



Remember Nong Tong who was trafficked into a begging ring in Chiang Mai? Here is the second part of her story. You may like to re-read the first part in lesson one before reading on...

... It seemed there was no hope for her.

But then Nong Tong heard the rumours. There were whispers on the street amongst the street kids – the trafficked children – that there was a place that took care of children just like her and, if she could get there, she would be safe. She thought it was just a fairy tale, something other kids dreamed up in their imagination. She didn't believe it was a real place. But still it comforted her. It made her feel better. It gave her a glimmer of hope. She would often dream about this place as she lay on her mat, tired and hungry.

One night the traffickers told the children that there were people in a certain section of town looking for them and they told them, "Don't go anywhere near that place! If you do, the police will arrest you and throw you in prison." The traffickers threatened the children with a beating or worse.

But something told Nong Tong that this was her chance for a better life. Despite the risks and the danger of a severe beating she sneaked through the laneways to the forbidden part of town and made a run for freedom into the arms of a child rescue team. At first she was anxious about being handed over to the police or worse, being taken back to her captors but the team quickly let her know that her long nightmare was finally over.



She was taken to the ZOE Children's Home, a large home that looked like a tourist resort to Nong Tong. It sits on 20 acres of beautiful land in the lush mountains of Thailand about an hour from Chiang Mai. There, she joined the 60 other children who had been rescued from human trafficking or who had been at-risk or orphans.

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During her first week at the home, Nong Tong walked around in a daze wondering, "So this is the place that was created just for kids like me? I can't believe it's real. I can't believe it's real!" With the help of teachers at the home, Nong Tong learned to read and write and to speak Thai. For the first time in her life, she went to a real school. She was so hungry to learn that she excelled in class, rapidly advancing from grade 1 to year 7. She also discovered passions for sewing and language, quickly learning how to make clothes and to speak English fluently. Finally she felt safe, free and happy but her story was far from over.

The gang that ran the begging ring had been arrested by the police and several of them were about to come to trial. Nong Tong was asked to be a witness in the trial and to tell her story to the court. At first she felt scared and nervous about the possibility of seeing these men and women again but with the support of the ZOE staff she built up the courage to testify in court. Based in part on her testimony, the perpetrators were sentenced to 15 years in prison.

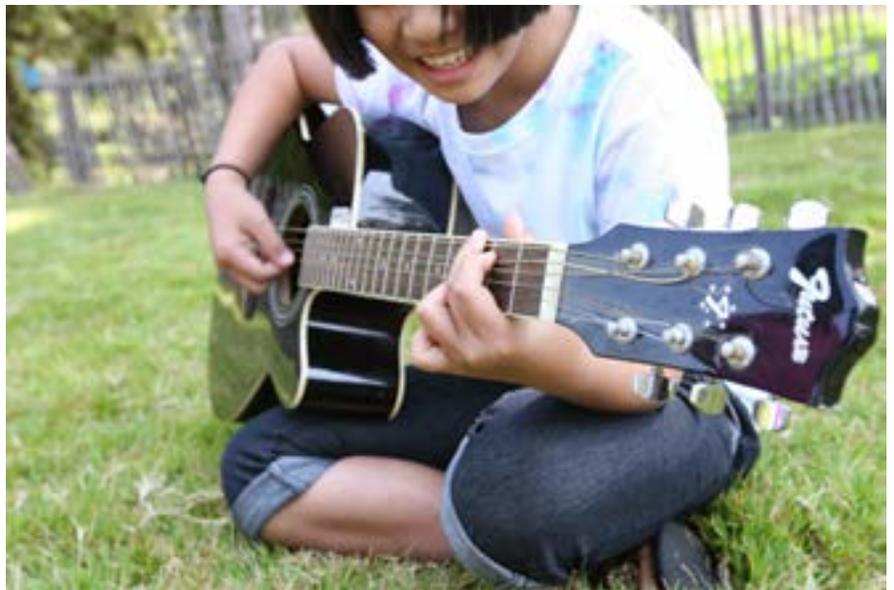
After 3 years at the children's home, another amazing thing happened in Nong Tong's life. The ZOE child rescue team discovered that Nong Tong's grandparents were still alive and located the general area where they lived. A team of investigators went to Myanmar to track them down and to find out whether they were willing and able to care for Nong Tong. When the team arrived in the small village, they found the grandparents' home. With the help of a translator, they explained why they had come. When team members showed photographs of Nong Tong, the grandmother burst into tears of joy. She had long since believed that her precious granddaughter was dead, having not heard anything from her since the day she went away twelve years before to visit the other relatives "for a few weeks."

After determining that the grandparents were able and willing to take good care of Nong Tong, the child rescue team went back to Thailand and, a few weeks later, took Nong Tong to Myanmar and reunited her with her family. In fact, the entire village came out to rejoice in the return of their long-lost daughter!

This case study is based on real life events. In an effort to protect her identity, the exact details of this case study may combine the facts of more than one case and the location may have been changed. Nong Tong is not her real name. As used in this case study, 'Nong' is a personal pronoun that means "young" or "child" and the child's name is Tong.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM ZOE CHILDREN'S HOME





1. Explain how Nong Tong's story illustrates the geographic concept of interconnection.
2. It is very rare in human trafficking cases that survivors are willing to testify in court against their traffickers.
 - a. Brainstorm the reasons why this is the case.
 - b. How does this make it difficult to prosecute child traffickers?
 - c. What steps could be taken to help more trafficked children testify against their traffickers?
3. Look closely at the photographs taken at ZOE Children's Home.
 - a. For each photograph, describe what you see and then explain why this feature would have particular significance for Nong Tong.
 - b. Imagine that ZOE has decided to begin a major publicity campaign to help raise awareness of the importance of caring for children who have been rescued from child traffickers. Select the photograph that you think best captures this idea and explain why you chose this photograph.
 - c. Use this photograph to design a poster for your classroom wall that explains the work of ZOE.
 - d. In the photographs there are no complete images of a child's face. Why do you think this is the case?
 - e. Access the ZOE Foundation Australia website (see 'Resources' section) and click on the 'How We Help' tab. Read about: Prevention, Rescue, Restoration and Empowerment.
 - a. Which of these do you consider to be the most important in dealing with child trafficking?
 - b. Give three reasons for your answer.
 - c. Discuss your responses with a partner and then with the class.
4. This is the final part of the unit of enquiry on child trafficking.
 - a. What are some important things you have discovered about child trafficking?
 - b. How do you feel about this development issue?
 - c. Why do some people hold different views and attitudes to yours about issues such as these?

1. ZOE Foundation Australia website:
<http://www.zoefoundation.org.au/>