

Girl Trafficking, Indonesia

Interview with ‘Positive Deviant’ father

Darma family Background:

Pak Darma is a farmer with a wife and four children. They have a small piece of land, which is typical of people in their Indonesian community. Pak Darma differs from others in the community in that he has *publicly* come out in *opposition* to allowing girls to work in the entertainment industry¹.

Despite economic hardships, Pak Darma has been able to keep his daughters out of the sex industry and provide all of his children with a higher education. Pak Darma's eldest son and daughter have both completed junior high school. His eldest son is now employed in Malang and his older daughter is working as a shopkeeper in Bali. His third child, a son, is attending the university in Malang where he lives with his younger sister who is employed in a large supermarket.

Pak Darma's attitudes, beliefs, and underlying assumptions about sending girls to work in the sex industry:

Education/ Parental Role:

- Pak Darma believes that parents should give their children room to grow, while at the same time continuing to monitor and guide them. He uses the Javanese saying to express this belief: “*You need to let go of the head but hold onto the tail.*” This belief translates into permitting a degree of autonomy for his children without relinquishing responsibility for knowing what they are doing.
- Pak Darma believes that his children should not be prevented from obtaining a higher education simply because they are from a poor family. Therefore, he works hard in order to raise the money to send his children to school.
- Pak Darma believes that he must be honest, consistent and trust worthy so that he can be a role model for his children.
- He believes that it is the parents’ job to educate their children and to supplement the knowledge that children receive in school.

¹ In this context, the term ‘entertainment industry’ is often used to refer to the ‘sex industry.’

Employment:

- Pak Darma believes that his children should only obtain work that does not violate legal or religious laws. (i.e. employment in a supermarket, factory or restaurant.) He believes that working in a massage parlor or other segment of the sex industry² ('buka dasar') violates both his religious beliefs and the law.

- Pak Darma is concerned that if his daughter worked in massage parlor news of her employment would spread to his neighbors and to other villages bringing shame to his family. Pak Darma is convinced that others would find out about his daughters employment, as he knows of many families that have daughters who work in massage parlors.

- Both Pak Darma and his wife fear that, if his daughter were to work in a massage parlor, she would come under the influence of her friends and would begin to drink and spend money without regard for the future.

- Pak Darma believes that if his daughter works in a massage parlor her future offspring (including daughters and granddaughters) will end up working in a massage parlor, as they will inherit ('turus') this from their mother.

Family Role Model:

- Pak Darma believes that it is important for parents to provide their children with a model of a healthy relationship. Consequently he and his wife are careful not to quarrel in front of their children.

Strategies that Pak Darma used to prevent his daughter from working in the sex industry:

Strategies To Pay For Higher Education:

- Pak Darma grows a variety of cash crops in order to improve the families diet and supplement their income. The additional income is used to help pay for his children's schooling. In addition to rice they grow:

-Spinach, eggplant, peanuts, and chilies with which they supplement their diet.

² This term is used in sections of East Java to refer to the woman or girl who earn her living by working as a prostitute.

-Coconuts, which can be harvested and sold on a monthly basis.

-Vanilla and coffee, which are harvested annually to increase their yearly income.

- If he needs additional money to send his children to school Pak Darma borrows money from his family or a friend. In order to ensure that he can borrow again when needed, he always pays them back on time.

Strategies To Verify His Children's Employment:

- Pak Darma inquires about the job his children will be performing before allowing them to accept work outside of the village. When his children ask for permission to work outside of the village he inquires where they obtained their information about the position. He then personally verifies the kind of work to be done, the location and salary.

- Once his children accept work outside of the village, Pak Darma instructs them to write or call him on a regular basis. His daughter who works in Bali routinely calls him and her brother in Malang.

- After he receives a letter from his daughter, he calls his son in Malang to verify what his daughter told him. Pak Darma then phones his daughter to cross check the information. If there were any inconsistencies in the information, he would suspect that something is not right with his daughters' situation and he would have his son, or a friend that lives in Bali, check up on his daughter.

- Pak Darma reports that he would not allow his daughters to seek employment outside of the village if he did not know someone who lives in the proposed work area. Pak Darma has a friend in Bali who has agreed to look after his daughter. He has told his daughter to think of this friend as a second father, and he insists that she visit the friend and his family often.

Strategies To Enhance Open Communication Within The Family:

- If Pak Darma is angry with his children, he waits until he is calm and his children are ready to discuss the issue before he talks to them. If his wife has already spoken to the children about the issue he does not address it again. When appropriate Pak Darma and his wife will sit down with their child and talk about important issues. They discuss the consequences of what will happen if they do not follow their parents' instructions.

- Both parents openly discuss ‘good’ and ‘bad’ employment options with their daughters.

Why would Pak Darma never allow his daughters to work in a “massage parlor”?

He reports that he will never give his daughters permission to work in a massage parlor because he believes this would place his daughter *and* his family at risk. If his daughter were to have a problem due to their work, the parent would face the same consequences as the child. He cites the example of if his daughter were to return to the village unmarried and pregnant. The whole family would have to take care of the grandchild, bringing economic hardship and shame. Pak Darma says that he has witnessed this happen to some of his neighbors and relatives who gave permission to their daughters to work in Ujung Pandang. Therefore, based on what he has seen, he decided to never allow his daughters to work in a massage parlor or do other work in the sex trade.

Pak Darma reports that he is unsure of what community based actions could be initiated. He believes that the intervention would depend on how the girls’ family feels about the issue. He fears that if he were to try to persuade other families to see his point of view, he may be violating their privacy and they might reply: “If you think my daughter should not work like that, will you give me money in order to fulfill my needs?” To this he could only reply that he is also poor but he has managed. However, he says that he would be happy to give advice to girls and their families who ask for his help. He says that his house is always open to anyone who needs help from his family.