, organise a Rugby League State of Origin fundraiser. We invite people to come watch the game on the large screen in our church auditorium, with businesses and church members donating to the event to cover the costs of half time footy food and drinks.

This year between 600 to 750 people packed the auditorium to be part of this event. Thanks to the generosity of many people, a number of whom made large donations to the event, \$10,775 was raised for HAGAR. This, plus the fact that Queensland won the game and the series made the night a great success. The night works well because of the generosity of so many businesses and individuals and the enthusiasm of the youth who promote this event and the work of HAGAR with a passion. Their enthusiasm is contagious.



Perth

The annual winter fundraiser took a fresh direction this year with over 120 gathering for an exceptional breakfast hosted at The Boatshed Restaurant on the South Perth foreshore. Tatjana Klein, Hagar Cambodia's Career Pathways Manager, shared the Hagar story, providing a positive first snapshot of the powerful impact that Hagar has in restoring the lives of broken Cambodian people. The event raised a total of \$70,000 for Hagar Cambodia

Melbourne

Our inaugural Melbourne event was held to coincide with World Day Against Child Labour, and to celebrate the work of Hagar International in this area. We held a Farm Day for families which was a great way to combine family fun and for people to hear about child labour and what Hagar International are doing to stop it.

For more info on future Hagar events in Melbourne contact: jyu@xlimits.com.au

Increasing our Impact

Hagar Vietnam Trains Local Partner

Hagar Vietnam was launched two years ago, in response to the growing magnitude of violence and human trafficking in the country and the severe lack of services available for victims. With a population of 86 million, the number of shelters and the expertise within those shelters is far from adequate. To maximize impact and sustainability, Hagar has adopted a capacity-building approach. In addition to providing our own direct client services, we are committed to training local partners. Many are hungry to learn.

For six weeks this summer, Dr. Paul Duong Tran, Director of Social Work at Dominican College (Orangeburg, NY) has joined Hagar Vietnam to share expertise. Dr. Tran is providing intensive training to staff of the Center for Women and Development (CWD), our key Hanoi partner. CWD is a government agency which operates shelters for abused and trafficked women. Training topics include client assessment, development of treatment plans, and trauma issues with respect to trafficking and domestic violence victims. This is a great step forward for shelter staff and we are happy to be able to facilitate.



What we believe...

We believe in hope. It's what we see in every individual who comes to us. We don't see the victim. We see the survivor. The possibility. The greatest of human potential.

We believe that when we focus on the individual - whatever it takes for as long as it takes - that the unbelievable becomes reality. That different endings are possible for stories of trauma and abuse.

Because we believe in a redeeming God, we know that women and children who have survived extreme abuse and exploitation can become strong. We believe that broken lives can become whole again - to be lived to their fullest potential, as they were meant to be. We believe that restoring a life back to wholeness includes the physical, emotional and spiritual.



Leading from the Heart

Introducing our Staff in Cambodia

Sam Sreyna's strong faith inspires her daily work. So does her personal background. Having been abandoned by her father at a young age, she knows what it is like to live through tough times. "When I was a student, I dreamed that I would one day be a counsellor and work with children in crisis."

First hired in 2005 as a counsellor in Hagar's Foster Home program, Sreyna has risen steadily in Hagar's leadership. In 2006 she began managing the Girls' Recovery Shelter, serving girls sold for sex, some at very young ages. Currently, Sreyna manages four trauma recovery shelters and supervises nearly 40 staff.

Each Hagar shelter provides critical crisis care as a first response to women and children upon rescue. Each provides safe and secure housing, medical care, legal support, and intensive counselling. Similar to an intensive care ward in a hospital, clients stay in the Recovery Shelter until they are ready to transition to a less restrictive environment. Some clients are fleeing domestic abuse. Others have escaped trafficking or have been abandoned by their families. In all cases, the shelter provides a first step on the journey towards healing.


Sreyna says that she works at Hagar to serve those facing the toughest conditions.





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Hagar Australia is a not for profit organization that exists to support the work of Hagar International. Hagar Australia (ABN 92 126 318 442) currently supports Hagar's work in Cambodia and partners with the World Relief Overseas Aid Fund by acting as its agent for fundraising and the delivery of relief and development projects. (ProjectCode:0914HagarID)



“I promised myself that I would give my son a better future. Now I know that I can keep that promise.”

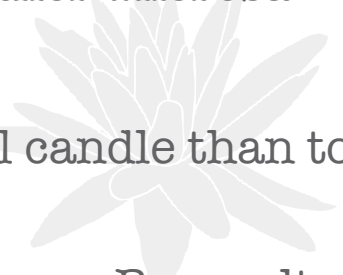
—Ly

“If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one”

Mother Theresa

“It is better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness.”

Eleanor Roosevelt



We welcome the toughest of human conditions. We stay focused on the individual. We do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to restore broken lives.

HAGAR

case study

A Better Life for my Son

My husband treated me like a dog, and I felt like one. One day he forced me to walk around our Vietnamese village naked while he beat me. Then he put me in a dog cage until even my neighbours couldn’t handle it anymore. They rescued me and brought me to a safe place. My husband was sent to jail, and my son and I went to a shelter.

I was broken in every way. Body. Mind. Spirit. I wanted to die. But when I looked into the eyes of my six-year-old son, I saw life. Despite everything we’d been through, I could still see goodness and hope. That was the moment I changed. I decided to do everything I could to give him a better life.

I tried to go back to my old job at the market. But after so much violence, my body couldn’t handle it anymore. I couldn’t work. That’s when I was introduced to Hagar Vietnam, and started to find a new life. I took life-skills training. I started to see hope in myself. I learned to let go of my past. Now, I have new skills. I can find a stable job to take care of my son.