



## DESTINY CENTER, Calcutta, India

The Destiny Center is Made By Survivors' newest initiative to help survivors become fully independent, and to slavery-proof them and their children into the future.

One of the biggest problems confronting the shelters that rehabilitate survivors is that the survivors have no place to go. They are often not welcome back in their own community, especially if they were sold into prostitution. Typically they were trafficked at a young age (average 11-12yrs) and have never lived independently. This not only means they don't have good options for the survivors, but it also means that the shelters can't free up space to take in newly rescued survivors.

To assist survivors in reintegration, this summer, The Emancipation Network, in partnership with four of our shelter partner organizations, opened Destiny Productions in Calcutta, India.

Rescued survivors who have received several years of aftercare, education, and training at our partner shelters, will now be able to work at the new production center, and support themselves independently for the first time in their lives. *This is truly the last stop on these young womens' Underground Railroad journey.*



### The long term impacts of the Destiny program include:

- Allowing survivors to rejoin society and support themselves
- Slavery-proofing survivors and their children through economic empowerment and education
- Educating and promoting activism among our US customers.
- Opening room in shelters for newly rescued girls

## About The Emancipation Network

**TEN** fights trafficking and slavery with empowerment, offering economic alternatives and education to rescued survivors and high risk communities, and using products Made By Survivors to help build the abolition movement in the US.

The Emancipation Network was founded by Sarah Symons and John Berger in 2005, using an operating model that could be bootstrap-funded, starting from the founders' personal savings. They have since grown the program to include partnerships with 18 NGOs in nine countries, and have built the Made By

Survivors® brand through hundreds of home parties and community events in every state, as well as through national magazine and television press.

The Emancipation Network also:

- Sponsors 100 survivors and children ‘born into brothels’ to attend school for the first time, working closely with NGO partners to monitor their progress and support the children in their mothers in every possible way (providing school supplies, medical care, etc.)
- Leads volunteer trips to provide therapeutic arts and personal development workshops to survivors and red light families.
- Offers intensive business development services to eight core NGO partners, assisting them in growing their own sustainable businesses and developing products for the US market.
- Provides funding for shelters’ and survivors’ emergency and medical needs, as well as start-up capital for income generating programs at the shelters.
- Exposes hundred of thousands of Americans to the issue of slavery in national magazine features, such as Family Circle and Glamour Magazine.
- Educates thousands of Americans each year about trafficking and slavery at home parties and community events. For many this is their first introduction to the issue, and hundreds have been inspired to take further abolition action as a result of their attendance at an event.

Most recently, The Emancipation Network was the winner of the Ashoka Changemakers International Ending Modern Slavery competition.

### **Story of a Destiny Survivor/Artisan:**

Puja is a typical program participant at the Destiny Center. Puja was trafficked at age 12 from rural West Bengal, after her parents put her into a child marriage. They were desperately poor and had 12 other children to support. She moved with her husband to Calcutta, where she was trafficked by her landlord, and sold to a brothel in the Sonagachi red light district.



Puja spent 2 years as a slave in the brothel, enduring severe physical and sexual abuse, and ultimately completely losing her hope and identity. Finally, she was rescued in a raid and sent to All Bengal Women’s Union. She has participated in their handicrafts program for the past 4 years, while receiving non-formal education.

Now for the first time, Puja is working in a dignified job outside the shelter, supporting herself through her handicrafts production, and saving money to move out on her own. According to Puja, her work for TEN has given her not only her first experience of independence,

but also a new identity as an artisan, rather than a victim. Puja is a team leader and gifted designer and problem-solver.

- **Possible obstacles and how these will be addressed and overcome**

Our daily challenge is to find sufficient resources to support all of our programs, including Destiny, and to maintain a consistent flow of product orders to ensure the program's sustainability.

We will continue to address the resource constraints by reaching out to other organizations, businesses, church groups, colleges and consumers in the US, offering innovative, customizable products at a fair price, and linking the sale of these items to real and sustainable change.

Every morning we wake up with renewed energy for empowering our survivor employees, especially those at Destiny. No one could be more deserving of help and opportunities than these courageous young women who have survived the unthinkable. Thankfully, volunteers and committed staff continue to join us from all over the country, expanding our reach and enabling our work to thrive. We are confident that your film will bring many more people to this cause, and some of them will surely be drawn to the economic empowerment approach of our organization. Some will certainly purchase products, allowing us to increase our product orders at Destiny and elsewhere.

Destiny's survivors struggle daily with social/emotional issues arising from the terrible exploitation they have endured. We plan to address the social/emotional needs of our survivors by offering more peer support, outings, and workshops. Many survivors are still receiving counseling from the shelters where they were rehabilitated. We work closely with our NGO partners to provide the intensive help survivors need for full reintegration into mainstream society.

- **Community partners for this project**

Sanlaap, All Bengal Womens Union, Apne Aap, and Womens Interlink Foundation – all of these shelters send survivors who wish to work at Destiny

- **Expected impact and how this funding will affect the identified need**

Our Destiny program is already fully staffed and operational. With help from donors through Global Giving, we propose to increase the number of survivors employed there, purchase equipment for the new employees, and add services for the survivor/artisans. Funding would allow us to add 15 more survivors to the Destiny team, help to pay the costs of the existing employees, purchase sewing machines, jewelry making tools, and other equipment for the new team members, and offer computer and English classes for the entire team for six months.