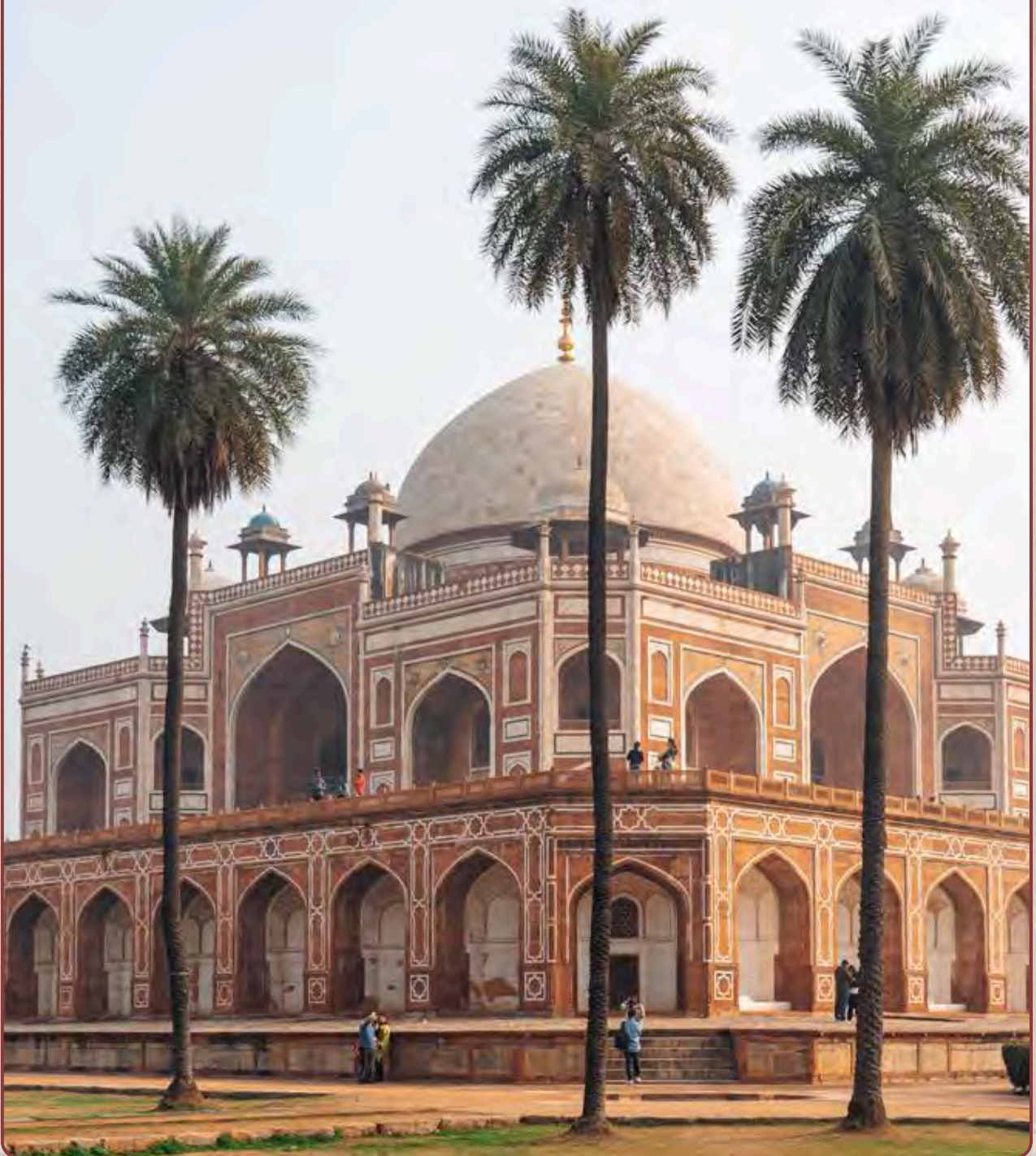


INTRODUCING India



ELEVEN

From the Editor



As we prepared for the Gower Girl's journey to India in March 2025, we had the privilege of sitting down with Kristi, the founder of Offspring.

This enlightening interview opened our eyes to the profound depth of India's rich history, diverse culture, and the stark realities faced by many of its people.

Eve Gower
FOUNDER & EDITOR

A big shout out to our videographer and photographer, Reagan Purdy, for his incredible visuals and touristy recommendations from his recent 2025 travels in India.

'Introducing India', invites you to explore the rich history, culture, and vibrant spirit of this enigmatic country.



OFFSPRING

Every Life... WORTH FIGHTING FOR



WHO IS OFFSPRING?

**Offspring is a not-for-profit organisation working
with survivors of sex trafficking in Kolkata, India**

“We have seen women and children bought, sold, traded and stripped
of the most basic human rights”

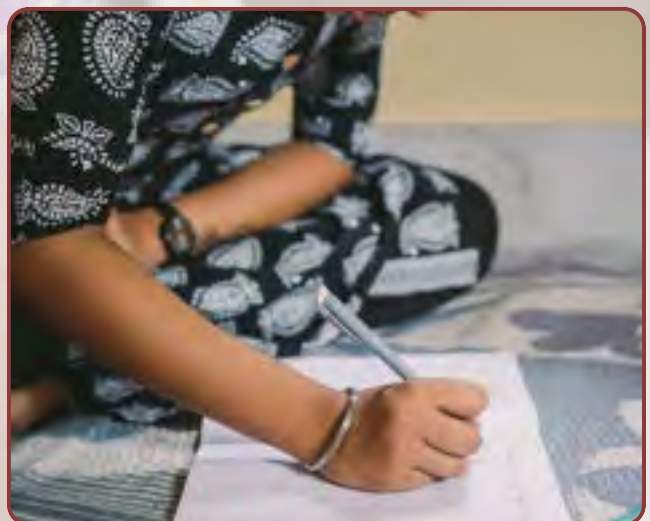


TRAINING CENTRE

Offspring has an Aftercare Training Centre set up specifically to support survivors of sex trafficking. They also have a Prevention Training Centre, located within a red-light area, to provide a safe space for young women at risk of sexual exploitation.

Every morning, each trainee starts the day with education. With often very little experience in a school setting, Offspring has a tailored curriculum designed to teach them English, Maths, Bengali & Life Skills. Everything taught with the aim to help develop their independence.

With Trauma Informed Care woven throughout, the staff provide a safe environment for trainees to learn, be healed and be free.





FROM HER HANDS TO YOURS

What started as a basic idea, to provide training for survivors, the products have developed into beautiful handmade masterpieces. When buying, you not only purchase the product, but you support the entire program.

AN INTERVIEW WITH KRISTI DAVIDSON

Founder of Offspring.

Kristi Davidson a remarkable woman whose life journey has taken her from the classrooms of Geelong to the streets of Kolkata, where she fights against human trafficking.

Hosts of the ELEVEN podcast, Jules and Eve Gower, had the privilege of sitting down with Kristi to discuss her inspiring transition from educator to human rights advocate.

It's time to dive into the complexities of **human sex trafficking**, exploring its causes, impacts, and the crucial efforts being undertaken by the Offspring Project to combat this global crisis.

In this interview, we'll dive into Kristi's transition from a dedicated educator to a passionate advocate for human rights.

In February/March 2025, Kristi will lead a small group to India on the "**Her Story**" **exposure trip**.

They'll explore the facilities, meet the team, and gain deep insights into the sex trafficking industry to learn about and help combat this global crisis.

If you're looking to understand more about this pressing issue and explore ways to make a difference, then **read on...**

Eve: Well, let's get started. Welcome Kristi. Thanks for coming.

Kristi: Thanks for having me.

Eve: Of course.

Well, a little bit of backstory on our relationship here to those who are listening...

I know Kristi from school. She was one of the teachers at my school and she came to speak. I was 16 at the time, I think. And you came to speak. You were heading off to India and you'd started an organisation which is called Offspring.

And you spoke about you leaving to go to India and start up this project and we were helping you and I remember everyone was like, 'Oh, what's this?' 'What is this project?'

And it got me really *inspired* about the world and about things that we didn't know were going on in the world, like human trafficking or sex trafficking. And from then, I followed your journey.

But would you mind sharing what Offspring is before I yap on?

Kristi: Can do.

So Offspring is an Australian organisation, not for profit organisation.

We're based out of Geelong, but essentially, we work with survivors of sex trafficking in Kolkata, in India. And for me, **I can't imagine anything worse than what these girls have gone through.**

So we've got an aftercare centre for girls who have been rescued, and we've got a prevention centre for girls who are at risk of being trafficked into sexual exploitation.

Jules: How did you get into, I mean, did you travel India independently as a young girl? How did you come across this? Where did this idea come from?

Kristi: Yeah. I went to India for the first time when I was 19. Much to the dislike of my parents at the time.

I was with an organised group, so it was fine, but I loved it. And just saw **poverty, vulnerability in a whole new way.**

And then I'd work with different organisations in Africa and then back to India again. And then it was in India, when I first heard about sex trafficking.

So that's probably where I was like, 'What do you mean? What is this? What does that look like?' And that's where it really hit me in India.

Jules: Through the organisation that you travelled with?

Kristi: At that time I was actually leading a group of teachers. Because I think **I just have got a passion to lead people on this journey of what does it look like in other parts of the world?**


Not that you have to set up an organisation, but when we come back here, we live in such a privileged position, **what can we do about it?**

And so, I was taking a group of teachers over and just had this contact with a guy who was doing rescues. And so, we just sat there and he was just talking about how they rescue girls and I just felt like my jaw had hit the

table, like I was just, 'What do you mean this happens?' And I feel, looking back now, I feel like, 'Oh, how naive am I?'

Unless you hear about it, you don't really know about it. And he was just talking about the magnitude of sex trafficking.

And from that point, I just was like, 'I can't not do something about this'.

AS I SAID BEFORE, THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE THE
WORST THING THAT COULD EVER HAPPEN TO
 SOMEONE.

And I can't just go back to my cushy teaching job and not do something.

Jules: Well, I suppose that that jaw hitting the table. That's how I felt when I went to breakfast. That's just such an impact and you [Eve] obviously felt it when you experienced it at school at 16 And it's kind of like how it's just opening your eyes to the naivety that we all live in. We're just not aware of what's going on.

Eve: Sex trafficking, by definition, how would you explain that to someone?

Kristi: There's a few umbrellas. There's modern day slavery, which people know, and then there is another one under that is human trafficking, which is essentially taking someone from one place to another.

So, the girls we work with are often trafficked from one place to another and then out of that, it's sexual exploitation. So they're trafficked, moved to different brothels, different households.

Eve: And this isn't just in India. **It's global.**

I think that the thing that people might not realise or understand is human trafficking or modern day slavery. It's also known as trans global. It goes across boundaries, and it happens in Australia.

It happens behind the doors that you might not even know. And I think that's important to mention as well. This isn't just something that happens in Australia.

It's in these less developed regions, it's something that's a worldwide thing.

Kristi: Well, I think globally there's

50 million people in modern day slavery right now.

That number just blows my mind. It's almost double the population of Australia. That's just in slavery. And then 11 million of that is in India.

And then at the moment they say there's about 41,000 people in modern slavery in Australia. And those figures could be conservative, but they just sometimes don't know who is in slavery and who is not.

Eve: And how do people find themselves in these circumstances usually?

Kristi: Mostly it's vulnerability.

If I look at myself and my position, I'm probably not someone who's going to be trafficked.

I'm probably not ever going to end up in modern slavery. And so, the girls that we work with, they're vulnerable. They're in poor areas. Someone comes in and says, we've got a great job for your daughter and so it's often they've been tricked and manipulated.

Eve: Correct me if I'm wrong, but like it's not always they're forced into that situation, sometimes it's, 'I need to go make money'.

Kristi: Yeah, totally. Yeah, or it's that they've been tricked.

So, there's so many cases of say even, in Europe where girls are applying for jobs in another European country or another country for a modelling agency that's popped up.

They're like 'Wow, what an opportunity, I'll go apply for that'. They think they're going to be a model but as soon





"YOU MAY CHOOSE TO
LOOK THE OTHER
WAY, BUT YOU CAN
NEVER SAY AGAIN
THAT YOU DID NOT
KNOW."

– William Wilberforce

as they go across the borders of the country and they go to these places, they get their passports taken off them. They get told that we paid for your flight.

Eve: I do remember reading a book about the same thing, a model in Italy, and she just got trapped.

Jules: Oh, that was horrendous. And that was in Italy, in which a girl from the UK was tricked to go and live and just held captive in Northern Italy..

Eve: Well, they say it's a **low crime and low risk** kind of situation. It's not really picked up by authorities because the nature of it changes so much and, and it's really hard to keep people accountable. And then similarly, victims are scared to speak out. It's just a perpetual cycle.

Kristi: They make a lot of money off people. **You can sell humans over and over again. You can only sell drugs once.** So, there's so much money involved as well. So, they're willing to take that risk as well.

Jules: What were the stats that you gave?

Eve: This is from World Vision Australia.

Human trafficking is considered the second largest source of illegal income behind illicit drugs.

It makes US \$ 150 billion, and almost a third of the profits generated go to wealthy industrialised countries like Australia.

So, whether you realise it or not, you're probably affected by it.

Do you have any stories that you might be able to share of specific examples from the girls that you've met and worked with?

Kristi: Yeah. There's never sort of one way.

We've had girls who were, it's called a **lover boy approach**, so the boys will pretend to date them.

They want to be their boyfriend, and they want to get married and it's like, 'oh, but let's get married in a different part of India, because my family's over there', so they go across to a different state, away from their family, their secure network.



And then, as soon as they get there, sell them to a brothel. They don't know how to get home, that person's now removed from them.

We've had one girl who was literally kidnapped as she was going out to go do some chores for the day. **Just taken off the street. Just taken and drugged. Then she was sexually abused, sold.**

Other times it can be family members.

I never ever judge anyone's family or the mother or the father or, because I'm not vulnerable. I'm not in that position to ever be, and I don't think I ever will be where I have to choose between my daughters and my livelihood. But it could be that they're sold where they thought that their daughter was going to work somewhere else as a housemaid.

I don't think it's ever, 'Hey, we've got a job for your daughter in a brothel.'

'Okay, that's great.' You know, it's often just deceiving to think that it's better than what it is. So, **there's a lot of different ways in which they're just tricked into it.**

Eve: Mm hmm. And how has the situation been since COVID?

I read a scary statistic that 68% increased in just New Delhi during COVID from the vulnerability that people were put in.

Have you noticed the change in Offspring?

Kristi: Uh, I probably haven't noticed it too much. We're sort of kind of dependent on the rescuing agencies as well.

I think it's changed a lot where a lot of younger girls, underage girls were in brothels and in the red-light area.

So, in **Kolkata**, it's one of the largest red light areas in **Asia**.

But the traffickers are becoming a bit clever.

They're sort of going...hang on, brothels may not be right, because police can come in and do raids and things like that.

And so, it's more private households and so it's becoming harder to do the rescues because they're private. **You don't know where they are, they could be in a house next door to you.**

Jules: Wow.

Kristi: Then they can move them quicker, and they can move them from place to place across the country and harder to find.

Eve: And do you work with the local authorities on this as well?

Kristi: We don't work with the local authorities. We partner with organisations who do the rescues who then work with local authorities.



EVERY LIFE
IS WORTH
FIGHTING
FOR...



Eve: What's the journey once the girls have found you or that you've found them? How does Offspring nurture them?

Kristi: We partner with those organisations. They bring the girls to us or say we've got this girl who might fit our model.

We have that conversation with them and then we have an interview with a girl, and we want to set them up. So, they're coming to a space that's theirs, it's their workplace. Because the girls' are trainees, they get paid to work with us.

They come and learn a skill and we want to go, 'Okay, it's not just about being in this beautiful, safe environment.' It's actually for them.

Some of them might have been getting money doing the work. So, once again, **it's another hold that the trafficker could have.**

Here's some money. You can actually send some money back home and so you stay there because now you're supporting your family.

So, we're like, 'Well, we want to pay you to train.' And we have an interview just to be like, 'This is now your place of work.'

Kristi: And we start off very professional. Cause again, they're the things that we want to teach them along the way. But essentially in our training centre.

We have Education every morning... maybe that's the teacher in me coming out!

Some girls have never been at school before and so they do Bungalow, their local language, English, math's and life skills. That's Monday through Friday. Every morning.

We've got social workers on board to work with them, and work with, I suppose, the trauma that they've been through through one on one sessions.

We've got like a plan for each survivor that comes to us to work through. And there's no pressure for them to talk, but **I think they figure out in the end that it's helpful to talk.**

And it's more about us helping them by giving them strategies on how to deal with the trauma that they've faced.

And then the vocational training side of it...

Giving them a skill, so that
when they're not with us
anymore, they've got something
that they can potentially use to
move forward with it.

Eve: What are the age ranges?

Kristi: We don't take girls under 16. We're an anti trafficking, anti slavery organisation and we're making products that we sell here in Australia. So I didn't want children. We're an anti trafficking, anti slavery organisation, yet we've got 12 year olds working on our product..?

So we say 16, but some girls don't even know how old they are. So at the very least we have an ossification test. They go to the dentist and they get a test and they can give a rough age of what they are.

If they're 16 plus, then we say, 'Okay, we've got some sort of proof.' And then we go, "Hey, choose a birthday." And then from then on we celebrate their birthday.

Priya, our manager in India, was just telling me the other day that there were two new girls that...I think they were 18 or 19, never had a birthday cake, never celebrated their birthday.

This was the very first time at Offspring in India that they'd done that.

Eve: Amazing. Oh, that's really heartwarming. That little elevation in their step.

Kristi: It's those little things that are so important in what we do that make them *feel valued and loved*.

Jules: And how long would they stay with you for?

Kristi: Oh, that can really depend. Initially we wanted it to be a two-year process, but at the end of two years, some girls don't have anywhere to go.



Finding them a job outside of offspring's been really challenging.

They don't have a home, some are either orphaned or from a different state, so they don't even know where their parents are.

It probably averages about two years, but some might be with for six months and they may go home because home's safe. And then some might be with us for four or five years.

Jules: Wow. That's pretty scary to be at the age of 20, 21 and not have anywhere to go.

Eve: Well, it's just incomprehensible. The scale of it.

Kristi: And then adding to that, being a female in India is a whole other level of just not knowing, and the security behind that.



But the story doesn't end here.

STAY TUNED FOR PART 2

Where we will go deeper into the transformative work being done on the ground in Kolkata by Kristi and her team. →

Travel India

Vivid Cultures, Lively Markets, and
Breathtaking Landscapes

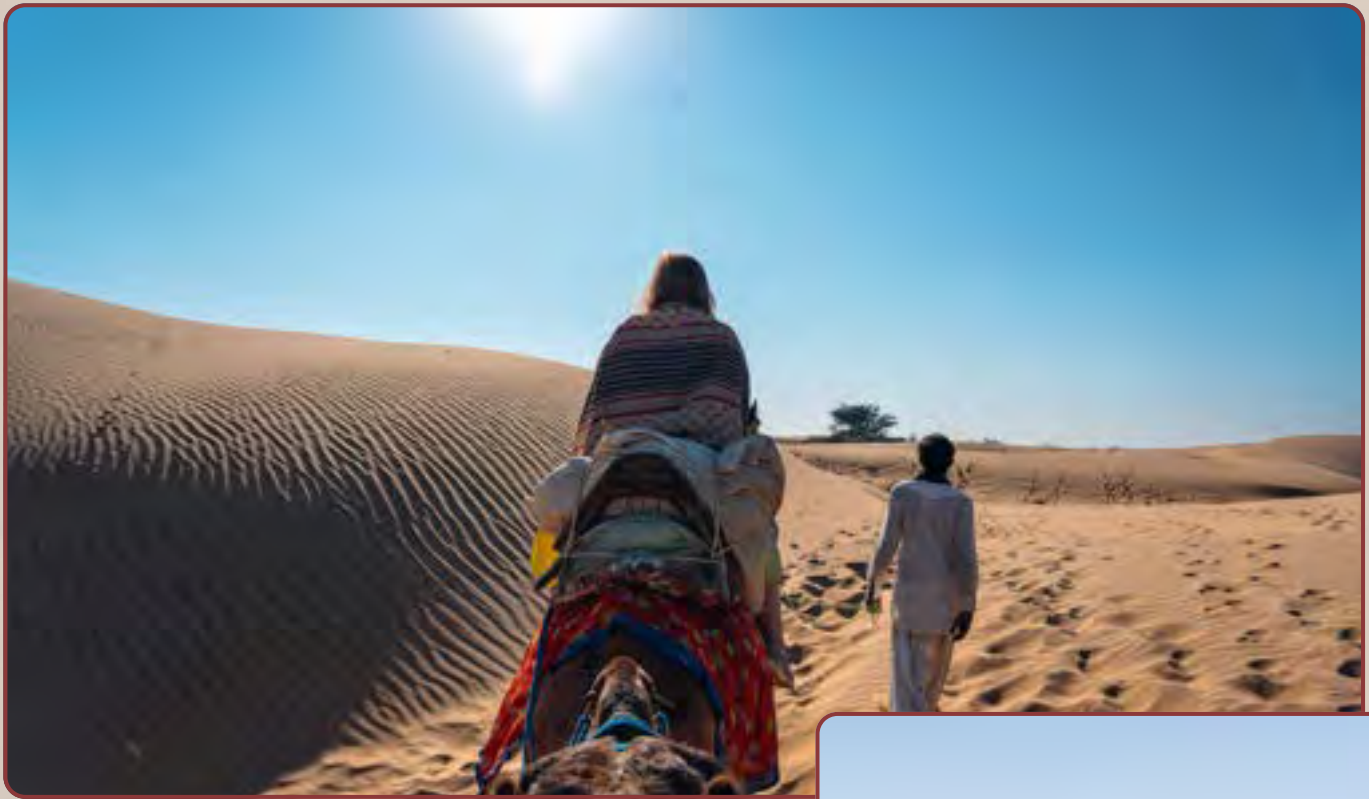


THE GREAT INDIAN DESERT

The Thar Desert is about 4.56% of the total geographical area of India.

More than 60% of the desert lies in the Indian state of Rajasthan.





Jaisalmer, located in the Rajasthan desert.

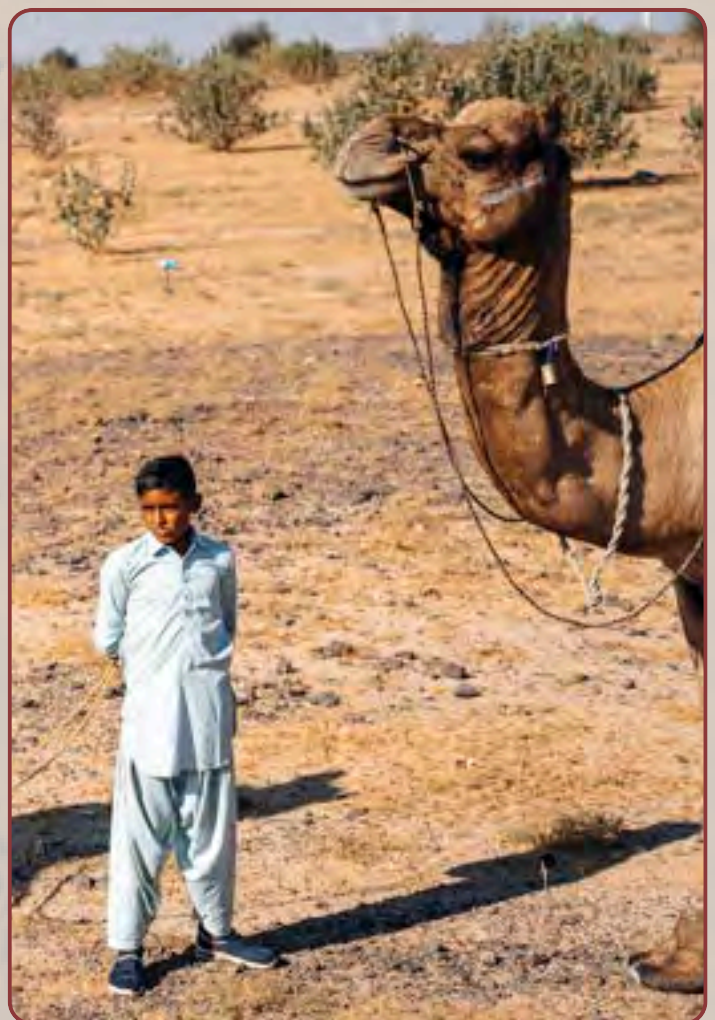
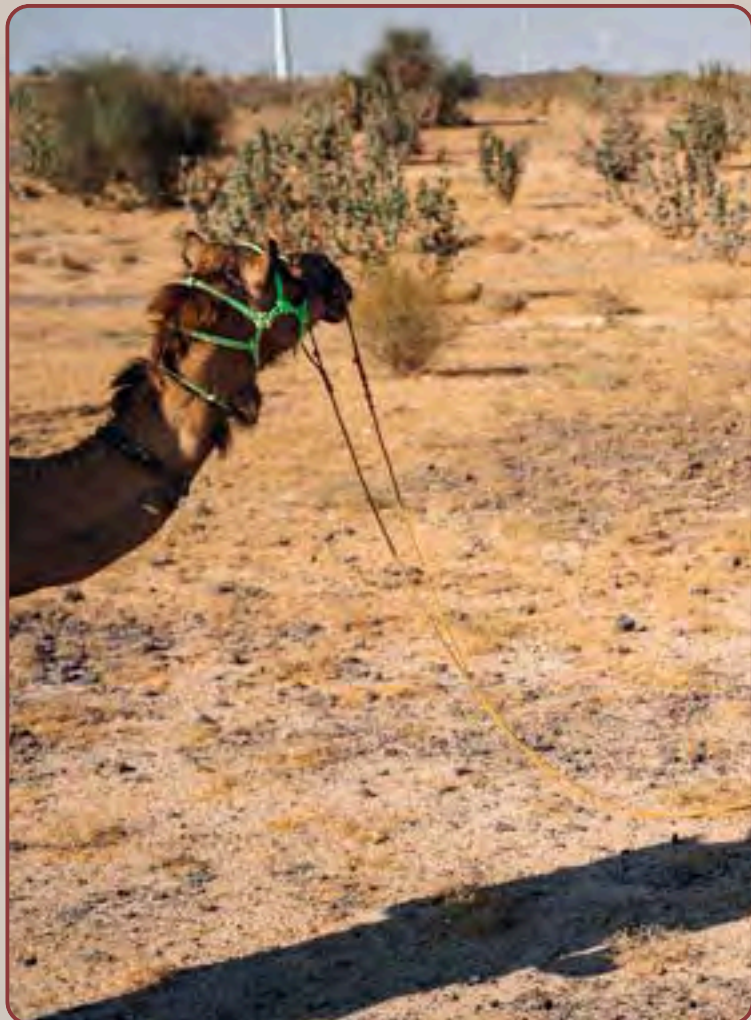
This moderately sized town, found in the far west of India near the Pakistani border, boasts a unique attraction:

THE OVERNIGHT SAFARI!

Nearly all local accommodations, including hostels and hotels, as well as tour agents, can arrange these excursions into the sand dunes.



The safari allows you to ride camels, sleep directly on the sand under the stars, cook dinner in nearby villages, and watch the sunset over the vast desert landscape.









Travel Essentials

Visa and Documentation

- **Tourist Visa:** Most foreign nationals need a tourist visa to visit India. The easiest way to obtain this is through the e-Visa system, available for citizens of many countries. The e-Visa is typically valid for 60 days.
- **Documents:** Ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry. Carry a photocopy of your passport and visa for safety.

Money and Currency

- **Currency:** The official currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR). Exchange your currency at a bank or authorised exchange counters (Forex) upon arrival.

How to Get Around

Air Travel

- India has a large network of domestic airlines that can take you across the country efficiently. Major airports in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Chennai have well-connected flight routes.

Train Travel

- Indian Railways is one of the largest and most affordable rail systems in the world. It's an incredible way to experience India. You can book tickets online via the IRCTC website or use apps like Trainman or MakeMyTrip.
- Consider upgrading to AC (Air-Conditioned) Classes for a more comfortable ride, especially for longer distances.





Bus and Road Travel

- Buses are available for intercity and interstate travel. There are both government-run and private services, and the road network is generally quite good in urban areas.
- Private Taxis & Ride-Sharing: Apps like Ola and Uber are widely available in major cities. It's safer and more reliable than hailing random taxis.

Local Transportation

- Auto Rickshaws: These are small, three-wheeled vehicles that are common in cities. Make sure to agree on a fare or insist on using the meter.
- Metro: Many cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore have an efficient metro system. It's the fastest way to get around.
- Bicycles/Scooters: In some cities, you can rent bicycles or scooters through apps like Vogo or Bounce. Be cautious about traffic, though.





Staying Safe and Navigating India...





Meeting Fellow Travellers

For solo travellers, India offers numerous opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals. Hostels are fantastic hubs for meeting fellow adventurers.

Often, you can find a group of travellers to accompany you on your journey to the next destination by train, making travel safer and more enjoyable.

Beware of Scams

Scams are unfortunately prevalent across India, affecting everything from transport to accommodation, markets, and even street interactions.

Many locals have advised against giving money to street beggars, as these acts are often scams and the money does not go where it is intended. Always exercise caution and be skeptical of too-good-to-be-true offers.

Cultural Sensitivity and Dress

Dressing modestly is key to respecting local customs and reducing unwanted attention.

Understanding and adhering to the cultural norms can significantly enhance your travel experience and help you blend in with the local population.



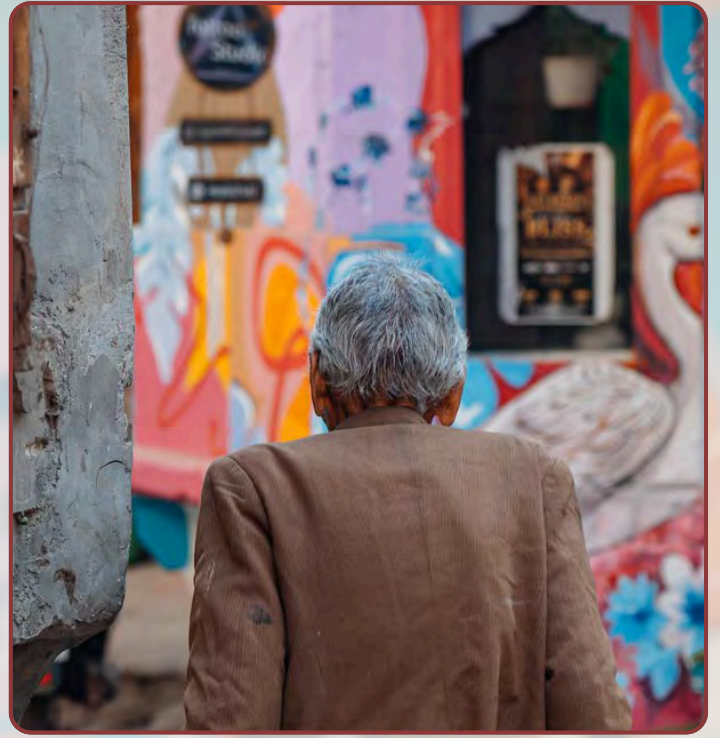


Look after Your Belongings

When exploring the bustling streets, it is crucial to keep your valuables like your phone, wallet, and passport secure. Avoid displaying expensive items publicly to prevent drawing attention. It's best to travel during daylight hours for safety; if you must travel at night, use reliable services like Uber rather than walking, even for short distances.

Be Mindful in Crowded Places

In crowded settings, keep your backpack and belongings in front of you to deter pickpockets. Stay vigilant and be aware of your surroundings at all times.



Cash is king.

Credit cards are rarely accepted, so carrying cash is crucial. Avoid using ATMs and bring foreign currency, like AUD, to exchange at currency converters in any city, ensuring you have the local currency needed for daily expenses.

FOODIE GUIDE

Exploring India's Vegetarian Cuisine

India's culinary landscape is predominantly vegetarian, offering a plethora of choices that cater to every palate.

A typical meal often features one or several curries, accompanied by naan or rice, providing a fulfilling and flavourful dining experience...



Must-Try Dishes

- Paneer Butter Masala: Creamy curry with paneer in a tomato sauce.
- Kadhai Paneer: Paneer with bell peppers and onions in a spiced gravy.
- Paneer Chilly: Spicy Indo-Chinese dish with paneer in chilli sauce.
- Dal Fry: Spiced and herbed lentils, a staple of Indian meals.
- Chicken Tikka: Marinated chicken cooked in a tandoor.
- Chicken Biryani: Spiced, aromatic rice with marinated chicken.
- Butter Chicken: Chicken in a creamy, spiced tomato sauce.
- Thali Set: A variety platter offering a taste of regional flavours.
- Butter Roti and Garlic Naan: Essential breads for curry dipping.
- Gajar Halwa: Sweet carrot pudding with milk and nuts



"Try all the food.
The best bet is to eat
where the locals are!
If it looks busy with
locals, it's going to be
good."

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

Sundarbans of India



Venture into the enigmatic wilderness of the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Sundarbans is a sanctuary for some of the most fascinating wildlife on the planet, notably the majestic Royal Bengal Tiger.

Visiting the Sundarbans offers not only an opportunity for wildlife spotting but also a chance to learn about and observe the critical conservation efforts in place to protect these ecosystems.



UNESCO WORLD HERRITAGE

Taj Mahal



Nestled on the southern bank of the Yamuna River in Agra, India, the Taj Mahal is not just an architectural masterpiece but a poignant symbol of *eternal love*. Built in the 17th century by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, this ivory-white marble mausoleum attracts millions of visitors each year.



The **Taj Mahal** also holds a place as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, recognised not only for its striking beauty but for its historical and cultural significance.

It stands as a proud pillar of India's rich heritage, drawing scholars, historians, and art lovers who seek to delve deeper into its past.

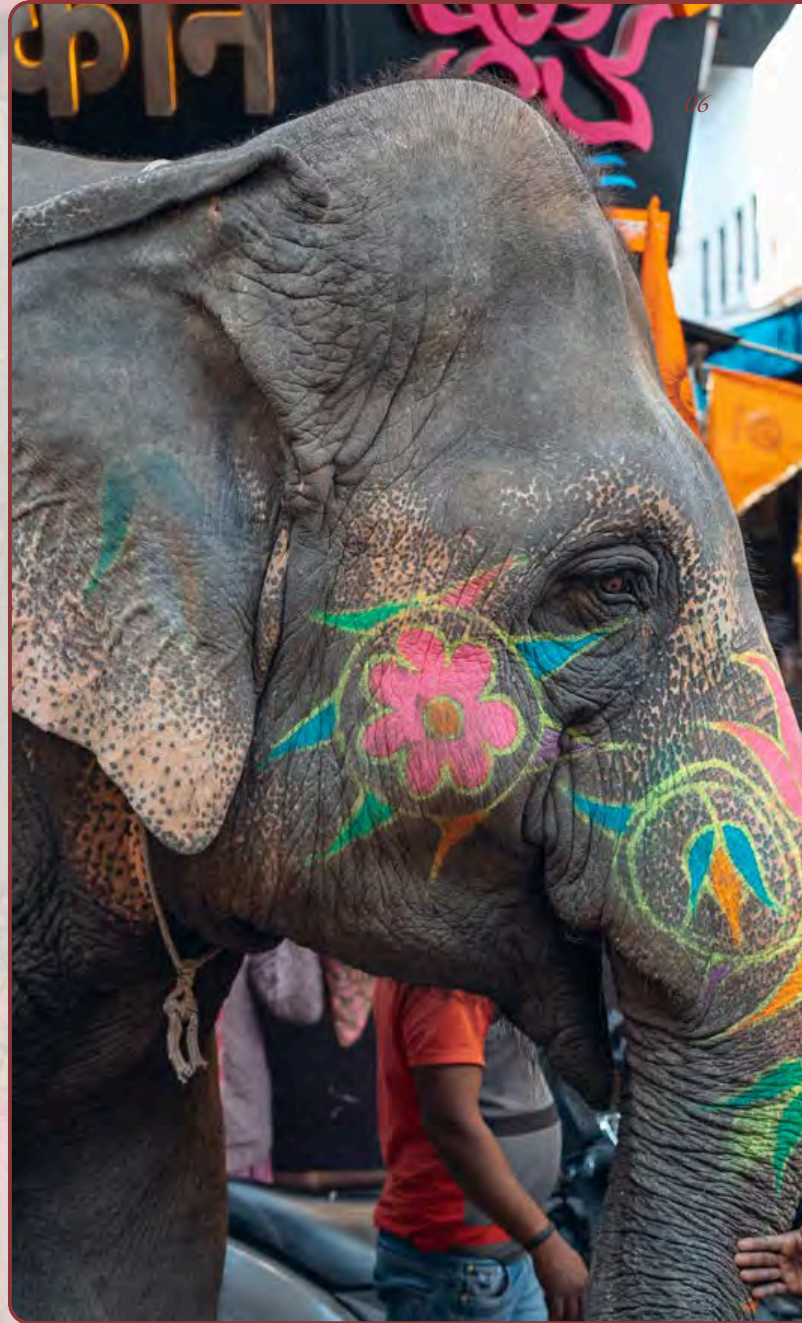
Visiting the Taj Mahal is a profound experience. It's a place where history, art, and personal stories intertwine, offering a moment of reflection on the impermanence of life and the enduring nature of love.







V.I.P. पण्डित रायता
पण्डित रायता सदन, मुंबई
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Part 2.

An Interview with Kristi Davidson





Kristi Davidson a remarkable woman whose life journey has taken her from the classrooms of Geelong to the streets of Kolkata, where she fights against human trafficking...

Eve: Have you ever had moments where you're like, 'This is just too much'.

I think sometimes when you really think about the scale of it... sometimes it's like, 'What am I, what am I doing? This is too big for even one step.'

Kristi: Um, yes. I think when you look at, say, 50 million people in slavery, its very ov-

verwhelming. And it's scary, and even when we talk about COVID and its increases, how do we ever do something about this? But our tagline is that every life is worth fighting for.

And very much a part of our values is quality over quantity. And so working with individuals really well.

And so I suppose for me personally, it's those, the one stories that we have. It's the ones of hope and the ones that we see that you're just like, 'I'm so glad she's not in it now.'

And that's all worth it for her.

Jules: So just scaling it right back down.

Kristi: Yeah, to every individual. And we've been able to help that one girl.

And everything that we've done as a team, it's worth it for that one girl, because ***she's a very valued human being.***

Eve: She's probably feeling seen for the first time.

Kristi: Yeah, well even a birthday cake. It's for her to feel loved through being acknowledged that it's her birthday and celebrated.

Those things are what I suppose make us keep going.

Eve: I think I found challenging when I've done projects overseas as well is what they call white saviour incentive.

You go over there, you send a load of money or you go with an organisation, give two weeks of your life and then you leave.

But I really like what you're doing in terms of the capacity development side of it.

9
EDUCATION IS THE NUMBER ONE THING TO GET PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY AND IT WILL END THE CYCLE OF POVERTY WHEN PEOPLE HAVE THE SKILLS TO DO THINGS THEMSELVES.

You're giving these girls skills to continue on. You're not always going to be there.

And Offspring might not always be there, but the skills that they have will be...

We're really excited about seeing how it all runs and how the girls have learned things.

And the name Her Story, like you just mentioned, it's her story, individual people.

For context, mum [Jules] and I are going to India with Kristi and the team next year (March 2025). We're so excited and *nervous but excited*.

What are your thoughts about the upcoming trip?

Kristi: Oh, I love it.

My passion is to lead people on, I suppose, a journey to see what's going on and to see what's happening. And then for them to not just see it, but come back and go, 'Well, what now? What does that look like for me personally?'

Not everyone's not going to go over and set up an organisation and do that.

But it's called Her Story because we want people to go on the journey of what her story might look like.

So going into rural areas where they face vulnerability and then looking at the rescue part of it. Then looking at the aftercare side.

I've done this trip numerous times and been to these places and I mean, I get excited about it because it's a really amazing seven days that's full and impacting and eye opening.

I THINK, NOT I THINK,

I KNOW

THAT PEOPLE COMING ON THE TRIP WILL BE
CHANGED BY THE END.

Jules: I had that conversation with you (Eve) today. I feel like it is going to be a game changer for me personally, to be exposed and understand the level of which you operate and what you have to deal with.

Eve: And I think it'll be really interesting for us going together as mother and daughter as well. We've learned a lot about our relationship over the years and learning these things together as well about the world.

But also you've got young daughters now and then that perspective must have changed dramatically once you had girls?

Kristi: Well, it's funny because when I was pregnant I thought we're having boys and I was like, 'ah, this is I think this is kind of good for me because I work with these girls'.

And it's real if I have girls, I'm probably just going to be a mess all the time. And it was not that we actually knew we're having boys and they came out and they were girls.

And I think it's challenging for sure because it adds a new layer to my relationship with the girls in India and my relationship with my girls, because I probably am maybe a bit more protective.

Having them is a reminder I would hate for anything like that to happen to them. And I can't comprehend that it ever would happen. I think it just grows that passion for me to go there.

And hence the name Offspring every girl that we work with is someone's daughter, and we want to then embrace her.

We're not trying to be her family or be her mum, but love her like she's our daughter.

Jules: Do you have any stories where the girls have been through your program and what they're doing now outside of Offspring. Do they keep in touch?

Kristi: Sometimes, yes. And sometimes we try not to keep in touch. Then it's really up to the girls.

We know yes some girls have gone off and been and they got married and one particular case was a girl who was trafficked from Bangladesh into India, into Kolkata, and it took her a long time to get back home because she obviously came across the borders illegally, and then she had to go back legally, and so there was a whole lot of Indian government and the Bangladeshi government talking together.

It really depends on the girl.

Eve: The reintegration into life would be so different. I think that's something that is worth mentioning as well.



How do the girls find settling into their new life? Are they accepted by their families? And how has society perceived what they've gone through?

Kristi: Yeah, probably not good. Society in general. It's very much a country where there's that shame-based type of culture. So by doing that, it can place shame on the family that you've done that, even though it wasn't your choice.

Or maybe the family, relatives, or neighbours are feeling the shame. It's dependent on them. Some will tell families or neighbours what has happened. Some won't, or will choose not to. And it's like a secret that they leave.

We encourage them, especially when they've got boyfriends and they want to marry them. We encourage them that they should be telling their future husbands that this is what's happened and that they need to embrace them for that.

It is easy to say from my perspective, or even some of our staff who are married and, haven't been through that and don't know that shame or what that feels like.

Eve: And the program provides support for them in a mental health capacity as well?

Kristi: We've got a psychologist who's based in the UK, so she works with us. She was actually living with me in Kolkata when I was starting Offspring.

She's been amazing. The whole trauma side of things and how to work with survivors, and even specifically sex trafficking, she's just shaped a lot of what we've done to this point.

Tiny things like, when the girls first start making a product, we use recycled saris for our product and we have got like a whole lot of saris in the cabinet.

And we say, 'you choose which sari you want to use for the product.' And I often remember them going, 'you choose?' And I was like, 'which one do you like? What colour do you like?'

And they'd pick one.

And so even **giving them choice back** is like a massive stepping stone to their development and their healing.

And simple things like that, I would have totally overlooked. But, Caitlin as a psychologist gives them choices. Because **choice was stripped away from them.**

So we meet with her on a monthly basis. Priya goes through the cases and we talk through that, and then she shares with the team and they figure out how to work through those things.

Eve: Such an eye opener. Just those small little things that we take for granted so much.

Jules: Is there a set number of girls that you can work with at any one time?

Kristi: In our aftercare centre, we've got two training units and we have a maximum of six. So basically, in our aftercare centre, there are a maximum of 12 girls.

And again, that comes back to the *quality over quantity*.

Do really well with the girls that we have and not be like, 'Oh, we've got 50 girls here, but what's your name again?'

So we can relate to each girl really well, and they're not lost in the system. And I think back to when I was teaching and when I had a classroom of say 22 students compared to 30.

It was a massive difference.

I was actually able to get to each student.

Then in our prevention centre, we've only been running that for about 10 months, and that's one unit, so a capacity of six.

Jules: I mean, that in itself, you're able to form relationships. One-on-one. Then, as you said, 50 would just be so hard to really pick up on all those nuances and how they're doing.

Kristi: And if they're not feeling valued, then it's like, 'well, what am I doing here?' 'I'll just go back and maybe earn money.'

In a brothel by choosing to go there. I'm not trafficked. I'm not in slavery, but I earn more there. So maybe I should just do that.

Eve: And what's the steps to building trust with the girls? Are they usually pretty open? Does it take time to get to know each other?

Kristi: It takes time. Trust has been broken. They've had people trick them, manipulate them. Whether that's family, or people like those in the stories we're told.

And then they get there and it's just everyone they see is lying or is telling them something they want to hear, but it's not the truth.

And so, all of a sudden they come to Offspring and it's like, well, why would they trust us? So it takes time. We want them to get to know us. And again, I think it's the little things that we do within our workplace that they soon go, 'Oh, okay. I can see that.' 'Oh, right. You're doing that.'

And even for their boss, Priya, to be helping clean at the end of the day. Or for her to serve someone. Bosses don't technically do that in India.

So for them to see all these little aspects of what we do, I think helps them go, 'Oh, okay, I think these guys are pretty genuine.'

Eve: Are they, generally speaking, very safe once they arrive? There's no threat of someone coming to find them?

Kristi: Yeah, no, we haven't had that. There's always a risk, but we talk to them very strongly about safety. That this is a safe place, we've got cameras outside and no one can just come in and out. We also tell them about not sharing the address and where we work because **it's a safe space for everyone.**

Eve: Do they have phones?

Kristi: They do, but they don't use them during work.

Eve: Yep, okay. Just interesting little things that you don't really think about. **Would you ever feel safe** or would it take a very long time to feel safe again.

Kristi: Totally. And often when they first share their story, during their one-on-one counselling sessions, they might make up a whole story because they're just like, 'Well, we'll just feed you what you want to hear.'

And it's not until maybe six months, maybe a year, maybe two years down the track, that all of a sudden little bits start to come out that we're like, 'Okay, so that's actually what happened.'

And now we can start to really **work with them on their actual story**. And that's maybe when the healing starts to begin.

Eve: Do you ever have girls that have known each other from the trade that they were in or the family?

Kristi: I think there are a couple, but not often.

We've definitely had sisters, but they're different ages.

Jules: And your team, is it predominantly women?

Kristi: Yes, we've got one male staff member.

Which is important because we want them to be able to trust males as well. So Prem is an important piece of the staff.

We've got ten staff across the two centres.

Eve: And how can people back home help? What is it to those who are like, 'well, it doesn't have anything to do with me kind of thing.'

Kristi: It does.

I'm passionate about working with survivors of sex trafficking, but then I'm also passionate about what modern slavery looks like.

And that's been a journey for me over the past 10 years because **I used to just think that robots made everything.** I don't know, you get ignorant, right?

Then when we had one girl, the girl who was trafficked from Bangladesh, worked in a garment factory. And she was trafficked to Kolkata because she thought she was getting a better job as a housemaid. Then when she got here, she was sold into a brothel.

One day I was in Calcutta and I had jeans on..., obviously I had clothes on... you don't walk around naked!

Anyway, she said to me, 'Oh, your jeans, are they from Australia? Or India?' And I said, 'Ah, they're from Australia.' And then she said, 'Yes, but made in Bangladesh by me.' And I was like, 'Oh'. And it really hit me. I was like, 'They could have been.'

These pants could have been made by you in Bangladesh, and I've bought them and I'm fuelling slavery by buying them.

Jules: We [Eve & Jules] had that conversation earlier today about that factory in Bangladesh, the Rana Plaza, where people died.

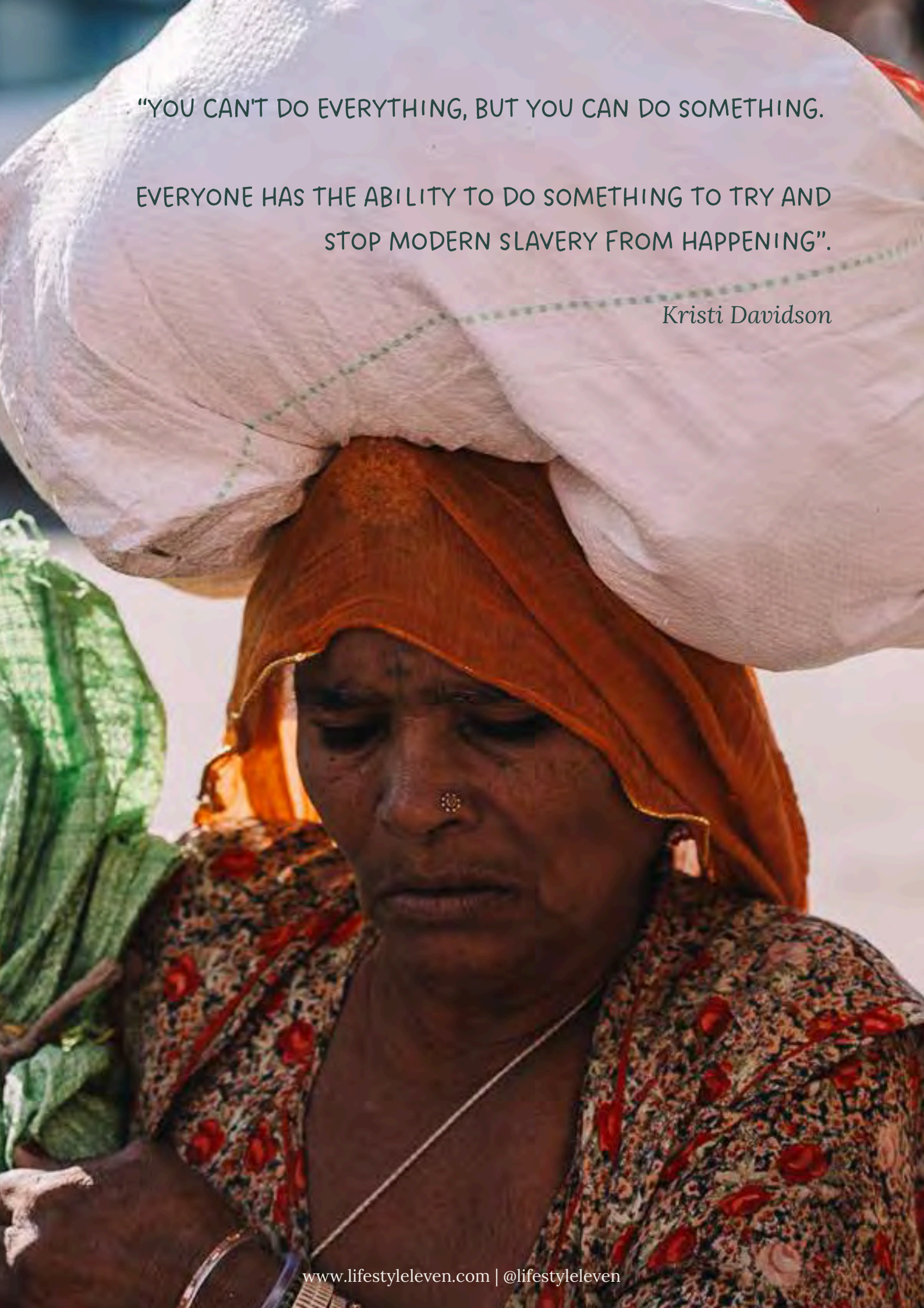
Kristi: Yep. It's like actually us in Australia thinking, 'Okay, we might think it happens over there or it's like I can't really do anything about it.' But for me specifically, I think we all need to have our focus and sort of look at things like clothes, chocolate, coffee. Where are they being made?

Eve: And just because it's cheap doesn't mean it's good.

Kristi: Just because it's cheap means it's probably not good...

I TALK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING,
BUT YOU CAN DO SOMETHING.

EVERYONE HAS THE ABILITY TO DO SOMETHING
TO TRY AND STOP MODERN SLAVERY FROM
HAPPENING.

A close-up photograph of a woman, likely of African descent, looking down with a somber expression. She is wearing a large, heavy white sack balanced on her head, which partially obscures her hair. She also wears an orange headscarf. Her clothing is a patterned garment with red and green floral designs. In her left hand, she holds a bundle of green leafy vegetables. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

"YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING, BUT YOU CAN DO SOMETHING.

EVERYONE HAS THE ABILITY TO DO SOMETHING TO TRY AND
STOP MODERN SLAVERY FROM HAPPENING".

Kristi Davidson

Whether that's questioning, where are these made?

Just ask them. And if they can't say exactly where they're made or where they've come from, they should be able to—and challenge them.

Eve: It must be difficult to shop for you these days.

Kristi: Oh, it is. It's funny. Most of my stuff is second hand. So from op shops and things like that. It's sustainable. It's recycled. I didn't buy that.

And I said to my sister, 'I just need you to help me shop'.

Jules: Just by thinking, well, this is recycled has stopped you from going to Kmart and buying that t-shirt.

So that in itself is one tiny little step, but you've done it. And if everybody did that...

Kristi: Yeah. And it's hard because sometimes you're like 'I just need a crisp white tee.' 'I just need it for this.'

But then I'm like, 'hang on'...

And again, it's very personal for me because I'm working with the girls and I **know their names and I know their stories. I've looked into their eyes.** But it can also be personal for everyone else because **we know that it's happening.**

Eve: I think it is difficult, especially financially, if you can't afford to avoid buying cheap, mass-produced items; it can be a conflict.

But even just being aware of it helps. You think, 'okay, I might not be able to make this choice today, but I know that tomorrow I'm going to try to make a different choice or even just substitute something else.' Like you said, with coffee or any other product.

The things we purchase, we really have no idea where they're coming from. And **we're all guilty.**

Kristi: Or ethical chocolate. For me, I wait for it to go on special. Whittaker's or Tony's is expensive, but it's on special, I'll just buy a few.

I don't want to put my money that I've got... I don't want to invest in that.

And I think that's another thing we talked about is investing your money. Where your money goes is important.

Some people invest it into Offspring and make monthly donations to help us do what we do.



And other people invest it into making sure they buy certain things.

Eve: You wrote somewhere, that *'everyone has a responsibility across the globe to each other.'*

Whether you're faced with adversity or not, you all have a global responsibility to one another to **be kind**. And **every life is worth it in measurable amounts**.

I really liked that sentiment that just because it doesn't affect you doesn't it doesn't affect someone else.

Kristi: Yeah, that's right.

Eve: What are you thinking mum?

Jules: I'm just absorbing everything.

Because I do find it quite overwhelming. It's such a big problem and you feel such a responsibility because it's such a big deal. And how do you impact that?

So, as you've said, you've just broken it down—that **one life matters** and just dealing with one person and helping them on their journey has an impact.

Kristi: And that each of us has our own responsibility in that.

You can think, 'What can I do?' But if everyone just thought, 'Okay, well, I can actually do this,' then that's how we create change. ✨ ✨



Part 3.

An Interview with Kristi Davidson



Jules: This might be off topic, but younger children, **who's out there helping them? Are there organisations that are out there helping younger people?**

Kristi: Yeah, there are definitely organisations working with children. In fact, I think there are more charities working with children than there are with older girls.

And that's probably why I chose to work with those aged 16 and over. A lot of girls might be rescued at 17, 18, or 19, and they're not technically children anymore. Where do they go? What do they do?

There's actually a lack of resources and help for these girls. So for me, it was more about wanting to help the older girls, because there are so many organisations focused on children.

Jules: I suppose they attract more media attention, pulling at the heartstrings of people. But once they're past that age—20, 21, 22—where do they go? What do they do? What does their life look like?

Eve: What is the likelihood of them falling back into it?

Kristi: Yeah, the risk is fairly high. If they've been rescued and they don't have support, that's why aftercare is so important for us and why we focus on doing it really, really well. The statistics are very high of them going back into the trade.

Jules: That's tough.

Kristi: Yep. Because, again, what else? I'm already tainted. What else do I do? I don't have any education. I've got no schooling. I've got no certi-

ificate. I'll just go back and work on the streets and make money that way.

Eve: And I think that's also due to the nature of governments that maybe don't support people from that base level.

The schooling system might fail a bit in those kinds of areas, and it's just not easy to go back to school as a mature student. Also, money is a major issue—if you don't have the funds, there's really not a lot you can do.

Kristi: Again, we're here in a country of 1.4 billion

people. It's no wonder things fail.

Eve: That number is way too incomprehensible, honestly. I think we're going to have quite the culture shock when we get there,

Jules: Without doubt.

So what is the most rewarding part of your work with Offspring?

Eve: What gets you out of bed?

Kristi: My girls! They wake me up.

IT'S THEIR SMILES.



It might sound odd, but even recently, being in India and just talking to the girls, seeing them smile, laugh, and have fun in our space—a space where I know they feel safe and aren't threatened—is probably the most rewarding thing for me. Personally, it makes me really proud.

They actually come to work and they genuinely love it. I love being there with them. They may not have felt that anywhere else. So, just to be with them and see them smile and laugh—that's incredibly fulfilling.

And often at the end, we have an exit interview when the girls leave. We ask, 'What was your favourite thing about being at Offspring?' Mostly, they say 'juice time,' which is just in the afternoon. They have juice. In the winter, they have chai, tea.

And in the summer, they have juice, which is just sugared cordial—they actually put sugar in with the cordial!

So no wonder it's their favourite time...

But it's actually a time where you just sit around like this, chat, and they laugh and share stories and just have fun and connect.

And it's an authentic connection.

Jules: And it's infectious when somebody smiles, you smile back. It creates an all-around *feel-good factor*.

Kristi: I think of the girls that, even right now, being in Australia, thinking about them there. I can just... see these smiles.

YOUR EYES LIGHT UP
AND YOU SMILE. WHEN
YOU THINK ABOUT IT,
YOU CAN SEE IT. ✨

Eve: Oh, we can't wait to go. I'm excited. Mum and I are going to try and document the whole journey and go with the flow.

Jules: Lots of tears.

Kristi: That's alright.

Eve It's all real.
Thank you so much for sharing everything that you are and everything about Offspring...

Jules: Kristi is there anything else that you want to share that you feel would help in any way if people, what can people do?

Kristi: We don't operate without the generosity of people.

And I say this as I struggle to ask for money because it feels awkward, but then again, when I think of those smiles, when I think of the girls that I'm asking for, I just have to ask myself, 'Why do I struggle?'

And it's an investment.

I think like anything you invest in certain things, for me, it's not just a donation. People are investing in lives when they pour their money into Offspring.

So, I think if there are people listening who go, 'I can invest, I can actually do that,' then that's how we survive.

www.offspringproject.org



EVERY LIFE IS WORTH
FIGHTING FOR.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Join the Collective to see how the Gower Girls found their Indian cultural immersion and experience with the Offspring team.

You can listen to the full interview with Kristi, simply by searching *ELEVEN: A Feel Good Collective*, wherever you get your podcasts!

Kristi Davidson + Offspring Project: Sex Trafficking, Empowering Survivors and Building Brighter Futures
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XI

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