

FREE A GIRL POWERED BY DE NATIONALE POSTCODE LOTERIJ



Free a Girl fights the sexual exploitation of children. Thanks to the invaluable support of the Nationale Postcode Loterij participants these past years, we were able to put up a tougher, more effective and innovative fight. Six-thousand girls have been rescued since the founding of Free a Girl. With the support of the Nationale Postcode Loterij participants we were able to initiate programs that help effectively prosecute perpetrators and give survivors the right tools to start their own fight against sexual exploitation. The programs are delivering promising first results, but this battle is far from over. Free a Girl will stop at nothing to continue the fight, expand these programs and strive for a world free of sexual exploitation.

Lured, blackmailed and exploited

Swathi (17) always takes the bus to school in Mangalore, where she meets a boy. Arun is charming and Swathi quickly falls in love. But Arun isn't who she thinks he is. He takes her to his 'aunt's' house, but the house is a brothel. Swathi is raped while being recorded by CCTV cameras. The exploiter uses the video to blackmail Swathi and forces her into prostitution. If she doesn't co-operate, the video will be posted on social media. Eventually, Free a Girl and a partner manage to rescue Swathi. Five exploiters are arrested. The day after the rescue Swathi takes her first exam. She plans to finish her studies and help her family.



44
rescue operations

220
young women and
141 minor girls
rescued

303
exploiters arrested

163
survivors' court cases
started and followed

159
girls received
psychological and
medical support

50
girls received
prolonged aftercare

230
re-integrations
monitored

66
girls and women
received support at
School for Justice

3254
girls participated
in empowerment
workshops

1860
girls got access to
education and/or
vocational training

1037
children received
study coaching

STRATEGIC LITIGATION FUND

With support from the Nationale Postcode Loterij participants, Free a Girl set up a fund in 2021 to finance strategic court cases that benefit minor victims of sexual exploitation. **One verdict in a sole case can have major consequences** for future cases in countries that practice common law (such as Nepal, India and Bangladesh) because court precedents are binding for future, similar court cases. The Strategic Litigation Fund is a relatively small program that will most likely have a significant impact on victims' access to justice.

SMART RESCUE PROGRAM

Another program made possible with the support of the Nationale Postcode Loterij participants is the Smart Rescue Program, established in 2020. The program's aim is to **find ways to trace online child traffickers faster and more efficiently**. Increasingly, criminals are turning to the internet and well-known online platforms to lure and sell girls. In 2021, the first four Free a Girl partners received a thorough training, and the first 74 investigations were started. To analyze online sexual exploitation and trace criminals effectively everywhere, we plan to introduce and expand this program in every country we work in.



Victoria Secret: justice for survivors in Bangkok

After thorough research conducted by Free a Girl and her partners based on rumors about a human trafficking chain between Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia, massage parlor Victoria Secret* in Bangkok is raided on January 12, 2018. During the raid, 113 survivors are freed, including 12 minor girls. Free a Girl helps the girls press charges and a major court case against the perpetrators starts. The news is picked up by many Thai newspapers and news channels, mainly due to the exceptionally high sentences the victims are charged with. Thanks to the legal support for the girls provided by Free a Girl, made possible by the Nationale Postcode Loterij participants, the perpetrators are sentenced to prison, with sentences varying from 8 to 22 years.

*parlor has no relations whatsoever to lingerie brand Victoria's Secret.

Rescued from fake spa

Asha (20) is from Mysuru city. Growing up in a poor family, she stops going to school and starts learning how to tailor to support the family. Someone from a trafficking network spots Asha and offers her a well-paid job in a spa. At first, Asha is hesitant. But eventually, she thinks the job might pay for her family's basic needs. The first days are normal: she is trained in giving massages and therapy. She is even paid an advance salary; a smart move to gain a victim's trust. Asha starts working at the spa every day.

One day, Asha is told to 'attend' to a male customer. She refuses. But the brothel owner threatens her, telling her to pay back the advance salary immediately. But Asha has already spent the money. Meanwhile, the traffickers start messing with her head, saying the police won't treat her kindly and judge her if she was to file charges. Filled with fear, Asha has to agree to have sex with her customers. Every day, Asha lies to her parents, saying she landed a good job.

On the day she is finally rescued with the help of local police, she had already entertained two customers. Asha is given counseling and sent to a government shelter home. After police procedures, court orders and family counseling, Asha is reunited with her family. Asha now wants to be a tailor, and one day marry.



SCHOOL FOR JUSTICE

Free a Girl's [School for Justice](#) program gives survivors a chance to join the fight against sexual exploitation. The students enroll in a three-to-five-year course, after which they'll have the right skills and experience to support other survivors, influence governments and communities, and build a world where sexual exploitation of children no longer exists. They can become lawyers, for example, or journalists, politicians, social workers or paralegals.

Thanks to the support of the Nationale Postcode Loterij participants, Free a Girl was able to improve, professionalize and expand this program.

In 2019, School for Justice won the prestigious Mother Theresa Award for Social Justice.

Previous winners include the Dalai Lama and Malala Yousafzai. In both Nepal and India, the program and its students are having a highly visible impact on the changing of systems in the respective countries. Since opening a new School for Justice requires making a five-year commitment, ongoing financial support is crucial to the success of this program.



SCHOOL FOR JUSTICE

“As an innovative model of social inclusion, the Special Rapporteur has been impressed by the work carried out by the Free a Girl NGO, in the context of the School for Justice project implemented in India and Nepal.”

– Report to the UN Human Rights Council by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Dr. Maria Grazia Giammarinar



From survivor to change agent

Sumi (21) is raised in the slums of Calcutta and dreams of becoming a social worker. To pay for her studies, Sumi has to find a job. A friend who has seen Sumi's dancing skills introduces her to a man in the city's entertainment district. Once she feels comfortable around the man, he asks her to meet his friends and 'pleasure' them in exchange for money. Sumi wants to go to school and support her parents, so she agrees. She's making money, but also leading a double life. The man makes her see more clients every day, and after a year she's taken and smuggled to a resort in West Bengal along with other girls. Sumi is 'lucky', she's rescued a few weeks later, but the experience has left its scars. She's traumatized, and it's a challenge for her to recover. The rescue team and the rehabilitation workers inspire her to go back to school and refer her to the School for Justice. Sumi is currently in her third semester of a bachelor's in social work and wants to help other girls like her conquer their traumas. Every week, we watch Sumi grow and flourish at the School for Justice. She supports new students, joins extracurricular classes like the Life Skills Education Training. Her heart filled with passion, Sumi is working hard to become a change agent and join the fight against the sexual exploitation of children.



SUPPORT FOR FREE A GIRL

Yolanthe Cabau, Arjan Erkel, Evelien Hölsken and Roelof van Laar founded Free a Girl because they could not look away from the horrific reality of the sexual exploitation of children. The campaigns we run to raise awareness around this topic are **campaigns you simply can't ignore**. Take the [Fight As If She Was Your Own](#) campaign in 2019, for example, during which mothers and daughters in shopping districts were confronted with a digital screen depicting a child in a brothel, the face swapped with that of the daughter walking by. Or the annual and successful Lock Me Up fundraiser, a nationwide campaign during which Dutch celebrities and Free a Girl supporters get locked up in a one by two-meter cage in the most public locations.

In 2020, 20 new ambassadors joined our fight to reach a new, online target group of 10 million followers.

Froukje de Both, Loes Haverkort and Romy Monteiro use their platforms and fame to tell the survivors' stories. In 2021 Romy Monteiro presented '[This Song Will](#)' a new music and performance format where musicians like Alain Clare, Di-rect and Niels Geusebroek perform and dedicate a song to a survivor of sexual exploitation.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

If we want to end sexual exploitation once and for all, it's all hands on deck. Fighting for structural change on all levels, from wiping out brothels to winning court cases. Online research methods must be constantly improved, renewed, and implemented to always stay one step ahead of the criminals. Impunity will not end unless we continue to find smart and effective ways to deal with the issue. And survivors deserve a change to take their fate into their own hands, to join the fight as change agents and fight for justice for what was done to them. Free a Girl will keep fighting. For every daughter, sister or cousin yet to be rescued, and for the protection of girls everywhere.



www.freeagirl.nl

[f](#) @freeagirl [i](#) @freeagirl [t](#) @freeagirl [in](#) @freeagirl