



YS UP GOVERNANCE AND BOARDS PODCAST

Episode 2 – Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery with Marc Nuss, Destiny Rescue

Transcript

Intro:

Welcome to YS Up Governance and Boards podcast brought to you by 3YS Owl Governance Consultants. Covering hot topics in governance, risk, latest regulatory changes and issues keeping directors and executives awake at night. Here are your hosts Ainslie Cunningham and Deb Anderson.

Deb Anderson:

So welcome to another episode of YS Up. Today we are joined by Marc Nuss who is the Business Development Manager for Destiny Rescue, a not for profit organisation dedicated to rescuing children trapped in the sex trade. Welcome Marc.

Marc Nuss:

Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate the opportunity that I can share about Destiny Rescue and what we do. I think we are one of the best kept secrets in Australia, so we've been doing this for 18 years. But yeah. Thank you so much.

Deb Anderson:

Tell us how you got involved with Destiny Rescue.

Marc Nuss:

Yes. Well, how I got involved is, one of my best mates, as you can hear I've got a South African accent, so excuse that, but I've been living here for 20 years in Australia and, one of my best mates that are one of the guys I met right from the beginning and we're still best mates his name is Col and I found out from Destiny Rescue through him. Him and his wife were in 2011, they were moving over to Thailand to go and work at one of our centres there and my wife and I got involved by funding them to be part of the funding campaign to get them over there and look, and then giving them money as for the period they were staying there to help them so that they can do the work they were doing for Destiny Rescue. So I got involved from a giving point of view, from a funding point of view, and then kept on donating along the way. And then, over a year and a bit ago, got a call from Destiny Rescue and they said, do you want to do more? And I knew that I have journeyed with them for quite a long time already. And they said, you want to do more, and it was for me, I don't even have to think twice. It was a split-second, yes, what can I do? And, that's how I got involved. So now I'm full time with Destiny Rescue and it's been a great journey for me, so, I really love it.

Deb Anderson:

And so what's your role?

Marc Nuss:

My role is to interact with our existing donor base because we're a hundred percent not for profit we don't get any assistance from any government levels, although we help certain government departments internationally. And even, I've been involved with the federal police, from Australia as well, but we don't get any assistance anywhere, but we're a tier one registered, not for profit with the Australian government. And so we get our money through donations. So my role is to spread the news, get the word out there about what we do and also to, yeah, to help people who want to maybe fundraise for us and like getting onto podcasts, webcasts and so forth to spread the news and tell what we do.

Marc Nuss:

And then I've also had the privilege to go undercover with our permanent undercover teams in Cambodia and in Thailand. And to see firsthand and be part of it firsthand to see what it takes to rescue those children out of these hell holes we find them in. And that was really, for me, it brought it really home what, I see, I count it as a total privilege to go with our permanent guys. We've got guys, permanent gentlemen all over. We're in seven different countries and, mostly Southeast Asia. So we've got, we're in the Philippines, in Cambodia, Thailand, and the Dominican Republic. And then we've also got a few other undisclosed nations, just purely for political sensitive reasons. We can't mention them on air, but we're, and what we usually do is we've got two types of rescue.

Marc Nuss:

I'm kind of just launching into explain part of my journey with this. And, we've got what you call a soft rescue. And, then also a hard rescue, which is what we do with the local federal police. So soft rescue is where we go in undercover into bars, karaoke bars, brothels, and in some real dingy places. And we basically act like we're sex tourists because sex tourism is a huge, huge thing. And, the problem with this is it's a Western created problem. So like the Australian Government last year in the Sydney Morning Herald, there was an article about, the governed guesstimates, and this is only a guesstimate that about 250,000 men travel to Thailand for sex tourism every year just from Australia. Now you multiply that from all the different countries, people are from Germany, from England, from South Africa, from everywhere.

Marc Nuss:

So that's why we can go undercover because, when I went undercover on my trips there to Cambodia and Thailand is I look like the perpetrators. I look like them so.

Deb Anderson:

You fit the stereotype.

Marc Nuss:

Yes, I fit the stereotype very well. And so that's how we can go into these places and they wouldn't know us for difference, and we've learned how to handle ourselves that we don't stand out, the whole thing is you don't want to stand out. And then that way we can go in there and then we start, looking for under age children that have been trafficked into it and it's amazing how many, that are just there

right there in the open. And, my own experiences when one of the first places we, went into, I saw this one young girl and I called her across and asked her to come sit with me.

Marc Nuss:

So for her, I just was another perpetrator, another John sitting there calling her over and, but, the thing that really hit me is there I was sitting with this girl and I've got, four children and my two younger ones are 12 and 10 years old. And here I'm sitting next to a girl and I've worked out her age was around the 13 year old girl sitting next to me. So nearly the same age as my own daughter. Okay. This is somebody's child sitting next to me being forced to do something that you would have never dreamed to do. So yes, it really hits home. And so that's what part of what drives me to want to get the word out so much because I'll think always of that 13 year old that I was sitting next to and going, were, the reason. And the reason why we go undercover is because they don't have a way of putting their hand up and say help. The worldwide, the world labor organisation guesstimates, and remember this is all illegal activity so they can only do guesstimates. They guesstimate about every 26 seconds a child is forced into sex trafficking. So as we're having this conversation another child's been forced into it and we've been, it depends how long we go on with this. But every 26 seconds.

Ainslie Cunningham:

And how are you finding with the travel restrictions at the moment, is there a slow down in this sort of, um.

Marc Nuss:

Yes. It's, a double edged sword. Um, yes. Thank goodness for that point of view that a lot of perpetrators and Johns can't fly over and do this, but what its done is driven it more underground. So it's actually what it's done for us is our undercover guys have had to really up there anti and work even harder, even with the restrictions they've got there. Because what happens is these organisations, this can go further underground and we've had our guys have already seen that some bars, it'll look like some of these brothels it looks like they're closed, but they're actually open in the back, so all the lights are off at the front, but they're still operating at the back.

Marc Nuss:

And also what's, what's really pushing further now is also online abuse is happening. And we've started getting into online abuse. Infiltrating certain networks there. With the help of... we were talking when we were talking earlier there, that there was a two and a half year old boy that we help rescue and it was the combined work through the British intelligence and the local Philippines anti-trafficking department and us. And we were fortunate enough to set up a sting and our guys interacted with them and these guys, like for example, this guy was, basically taking, it was a stepdad and he was taking pornographic material of him abusing his child, a stepchild, two and a half year old, and putting it on the dark web, and he was also organising for paedophiles to come and fly over and abuse his child and that's how we got into it. So we set it up and, with the help of the two different federal departments and from England and from, the Philippines. And we set it up and fortunately we took possession of the child and did the money change over and the man and his wife are now in jail. We organised it all. And that's just, I mean, I can tell you hundreds and hundreds of stories, but so unfortunately with COVID, getting back to that, that's what's happening. You're finding out that the online, online is increasing and also what we really believe and we're preparing for it, is there'll be a flood of, children once all of these restrictions are lifted. Because unfortunately what happens with also these all these restrictions, poverty is a lot of times the motivating factor behind it. So, and there's so many different ways that these children get caught. So a lot of people just think it's just parents that sell their kids, and that happens, but a lot of it is these children get duped, but the pressure is finance. So when you've got all these restrictions it doesn't really help the impoverished

groups in all of these different nations. And so, and that's why we're realising there will be a flood of children forced into this once everything's opened up. So we've got to prepare for that as well.

Ainslie Cunningham:

Yeah and then with the slow down of tourism and that income stream

Marc Nuss:

Yeah, that's right. That's right. It's got a huge knock on effect. And we've seen even from last... There was the financial crisis, around that period of time, that's also when these activities increased. After that, all the fallout of that was also more and more kids found themselves unfortunately in these vulnerable positions to be exploited.

Ainslie Cunningham:

And do you have in terms of I guess, rehabilitation type programs and, sort of providing them an alternative income stream so that they're not engaging in this sort of activity?

Marc Nuss:

Yes. So what we do is it's so multifaceted, the whole thing. And so what we do is once we rescue the children, so, and they got there through different avenues. So, some of them its purely, one of the major stories or main stories that's always repeated in different ways is you'll have a child and she's 12 years old or 14 year olds or whatever age they are, but still young, their parents just battle looking after them and they say, all right then. So then they feel that pressure to want to help their family. So they say, okay, I'll go to the big city and look for work. And you know, like, well, I'll give you one example. We had these two girls that they were Northern Thailand, and a lady actually, came into the small rural town and just said, hey, I need two girls who are looking for work to come and work at a restaurant, that I own, do you want to come?

Marc Nuss:

Who's looking for work? So these two friends, 15 year old girls put their hands up and said, yeah, we'll go, and didn't know where they were going. Thought it was just kind of down the road, end up travelling, in the back of like a ute for two hours and find themselves at this bamboo hut in the middle of nowhere. And, once they were in there, they were basically gang raped, forced, these two girls were virgins, had no idea. And basically we're, broken in and then we're from that moment sold for sex and this, so a lot of times these kids think they're going for work, but then they get forced and railroaded into this. And that story is over and over and over in different, different versions. But that's basically the gist of what happens.

Marc Nuss:

But once we find them and we rescue them and like we rescued these two girls, once we find them and rescue them we take them to our rescue centres and it's happened so many times because just think of this, the girls met us, our undercover guys and we initially we just look like another dirty John that's walked in. Right? So, and so how desperate have you gotta be that when we start showing them this is what we do, but they've been lied too so many times. We could just be another story that we're telling, another storyteller and they could get themselves into a worse place, but it just shows how desperate these girls have got to be that they're willing to go with a complete stranger because we've got to get their permission that they'll finally say, yes, okay, I do trust you a certain element.

Marc Nuss:

And they go with us. So we book them out as if we're going to abuse them in a hotel and we disappear with them and we take them to our rescue centres then, but the amazing, most amazing thing that is to see those faces when we drive into our compound and we always get the girls there already there to come and greet them and to see the relief on their faces that what we told was true and that they are now in a safe place. And so once we get them, once they're there, what we find with all a lot of these girls, they sleep for two days without stop because of what they've gone through and the trauma and everything. And then in our rescue centre is then when we basically, we give them a week to kind of settle down and, just, kind of get back to some form of normality. And then we start doing stuff, like we'll do medical checkups they get medically assessed because some of them have an aerial disease, because they've been raped and everything else. So we give them medical help, we give them the psychological help. And, we also take them then through, because they've been traumatised, through a trauma counselling process. And then we also start assessing them. Where's their education levels? Like for example, in Cambodia, we'll find that some of these girls don't even know how to read and write in Khmer. So we help them with that by obviously start teaching them how to read and write because we, part of it, we've got to up their skill levels. Like coming back to your question, sorry, it took a little bit, and I keep on bumping the mic here, I apologise.

Marc Nuss:

But yeah, so we go and so we start assessing where they are with their schooling and then start helping them with their schooling. But then also we look at what type of, what's the area, because we're, we believe in the principle of give a man a fish, you feed them for one day, but teach them how to fish, you feed them for life. And they can look after themselves and their families. So we're not naive enough to think, oh, you know, you know, just, just help them, patch them up and send them off. No, you've got to give them all the tools that they will not find themselves back in that position again. And that's why we've got such a high success rate of the girls never falling back into that or getting caught back into that type of industry. So what we do is then we'll assess them and see like for example, in Cambodia and we've got in-house, we've created a beauty, train them up to become beauticians. But when we say beauticians, there it is hairdressing, nails and makeup. And so some girls will go for that. Last year, just in Cambodia alone, I think we, we had, 24 girls, graduate from that program. So, and then we give, we set them up with when they go, if it's safe for them to go back to their own village and to be with their family, we actually will send them with product and gear as a startup kit to be able to start up their own little business there. Those that aren't safe, you know, they can still, we look after them if it's not safe to go back, they'll stay around where we are and we'll, but we'll set them up there.

Marc Nuss:

But we've also got a lot of other businesses. While I was in Cambodia, there was an organisation called Bloom Cafe for example. They'll take the girls on who are, interested, to go in that direction. They'll train them up to become patisserie chefs and they'll train them for two years and then employ them afterwards as well. But also what they've found there is that other restaurants, that also have been asking for these girls because they've been trained so well, to come and work for them. And, so with our aftercare, I'll give you one story if you don't mind. I know I've been, but it's, the aftercare is so important because the rescue's one part, but what you do with them after is so vitally important for their future. And so that's why the essence of us, why we're called Destiny Rescue.

Marc Nuss:

We rescue them to put them back where they can choose their own destiny. So it's not something that's forced upon them, but they can choose the life they want to live. And so one of the things we've got is, I'll just, it's not real names because we've got to protect the girls we work with, but, I'll just say Rhianna. What we, she was a girl that we rescued and I won't say the nation just purely just to

protect as well, but, Rhianna, we rescued her and we were trying to work out, she didn't seem to really, nothing really fitted for which direction to take her, you know, we helped her with reading, writing, and, but just didn't know where else to take her. And so, then one of our, workers there at our home saw that she was drawing a lot and so ok, well lets, and things, looked at her drawings and she was actually quite a good little artist. And so we paid for her to going to a local Japanese art school to get formal training and then their country wanted to, then she went through that program. And then after that program, we found out that, there was a new organisation that was starting up that wanting to get into the animation business, movie animations and so forth. And she went in for an interview and she got the interview and now she's a digital animator. So what a change from what a change from being in a place of no hope, forced into something she would have never dreamed to be involved in, her childhood stolen, but yet our agents came across her and rescued her out.

Marc Nuss:

Can I just add one thing for us? What makes us different from a lot of organisations, because you've got a lot of fabulous organisations that are there, that because it's such a huge problem, that are there helping these children that have been trafficked. But, what makes us different from probably a lot of other organisations out there, and I use the analogy, it's like when you've got the surf lifesaving, you've got the overall arm that will, that advertises and says, you know, swim between the flags, you know, watch out for rips, which are very all important. We need to hear those messages and be educated and you know, so that's an awesome part of that arm. But on the day when you're in the waves and you find yourself in trouble, you want the surf lifesaver right there in the waves with you and that's us. We go into the dark places. The places that people wouldn't dream even exist, in the dingy places and you name it. We'll go in there and we'll look for these children. So we're in the waves with them and we'll, when we see them, we'll find them and we'll rescue them.

Deb Anderson:

So, from a cultural perspective, it's probably quite difficult for some of the rescue children to integrate back into their families.

Marc Nuss:

Yes. So in certain cultures, like some of the nations that I unfortunately can't mention specifically one, it's a huge problem. With them there we can't reintegrate them with their community because, like we had, well one case we had where the sisters, so mother died, the sister looked after the family, but the sister sold her niece when she was 13 to a brothel and so we rescued her. But what happened is after we rescued her, her brother, who was in a different town actually ended up putting a hit out on her because it was, if he saw it as bringing shame to the family, what she got, she never chose to be in that, but she was forced in that. And that happens so many times. So in that country specifically, we can't get them back to their family. And if the family was also totally innocent out of it, sometimes we'll help the family actually move out of the area because you can't bring them back into the community. So yes, in certain communities. And we also really make sure that we look after the girls. So when we reintegrate them in other countries with their families, because the world health organization says it's if you can reintegrate these girls with their families, if it's safe to do so, we we'd go and determine if it's safe. We send our social workers and community workers will go out and look and do assessment. If it's safe to go, if it's safe, we'll get them back. But we never tell them where we found their child. We don't say your child was involved, that's up to the child, if the child wants to divulge that. So we'll protect the child's identity and what they went through stays with us. So when we talk to the families, we will just say, we just, she came across our path. We were just some benevolent organisation and we won't go and give further details really of where we found her.

Deb Anderson:

And does it take a bit of, how long does it take to build the rapport and trust?

Marc Nuss:

We'll see the amazing, yes, see sometimes it takes quite a long time to build the trust with some of these girls because some of these girls have been also damaged that even if you show them, because we'll quietly show them what we do in photos of who we rescued. But I mean they're still taking a chance. I could just be another person that's telling a story. And so some of our undercover guys have had to, you know, the longest we've had, which is very long. It was up to two years, but that's the minority. Usually it's, it's three to five visits that we'll visit within that, that's when, that's usually where it sits. But we've had cases where like, our guys went into a, into just a little, it's called the bus stop, but it's basically buses do come around there, but it's basically just a whole bunch of bars and brothels kind of in a U-shape, kind of all round a oval type of form. And we went into one and, and our guys walked into it and it literally was just a dirt kind of a concrete floor. There were these little curtains along the way with beds behind it, like, and our guys that were there, said, they don't know how desperate you have to be to want to even lie in those beds. But that's where they would, to right there, the guys would just take the girls and go and do whatever they wanted to do. And they were talking to these two girls there and they were, and they felt at that moment that it's not safe for these girls to stay one second longer there. And so basically within five minutes they broke their cover, told them what they were doing there and these girls, so within five, they only met these guys for five minutes. They tell them what they're doing and said, do you want to go with us? The girls said, yes. They said, just walk down this dirt road a little bit, but we'll wait for you there. The girls kind of snuck out, went there and went with them no idea where they were going, driving in the dark, with on the back of the bikes with our guys, no idea where they're going. But that just shows how bad it was for them there that they would rather take a chance with a complete stranger. And that was within five minutes. And we've had cases like that.

Deb Anderson:

Yeah. And in terms of, I guess your tactical teams, do they have to have specialist training in terms of breaking through those language barriers?

Marc Nuss:

Unfortunately, English is the, abuser's language, right? So all of these girls, whether it's even the smallest level of English, they still know a little bit of English because it's an international thing. You'll get people from America, from everywhere. Like we do work with the FBI and so forth with, they've got, you know, all these countries got paedophiles and guys flying in from all over the world. And English is the, it's the abuser's language if I can put it that way. So there's communication that way. Our guys know a little bit of depends which country they are in. And one of our undisclosed nations, there's one where we don't as Westerners go because they've got a form of temple prostitution. And so girls as young as five years old get forced into that no choice. So our, all our guys that do the undercover work there are locals. So, and yes, and with our guys do get training, we've got a sister organisation that we put guys that want to go full time undercover first, got to go through training. In the beginning we learnt as we went, learnt a lot of things what not to do, what didn't work, but really and then got some professional help in and we still got, updated training that our guys go through. And, in the beginning I spoke about the soft rescues, but we've also got other big part of our organisation is what we call hard rescues. Hard rescues is where we work with the local federal police in the different countries. We've had some problems unfortunately with some of the local police, where they'll, when we were in the beginning days when we were trying to organise a raid, that's trying to raid and close down the whole place.

Marc Nuss:

So it's not just rescuing an individual out of there, but actually going in and closing the whole place down because we want to stop these... we want to just more than just rescue these girls, we want to stop the instruments that are causing them to get into that place. So with the raids in the beginning,

you know, police would, we'd organise a raid and somebody would have gone like in one place with our guys were sitting in, I won't mention the country, but sitting still undercover in the brothel, waiting for... just waiting, and next minute the police, local police head of police walks in with his medals and everything walks. And talks to the owner, takes money, bribe and walks out. And we knew that it was compromised. But now with the Federal police, all these countries, they've got actually specialist divisions that deal with this and they'll sometimes fly in from a different part of the country. And so the local police wouldn't even know what's going on. And, so we've seen great success with that. So our part there is we'll go in, set up the, our guys will go under cover, we'll gather all the information because we want to make sure everything is, all the T's are crossed, the I's are dotted, so that when it goes to court that these guys can wiggle their way out. So we set certain things in place, we've got evidence, everything set in place. And then on the day of the raid, our guys will go undercover as if they'll go to, to want to book the child out. And once money has been exchanged and the child's in our possession, the raid happens, they get closed down. And I was so, so fortunate that that one of the places that I was, so honoured to be with our undercover guys got shut down in, Pattaya. It was right in the heart of one of the main districts. With those raids we find out a lot of times we might've interacted with two or three children that we found there. But once we've done the raid, you find there's six, seven, eight or more that we, that we just didn't come across our path and in one raid we rescued 33 individuals. So it's, so the raids are really what, it's one of the things we go... We'll always do the soft rescues what we call soft... You know, when we go ourselves undercover, but we want to see these places shut down. And that's increasing. Like in the Philippines, we've really seen some major breakthroughs there. With everything happening now, unfortunately with the Corona virus, people's finances, the thing that drives our raids because raids costs for us roughly about \$10,000 per raid because there's so much money that needs so much that goes into building the case, and preparing it and getting it ready and so forth.

Marc Nuss:

We've got about 20 raids just waiting to happen. There's finances that's keeping them from getting them done. I'll use the Philippines for example. The guys at one stage, they realised we were going to lose, some of these girls were going to be moved. And unfortunately, it was just at one of those moments when we were a bit stretched financially a bit, that the whole team in the Philippines decided they won't get paid. They'd rather put that money towards a rescue. So our guys believe it with all their hearts, they're all in with this. So for them to say, you know what, we'd rather skip getting paid. We'll work it out later, but we'd rather get this raid done. You know? I just, I'm just every day I just sit in amazement that I can be part of such an amazing organisation. They've got such amazing people working for them.

Deb Anderson:

And do you get quite a few successful prosecutions?

Marc Nuss:

Yes, yes we do. And that's why over time we've learned really how to do our jobs and do it well. And so, there's sometimes when it's a bit more difficult as the auxiliary parts are involved and when they try, and sometimes those parts take longer, sometimes you'll have people that weren't directly involved in the child's handover and so forth. When you're trying to go down the lines, sometimes you find that somebody gets off on a technicality but directly where people are involved we've got a huge success rate with that. So yes.

Ainslie Cunningham:

Do you have a lot of support from the local governments in these countries? We have from the, from that specific federal departments, but, no financial support, but it's, they need our help as well because like I said, a lot of this is a Western created problem.

Marc Nuss:

And so I heard people saying, well, you know, because we started out of Australia, like I said, 18 years ago, the founder, Tony Kirwan, was an electrician here on the sunshine coast. So, him and a real good mate, were the ones who started it off. But these countries do need our help it's such a huge problem. And so yes, we get help from the policing point of view and from sharing information and evidence, but no financial help if that's more the question. But yeah, we've seen some real breakthroughs with the federal departments in all of these different countries.

Deb Anderson:

And do you think, with the changes that have come about to modern slavery reporting, do you think they'll have a positive impact on your organisation?

Marc Nuss:

I think not maybe specifically on our organisation, but more maybe on the effects where people have got to realise, Where's the flow of money? Who's being funded? Where is it going? I think we've got to all be aware this is a global problem. This is the second fastest illegal industry in the world. The second biggest but the fastest growing illegal industry in the world. What you've found is that, a lot of these crime rings have worked out if I'm a drug supplier, I've got to create the drugs in some dingy place somewhere then I've got to have this whole supply chain with different elements and get it to the client at the end of the day. But with this, they can take a child, have the child there and that child will produce for them over and over and over and the clients fly to them. They don't have to send the client and child anywhere. So they worked it out very quickly that it's a way more lucrative business. And when people think, trafficking and slavery, we always think of back in the 17, 18 hundreds, when you heard African people taken from there, taken in chains on boats to England, to America, to everywhere. But if you think in monetary terms in those days, it was a rich man's type of thing. If we work it out in today's terms, a slave was about between 30 and \$40,000 is what it cost you. But now in today's society, you can get a child for \$90 so it's just opened up the market so big for these guys. And, and I never thought I would be in a society where there's no difference between a bottle of beer for these guys selling a bottle of beer or selling a human.

Marc Nuss:

And I'm sorry, but we've got to do something about it. And that's why to answer your questions. People have got to be aware of it so that it doesn't help us directly as organisation, but it brings awareness and people have got to start thinking, okay, where's the flow of money going? Who are we funding? Who are we helping along the prices? Have we looked down the line of actually where does, where are these products coming from? Or where, you know.

Ainslie Cunningham:

Where's my paper come from?

Marc Nuss:

Yeah, that's right.

Ainslie Cunningham:

Where's my call centre based?

Marc Nuss:

That's exactly it. And, but for us as an organisation, Westpac Bank, you know, there was some drama that came out in the media, about their governance. And so they set up actually a specialist committee to help them. And we once again, our CEO, Fiona got asked to be on the panel. So we are on the panel. So for us as an organisation, at least we know we are helping an Australian organisation to shine the light more on the problem we see every day.

Deb Anderson:

So as a community, what can we do to help reduce demand?

Marc Nuss:

Well, what we can. Yes. Well, part of it is awareness like what we're doing today. That's why thank you so much. Thank you so much that I can be here sharing what we're talking about.

Deb Anderson:

Pleasure

Marc Nuss:

It's awareness. People have got to be aware and like I spoke at a... and sometimes the awareness is right at your doorstep, right in your face. It's like I was speaking at a university and explaining about this and one lady came to me and said, I've got to have a serious chat to my uncle. He travels four or five times on holiday to one of these places that you talked about. And I have had my suspicions and I'm going to just ask him straight out because you don't, unless we start talking about this openly, the more hidden it is, the more prolific it grows. And so firstly is talk about it, start sharing about it and how people can help. Also, like I said before, is money is our... the more money we have, the more we can go and do that. And so donations for us as is, that's our lifeline. And to tell you that, when I told you in the beginning, when we started this, when I was sitting next to this 13 year old girl, basically the age of my own daughter sitting there and her story was three months before I met her. She was in school. She's got a 10 year old sister, parents, her dad suddenly dies. Unfortunately, the mum starts struggling, so she decides to pull herself out of school and go look for work in the city so that her sister could stay in school. So she goes and she gets railroaded. Wrong people get their hands on her and force her into this. So, I'm sitting next to this girl and I'm realising I couldn't have even sat there if it wasn't for me, part of the heroes for me are people, normal mums and dads were willing to put their hand in their pocket and say, you know what? I want to be part of this journey and donate money to us. And I could have not sat there next to her if it wasn't for people that have donated so that I could be there.

Marc Nuss:

And so donations is our big thing. We've got a thing called a rescue partner where people can give on a monthly basis that helps us with our cashflow, looking at about \$48 a month, but that's rescue partners. But then there's, also, we've got people that say, you know what, I want to, how much does it cost to do one soft rescue and that's \$1,500 roughly. We've had to work out numbers, some stunts higher but it's around \$1,500. And so we've had people say, you know what, I want to give money to be able to affect a rescue. And then also we've been speaking to organisations and individuals we've got, like I said, we've got those 20 raids that we need to do. So if these people, even groups that can come together and said, you know what, we're going to start a little GoFundMe or Raisely site. And between our friends, we've got people that just talked about this week that they want to get together and raise enough money for a raid because a raid, they can not only rescue quite a lot more girls, but

they can actually shut it down and send the perpetrators to jail. So those are the different ways. And you can go onto a website, which is www.destinyrescue.org.au and you'll see there is a donate button there, but, and also talk about it, share on your posts. You know, I'll gladly, like I said before, I'll talk to anybody, whether it's one person or a hundred people, I'll talk about it because the more we talk about it, the more we share on our social media about it, the more it comes out into the open. When you shine the light on something, it comes to open more and more of these consequences for those that do it. But also more and more people get aware of it. The more the people start rising up and say, no, we shouldn't have this in our generation.

Ainslie Cunningham:

You would find even like myself, I've been to Thailand and Bali and all those sorts of places and you do see it, but I think you probably sort of become naive to it and think oh well, it must be just normal for this country and not really know a way of being able to stop it.

Marc Nuss:

That's right. And a lot of times people just don't know. That's the thing people don't know they'll go into, because you'll have some of these that's nearly like tourist attractions. Like you've got walking street and a few others, like in Pattaya and you'll have tourists walk through it, which it's like a tourist... because you've got all these girls and lady boys and everybody standing out there outside of the bars and, and, and so it's nearly like a tourist attraction. But what they don't realise is yes, there's certain people that that's choices they've made that they want to do. That is, you know, but a child never dreams to do that. A child doesn't have that choice. The child shouldn't be put in that position. And the thing is, a lot of people wouldn't even know because they tell the children to lie.

Marc Nuss:

Because they don't, it's a game. It's just one big fat game. So I've gone into quite a lot of these bars and different things and you just see it because we look at the girls, we look at their eyes, we look at them and they ask to in some of these places, nothing left to the imagination. They're made to dance on these little platforms and different things. And you go in there and you see this, and then you'll see a customer talking to them they're all smiles. But as soon as the customer walks away or they turn their head, you can see the real expression on their face that they don't want to be there and, but they're forced to do that. And these bars... I know one conversation with a bar owner and he was, he didn't know who I was and he was bragging about all this is bringing, putting money in their hands and that, and he didn't know, I know the system, the system is that every girl has got to sell X amount of drinks every night as in have customers buy them drinks.

Marc Nuss:

If they don't sell those drinks, the whole amount becomes a debt against them. So, and then they've also got to sleep with x amount of customers that the bar also charges a bar fine to book them out, which is 100% the bars. But then the girl gets the money that she gets, a piddly amount that she gets in the hotel room. But part of that goes back to the bar owners as well. So they'll keep, not only are some of these women forced into it, but then they're kept in debt bondage and it's to keep them there longer and more. And but the unfortunate thing, according to world labour organisation, I think their guesstimate is about seven years as their life expectancy of children in sex trafficking because of different things that, because they're very vulnerable and different things happening to them.

Deb Anderson:

Is drug addiction an issue for them too?

Marc Nuss:

Yes, because what happens, thanks for asking that. That is a very good question. A lot of these girls they get broken in and part of, to keep them compliant, they'll give them drugs so they get addicted on them. And they also get them addicted on alcohol. Like they'll force them to drink the whole time to keep them on a certain level of intoxication so that they stay compliant. And they also force them through their, also through fear, through saying that they'll do harm to their family, to them. So there's different ways they might not be in physical chains, but they're in emotional, psychological chains. So, yes, drug addiction and that's part of our health assessment is to see on what level these girls are...

Deb Anderson:

And presumably their housing conditions are...

Marc Nuss:

Yes, it's not good at all because, and it depends in certain places you get where they've got zero movement, where they can't go out or anything and they stay in those places the whole time. Others, they get some form of movement, but they've always got to come back and, but like I said, they've got other ways of controlling them. So they, and unfortunately in some places we've had, where we rescued two girls. And it was just, we basically just stopped in plain middle of nowhere, thought we'll check this place out, we'll go there. And although they could kind of move around, they couldn't escape it because the local police owned that business. So they had nowhere to go until we came and we rescued them out of it.

Ainslie Cunningham:

And so with your rehabilitation program, have you found that any of the girls have suffered long term emotional damage as a result of this? Or are you finding success in your sort of mental health program?

Marc Nuss:

Yes. We find the program we've got, because we'll do even our therapy and a whole bunch of stuff and we journey with them. It's amazing how resilient these girls are. I've used the word here a few times for people that are willing to give money and so forth. But these girls are also. The fact that they're willing to break these emotional shackles off, we give them the tools to do it, but that they are willing to say, no, you know what? I'm going to go after my destiny. I'm going to go after my life. So we've got a big success rate with it. Yes, there's some girls that will take longer than others. Everybody's a unique individual, so we've just got to work with the individual and work it through.

Deb Anderson:

I love that you're providing a community too that supports them. They've all been through it and they're all their to support each other.

Marc Nuss:

Yes. Yes, that's right. That's right. And we find that even some of the girls that just can't move back to, it's not safe to go back to their families or their villages. They'll actually find accommodations after they've gone through our program. They'll actually go together and find a unit and still still could stay connected with the community and go out and find jobs and so forth. So yes, we're very proud of what we've done, but there's so much more still to do. There's other countries we want to launch into

that because in certain countries we've been realising we've been rescuing girls that have been trafficking from another country into that country. Like in Cambodia there's girls that have been trafficked from neighbouring countries, so we'd like to expand in there. We've got one of our works that's undisclosed at the moment that is actually a total preventative. We actually, we found, we were rescuing so many children that have been trafficked from that country into another one that we actually set up a border. We were with the border patrol. So we'll actually work with the border police in this country and in certain hotspots where they cross the border and we'll actually do interviews and assess and we actually prevent girls, children from being trafficked across the border.

Ainslie Cunningham:

So do you find though that in that instance they then resort to moving underground or moving to another place or does it really actually ever stop them?

Marc Nuss:

No, it does because firstly people get caught and, I know it's a huge problem. Like we said every 26 seconds. But you've got to start somewhere, you know, the old saying, how do you, I know, I've never ate an elephant, but how do you eat an elephant one bite at a time? I don't know who thought of that one, but yeah. So it's for us just one child at a time and you can sometimes look at the problem and go, this is so big. But yes, but for that child, it was 100% difference. So for that child, they are not in that hell anymore. And they can choose their own destiny. And that's how we look at it.

Deb Anderson:

You can't save everybody can you?

Marc Nuss:

But we try our hardest too. We try our hardest too, and that's the most difficult thing for us is we've had times when we are trying to get a raid done and just because of cashflow and different things, waiting, waiting, waiting. And, we had unfortunate stories like when we got there, we rescued some of the girls, but one girl got murdered the day before. So we were one day short. And that's what, that's what drives me. It's if we were in a position where if we were just one day earlier, we would have been able to save her. And so, yes, no, we won't stop. And, for us it is important that we're there and every child deserves that opportunity. Like our head of the Philippines. The one story that sits with him, he rescued this girl, and she was just elated to be rescued out of the position she was in. And then, but then with her big smile and then she turned around and looked sternly at him and just kind of scolded him and she said, where were you? Where were you four months ago when I got forced into this? She said, I was crying every night, calling out for help. Where were you? And that's what drives us. We want to be there to be able to be the ones that take them out of that as soon as possible.

Ainslie Cunningham:

You are doing such an amazing job. And I mean for us, like you've mentioned a few things of how people can get involved and help. And, you mentioned the website and donations. Do you guys hold any fundraiser events or things like that that we can be a part of?

Marc Nuss:

Yes, yes, we look at different fundraisers with, unfortunately with Covid, that's put everything to a stop. I had a few things lined up that I had to just put a pin in it. And once that lifts, yes, we'll have fundraising events in different forms and ways that people can get involved with definitely. So I'll let

you know once we get these restrictions lifted and we can start gathering in more than just a couple of people. Yeah, definitely.

Deb Anderson:

Happy to give you any help that we can.

Marc Nuss:

Thank you so much. And once again, thank you so much for the opportunity that I could come and share our story and like I said, I can talk for hours on this because there's so much that we're actually involved with. But yes, thank you so much.

Deb Anderson:

Thanks for your time Marc, appreciate it.

Ainslie Cunningham:

Yes, thank you Marc. It's been amazing to hear about the wonderful work that Destiny Rescue and your team are doing.

Marc Nuss:

No. Thank you so much.

Outro:

That's all for today until next time, happy podcasting. And remember if you're enjoying the show, check out our other episodes and all things governance at www.3ysowls.com.au.