

SAVED FROM SEX SLAVERY Mum offers beauty therapy training to sex trafficking victims to keep them safe

Charity founder Sarah Glover, 50, from Cambridge, has saved 100 women

REVEALED By Jax Jacobsen
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“AS I stepped into a small house in the middle of Mumbai in 2010, nothing could have prepared me for what I saw: a dozen young women and girls with their heads bowed in shame.

“Although they were safe in a shelter for former sex slaves, it was clear the horrors they’d endured would leave lifelong scars. I knew there and then that I would do everything in my power to help.



Meeting the victims of sex slavery for the first time, Sarah there and then that she would do everything in her power to help the women

“Before that day, I worked as a beauty therapist and spent my spare time shopping for clothes, holidaying and going out with friends. I was aware that there was poverty in the world, but it wasn’t until October 2008 that my eyes were opened when a friend who worked as a pastor told me about witnessing girls as young as four chained to beds by sex traffickers in Mumbai.

“As a mother to two daughters, then in their teens, his words haunted me. I found myself waking in the middle of the night thinking about those poor children.

“I signed up to work with the charity Vision Rescue and was invited to visit India in October 2010. The mission was to meet and help educate rescued sex slaves and raise awareness in the local community, so I jumped at the chance. I was nervous, but I knew I had to be brave.

“Touching down in Mumbai, our group travelled to the outskirts of the city to visit the safe house. Inside it was clean and comfy with bunk beds in each room. The 12 girls living there were so traumatised they wouldn’t make eye contact or speak. They were cared for by ‘house mothers’, who said that some had been sold into brothels as babies. My heart broke, and I couldn’t help thinking of my own daughters.



Sarah formed Born To Be Beautiful in 2011

“After 10 days of meeting survivors and advising them on re-entering society, we flew back to the UK. But knowing a lot of the women could end up back in the sex trade because they had no other option or were lured back by traffickers, I desperately wanted to help.

“I realised that if these women learnt a trade, like beauty, then they could make a living, saving them from life as a sex slave. “My friends and family thought it was a brilliant idea, so I began setting up a charity and enrolled on a teacher training course alongside my job.

“In December 2011 all my hard work paid off and Born To Be Beautiful became a registered charity. Our aim was to provide beauty therapy training all over the world to victims of poverty, slavery, sickness and war so that they could earn a living and stay off the streets.

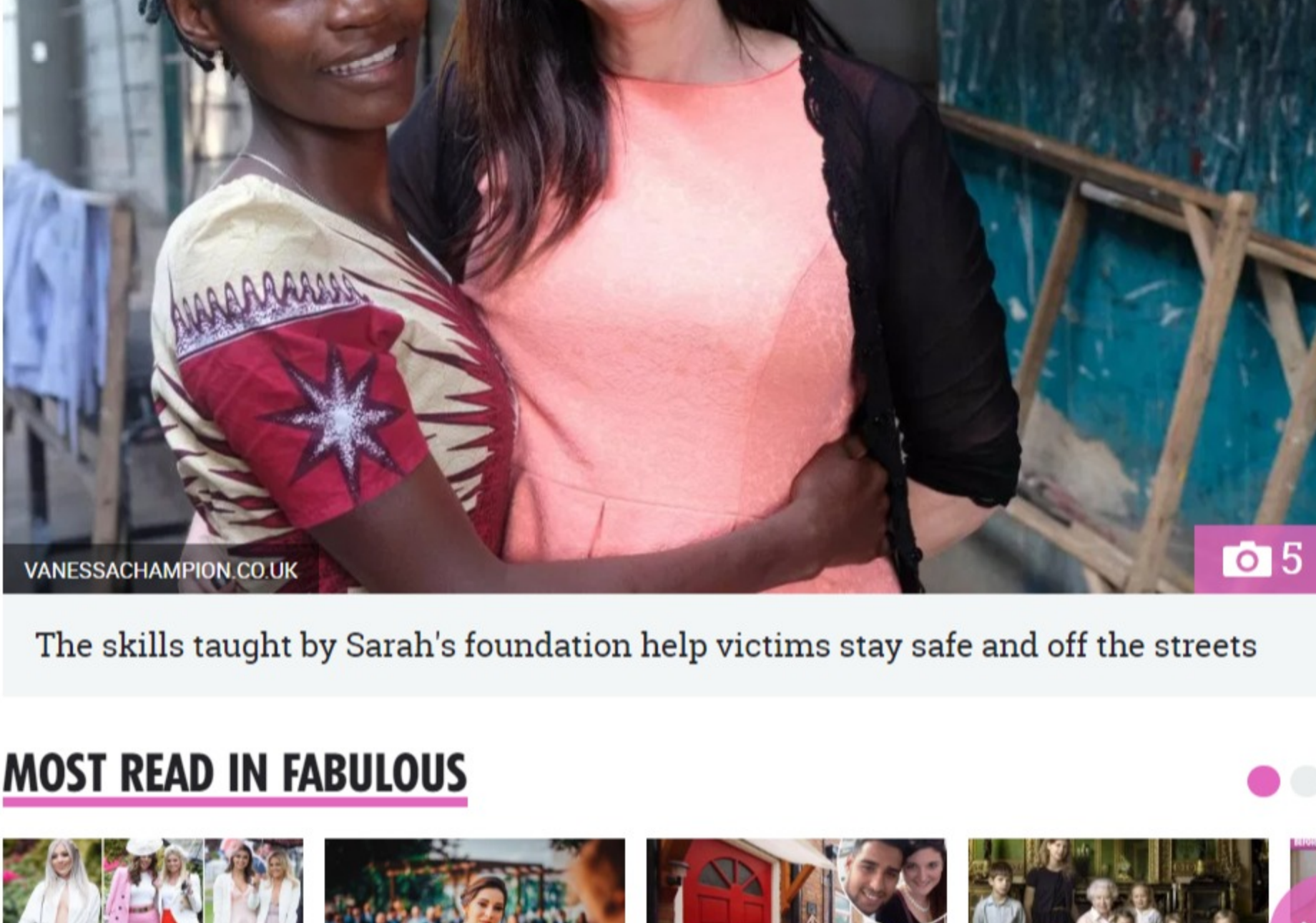


Sarah’s foundation works with victims of sex trafficking to teach them beauty therapy skills

“Sadly, around the same time, my 20-year marriage came to an end. We’d been growing apart for a while, but it was still tough, and I threw myself into my work. That month I returned to Mumbai for two weeks and ran my first beauty course for 20 girls who were former sex slaves. Many were living in slums and some were HIV positive. I grew close to the students and some opened up and spoke about their experiences, telling me how they were made to have sex with up to 40 men a day.


They spoke very little English, but thankfully we had a translator to help, and hearing about their bravery helped put my divorce into perspective.

“Over the past eight years I’ve organised and hosted six workshops across India and Uganda, training more than 100 women aged from 16 to 60 in beauty services. These places can be dangerous, but I make sure I use trusted guides and hotels.

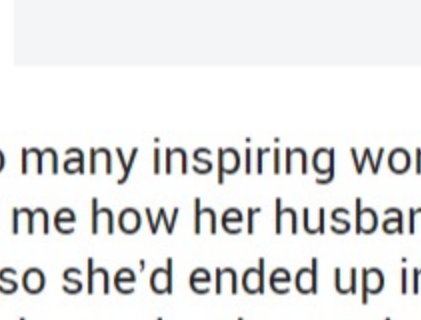


The skills taught by Sarah’s foundation help victims stay safe and off the streets


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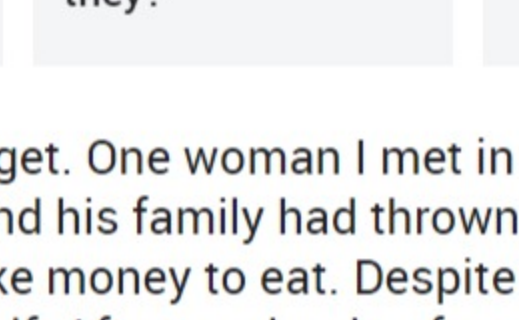
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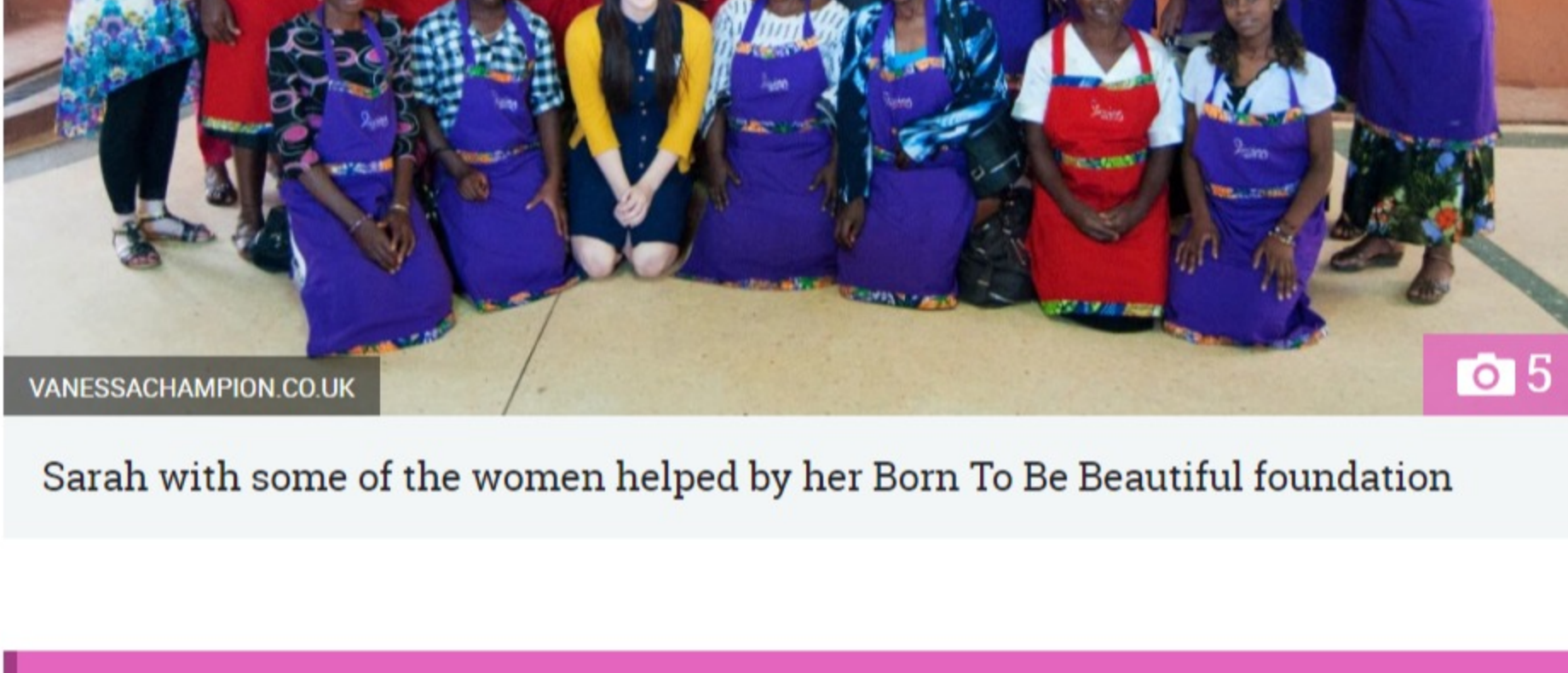
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“I’ve come across so many inspiring women who I’ll never forget. One woman I met in Uganda in 2012 told me how her husband had died of AIDS and his family had thrown her on to the street, so she’d ended up in the sex trade to make money to eat. Despite everything, she was determined to make a better life for herself. After graduating from my workshops, some of the women set up businesses or worked in salons and have now earned enough to feed and clothe their children, have access to medical care and move out from the safe houses into their own homes.

“Now, I’m hoping to set up a permanent beauty salon and training school in Jinja, Uganda, and I’ve been invited to open three salons in East Africa. I may have given up my ‘perfect’ life to work in developing countries, but I’ve never been happier, and my daughters couldn’t be prouder. Ironically, these incredibly brave women have been the ones saving me, too.”



Sarah with some of the women helped by her Born To Be Beautiful foundation

BTW...

- It’s estimated that there are 4.8 million victims of sex trafficking worldwide.*

- The US Department of Defence named trafficking the world’s fastest-growing crime. ■