

# Africa United



## The Back Story: Child Prostitution

Leader's Guide



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Written by Sophie Lister

Edited by Steve Couch

Design by Iain Gutteridge  
([www.ig-graphic-design.co.uk](http://www.ig-graphic-design.co.uk))

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# The Back Story: Child Prostitution

## Leader's Guide

*Africa United* is a story about children with big dreams who make an extraordinary journey. On their way across Africa, Dudu, Beatrice and Fabrice pass through amazing landscapes and make new friends, Celeste and Foreman George. But they also come face-to-face with some of the challenges that have gripped the continent.

Celeste is a teenage girl working in a bar, who the others realise is forced to work as a prostitute as well as a waitress. She escapes from the bar owner and joins the others on their journey. Getting to know her, Fabrice in particular has his preconceptions about sex workers challenged. Celeste is a bright and resourceful young woman who has fallen into prostitution through circumstances outside of her control.

This Back Story session guide will help you to look more closely at the issues, and think about what you can do to help. As the session leader, it's a good idea for you to familiarise yourself with the key facts below so that you can inform the discussion. It would also be useful to look through one or more of the websites in the Find Out More section.

The session has been written to be combined with the short video *The Back Story: Child Prostitution*, which is available as a free download from [www.damaris.org/africaunited](http://www.damaris.org/africaunited). The video features Rachel Davies of CARE talking about some of the issues raised by the film *Africa United*.



There are two sets of questions, one for an adult discussion and one for a youth group session.



## What Are the Facts?<sup>1</sup>

- Commercial sexual exploitation of children can involve payment by cash, or through meals, clothes, rent, etc as payment in kind. Many of those involved are caught in a modern form of slavery which they are unable to easily escape from.
- Trafficking is taking, buying, selling and/or transporting someone against their will (including through deception) for sexual exploitation or other purposes.
- It is impossible to know how many children are involved in the sex trade overall, due to the criminal and covert nature of activities. 2.45 million people are victims of trafficking annually, of which 50% are children. Children working in the sex trade can be as young as 3, though the world average age is 13.
- Many interlinked factors make children (both boys and girls) especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation worldwide. Homeless and orphaned children are particularly at risk, along with those with little or no education, those affected by natural disasters and those who are affected by drug or alcohol abuse or by abusive family situations.
- Child prostitution has many root causes, most of which are directly linked to poverty. In many cultures, girls bear a greater brunt of economic hardship than boys – they are less likely to go to school, for example. Lack of education leads to reduced choices. Many families, through ignorance or desperation, are lead to sell their own children in order to provide for the rest of the family.
- Child prostitution steals childhood from children. It denies them the opportunity of a normal, rewarding life. It often has life-threatening consequences as well as having a profound effect on children's physical, psychological and social development.

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from Back Story video, [www.stopthetraffik.org](http://www.stopthetraffik.org) and [www.ecpat.org.uk](http://www.ecpat.org.uk)



## Adult discussion

### What are the issues?

**Q:** What do the words 'child prostitution' mean to you? Do you know anything about the issue already?

(Having elicited initial responses, show AU035 The Back Story: Child Prostitutes to inform the rest of your discussion)



**Q:** What is your first reaction to the facts and stories in this video? What surprised or moved you the most?

**Q:** Why might child prostitution – and prostitution in general – be difficult or taboo topics to talk about? What judgments or assumptions might we be tempted to make about people involved in prostitution?

**Q:** What rights do children have in life, and what opportunities should they have? How are children in prostitution denied these basic rights and opportunities?

**Q:** What circumstances might lead to children being recruited into prostitution? What other factors, apart from poverty, might contribute to the problem?

**Q:** Is there any difference between those who are tricked, like the girls whose story features in the video, and those who enter the industry under other circumstances? In what circumstances do 'choices' cease to be choices?

**Q:** What might be some of the physical, emotional and psychological consequences for children working in prostitution? What help and care might formerly prostituted children need in order to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society?

### What can we do?

**Q:** This issue might seem far from our everyday lives, but human trafficking – for sexual exploitation and for other purposes – is a global problem affecting every country. How could you find out about the issue in your local area?

**Q:** Why should we focus on tackling the underlying causes of this issue? What bigger global problems might contribute towards children being recruited as prostitutes?

**Q:** How might education prevent children from being recruited into prostitution? What messages need to be spread, both in countries affected by the problem, and all over the world?

**Q:** Our daily actions have significance on a global scale. In what ways might our choices in many areas of life – for example, how and where we travel in the world, how we vote, whether we campaign or give to charity – impact the lives of children working in prostitution?

**Q:** How can your community group find out more about child prostitution? Discuss ways that you could raise money and awareness for this cause.

### What are the issues?

**Q:** What do the words 'child prostitution' mean to you? Do you know anything about the issue already? Write down five words that you might associate with it.

(Show AU035 *The Back Story: Child Prostitutes* to start off your discussion)



**Q:** What is your first reaction to the facts and stories in this video? What surprised or moved you the most?

**Q:** Why might child prostitution – and prostitution in general – be difficult or taboo topics to talk about? What judgments or assumptions might we be tempted to make about people involved in prostitution?

**Q:** What things do we all need in life to be happy and healthy? As a child working in prostitution, which of these things might you be denied?

**Q:** Some children are abducted and forced to work in prostitution, while others are sold by their families or turn to prostitution through a lack of other options. What choices are you able to make about your future because you live in a safe country and can get an education? How might your future be limited if this wasn't the case?

**Q:** Formerly prostituted children may be harmed physically by their experiences, and also carry deep mental and emotional scars. How might talking about their experiences help them? What other help might they need to heal and move on?

### What can we do?

**Q:** This issue might seem far from our everyday lives, but human trafficking – for sexual exploitation and for other purposes – is a global problem affecting every country. How could you find out about the issue in your local area?



**Q:** Bigger problems like poverty, AIDS and gender inequality lead to children being put in desperate circumstances. Why is it important that we do something to tackle these root causes, as well as helping children who are already working in prostitution?

**Q:** How might education prevent children from being recruited into prostitution? What messages need to be spread, both in countries affected by the problem, and all over the world?

**Q:** How might our choices in many areas of life – including how and where we travel, and whether we campaign or give to charity – impact the lives of children in prostitution?

**Q:** How can your community group find out more about child prostitution? Discuss ways that you could raise money and awareness for this cause.

## Find out more

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and  
the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes  
[www.ecpat.org.uk](http://www.ecpat.org.uk)

Stop the Traffik campaign [www.stopthetraffik.org](http://www.stopthetraffik.org)

Anti-slavery [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

