



Case Study of the Campaign to End “Modern-Day Slavery”

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This case study expresses the research of Margaret Reilly McDonnell, who served as a consultant to the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival from February 2007 to May 2007. The case studies were developed to help inform the Coalition’s advocacy and communications campaigns to support the U.S. Global Commitment to Child Survival Act of 2007. Please send all comments or queries to Margaret at Margaret_mcdonnell@yahoo.com

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I. GAINING SALIENCY INTERNATIONALLY

Awareness of human trafficking first began to spread in the late 1980s and early 1990s, thanks to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Thailand and the Philippines that campaigned against sex tourism and child sexual exploitation by westerners. In October 1994, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) was formed at the International Workshop on Migration and Traffic in Women in Chiang Mai, Thailand.¹ Facing international recognition and pressure, in the late 1990s the United States and the European Union began to pursue initiatives to combat trafficking.

Eventually, “the international community seized the opportunity to address trafficking as a matter of international criminal law through a trafficking-specific protocol to the UN Convention Against Transnational Crime.”² In January 1999, the United States and Argentina introduced the first draft of the “Trafficking in Persons Protocol” (aka: Palermo Protocol), which was adopted two years later in the General Assembly. The purposes of the Palermo Protocol were the prevention and combating of trafficking; the protection and support of trafficking victims; and the promotion of cooperation between state parties. The Palermo Protocol also established an internationally accepted definition of trafficking.

In the United States, the Clinton Administration announced an International Crime Control Strategy, which included an interagency working group established to address the international crime implications of trafficking. On March 11, 1998, President Clinton issued a directive establishing a U.S.-government-wide anti-trafficking strategy of prevention, protection and support for victims, and prosecution of traffickers.³ While this directive was a step forward, it lacked the impetus for real change. Months later, a loose coalition formed to develop legislation that would institutionalize government programs to end “modern-day slavery.” As described below, this coalition created momentum by building grassroots support and the political will within Congress, leading to the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) in October 2000.

II. PARTNERSHIP: LOOSE-BASED “LEFT-RIGHT” COALITION WITH SINGULAR FOCUS

As many interviewees remarked, the strength of the anti-human trafficking campaign was its ability to bring together “strange bedfellows” (evangelical Christians, human rights organizations, feminist groups) and mobilize them towards a compelling vision of ending modern-day slavery.

This coalition of NGOs, key congressional office staff members, and religious groups had first coalesced in the religious liberty campaign of the mid-1990s. Michael Horowitz, director of the Hudson Institute’s Project for International Religious Liberty, prodded evangelical Christian

¹ Andrea Bertone, *Transnational Activism to Combat Trafficking in Persons*. *Brown Journal of World Affairs*. Winter/ Spring 2004: Volume X, Issue 2, pg 13-14.

² Janie Chuang, *The United States As Global Sheriff: Using Unilateral Sanctions to Combat Human Trafficking*. *Michigan Journal of International Law*. Vol 27: 437-494, p. 442.

³ Francis T. Miko and Grace (Jea-Hyun) Park, Report for Congress, received through the CRS Web, *Trafficking in Women and Children: U.S. and International Response*. Updated March 6, 2003. p 12.

groups, Jewish organizations, and feminist groups to work together to exert pressure on Congress.⁴ The coalition's efforts (grassroots organizing, media engagement, and political negotiation) facilitated the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, which established the U.S. Department of State's Office of International Religious Freedoms. Leveraged with additional partners that focused on refugees and anti-slavery, the coalition united again to pressure the U.S. government to utilize its political will to end the war in Sudan. They successfully encouraged the Administration to assert aggressive diplomacy, which eventually contributed to the North-South peace process negotiations.

In 1998, the coalition looked across the landscape to find a third cause around which to organize. They chose to tackle human trafficking, as it was becoming salient in Europe and Asia but had "hardly hit the radar screen in the U.S." Coalition members worked diligently to recruit human rights organizations and feminist groups. While this was not an easy sell, and took approximately six months to complete, members embraced the strategy of uniting temporarily around a specific policy goal. As a result, the coalition was able to pull together the resources and memberships of disparate groups to effectively mobilize constituencies on both "the left" (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Equality Now, various feminist groups, labor unions) and "the right" (Southern Baptists, National Association of Evangelicals, Salvation Army, Prison Fellowship, Senate Republican Conference).

III. MESSAGING: CAMPAIGN TO END "MODERN DAY SLAVERY"

Simple, compelling, and flexible

As one interviewee indicated, the coalition realized that the issue needed "an angle that would capture the imagination." They wanted to keep the process "organic" and in doing so, chose not to hire a communications strategist. Through words and images, members utilized shock value to explain that "there is modern-day slavery — more than ever existed before — and there is something that can be done about it." Coalition members agreed to this simple message because they realized that human trafficking is a very complicated phenomenon, whose resonance would be weakened through over-explanation. Therefore, they aimed to capture the essence of the problem and solution within two to three sentences.

In order to have the greatest impact, the coalition presented the most extreme versions of the trafficking story, with particular emphasis on victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation. The coalition has been criticized for downplaying labor trafficking, but images of 12-year-old girls sold into prostitution proved more compelling than middle-aged sweatshop workers. As one interviewee explained, "We were accused of 'sensationalism,' but quite frankly, that is what grabbed people's attention. We crystallized the message and employed hard-hitting images and stories."

The coalition acknowledged that the audiences of each member group would respond to different permutations of the main message. Therefore, they enabled each member to stylize the message for their audience. For instance, faith-based groups responded to the moral call to save young girls from prostitution ("what would Jesus do?"), whereas human rights activists connected with principles of global justice ("what should the United States do to stop this global tragedy?") and

⁴ Mark Elliot, "Faith-Based Responses to Trafficking in Women from Eastern Europe," page 8.

feminists responded to calls for strengthening women's economic and social rights ("your sisters are in need").

Three P's: Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution

The "three P's" language, which was likely taken from Clinton's initial framework, was soon incorporated into talking points with Congress. Interviewees speculated that this must have occurred when the drafted legislation was handed over to the State Department, the Justice Department, and the Department of Health and Human Services for feedback. This message worked to ensure that the legislation was comprehensive and addressed the three critical areas of prevention, protection and prosecution.

IV. CAMPAIGN GOALS

Victim-centered; Institutionalize anti-slavery regime

The coalition's overall objective was to pass a victim-centered piece of legislation that institutionalized government initiatives and programs. They wanted the bill to be more than a symbolic piece of paper; they wanted to create a holistic anti-slavery regime. While the coalition did not achieve everything it set out to achieve, the final version of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 was considered a great success. The act created the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, established new offices within several federal departments, institutionalized a mechanism for protection, offered visas for trafficking victims (T-visas), mandated annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports, and established guidelines for sanctions against negligent countries.

No money attached

Coalition members made a conscious decision not to request specific appropriations in the initial bill because they did not want to be perceived as asking for more money amidst an already tight budget. Instead, they wanted it to be a bill focused only around values, moral imperative and American stewardship. Ten million dollars was added for each of the five agencies at the last minute, and funding was followed in subsequent appropriations, but they were not a part of the original legislative intent.

Compromise and integrity

As one interviewee said, there was little agreement on goals beyond a victims-centered piece of legislation that institutionalized government initiatives and programs. A subgroup of the coalition was commissioned to draft the legislation because consensus would have been impossible with all members at the table. Coalition members had numerous disagreements and "bloody battles" over intentions and semantics, but groups were never asked to sacrifice the integrity of their principles or stance on other issues, particularly reproductive rights. Members had to "agree to disagree" and compromises were made to maintain broad support for the legislation.

For instance, the provisions against labor trafficking were "a bit clipped" due to opposition from the Chamber of Commerce and because many coalition members felt particularly strongly about sexual trafficking and prostitution. There was also disagreement over the use of broad-based

sanctions against negligent Tier 3 countries, so sanctions were limited to educational and cultural exchanges as well as military aid. As one interviewee indicated, “[The negotiation] required a great deal of emotional and political discipline, but we learned that if you can manage the relationships, you get the best wins.”

V. TARGET AUDIENCES: U.S. CONGRESS AND EXECUTIVE AGENCIES

U.S. Congress: Bipartisan initiative, targeted leadership, political will

Achieving political will on Capitol Hill was truly a group effort; coalition members appreciated that they could not get the bill passed alone. Women’s groups focused on senators such as Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), whereas faith-based groups focused on senators like Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX). The coalition was very proud that TVPA was the one of the only bills (if not the only bill) to pass during the last three months of the Clinton Administration. They attribute this to the fact that it was truly a bipartisan effort.

From the beginning, the coalition was very intentional in targeting leadership. They recognized that leadership needed to come from senior members of the majority party with energetic staff. They specifically targeted members with political capital and the willingness to fight for an issue and “go out on a limb.” As one interviewee remarked, otherwise the process and the legislation would become “ghettoized.”

With Republicans in control, the coalition looked to the leadership of two Catholics in Congress, Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), who successfully worked in tandem to pass the TVPA in 2000. The coalition found a fervent Democratic co-sponsor in Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN), whose role raised the legitimacy of the legislation in the eyes of Democratic members. The media was intrigued by the unlikely political partnership between Brownback and Wellstone.

The coalition focused on key committees, particularly the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. They conducted regular educational trainings, working lunches and hearings to get members and their staff on board. Senator Brownback’s staff arranged for a particularly poignant hearing, in which trafficking survivors were invited to provide testimony. Coalition members located young women from Russia, Nepal, Mexico, and Thailand who were willing to come to the United States to share their devastating and compelling stories. The hearing attracted dozens of legislators and staffers as well as representatives from every major media outlet. This was a major turning point, as it “cemented fledgling bipartisan bonds between faith-based organizations, women’s rights groups, children’s groups, human rights groups, and others, which eventually led to the passage of the law.”⁵

Executive agencies: exerting pressure from within

Recognizing that the greatest pushback often comes from administrative agencies, coalition members also worked diligently to maintain regular communication with their contacts on the inside, especially within the State Department. Coalition members kept “insiders” informed of

⁵ Laura Lederer, Introduction to Senator Samuel Brownback, *Faces of Children Prayer Summit*, June 23, 2004, p. 4-5.

the process and status of the legislation and requested that they provide a gentle push to the Secretary. This was difficult and required that their contacts expend political capital, but it paid off — the coalition met little resistance from executive agencies.

VI. STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Overall strategy: Focused, winnable, short timeframe

The critical component was that the campaign to “end modern-day slavery” was single-issued and addressed a specific policy goal that was considered “winnable.” The coalition developed a strategy around a set of targets (bipartisan leadership in the House and Senate) and set out to pass the TVPA within a short timeframe (18 months to 2 years) as to maintain momentum.

Public outreach strategy: Horizontal-vertical dimension

In addition to its “left-right” dimension, the coalition developed a “horizontal-vertical” public outreach. Each group utilized their natural outreach networks and delivered the message through grassroots organizing methods such as email bulletins to students, meetings on campuses, and church newsletters. The coalition also solicited high-level commitment from top church leaders to deliver the message directly to their congregations through sermons, bulletins, and fundraising drives among parishioners. Organizations with a large outreach capacity, such as the Salvation Army, were a tremendous asset.

Media strategy: “Unique political hooks”; continuous engagement

In order to be successful with the media, the coalition realized that it would “need unique political hooks that the media would want to write about.” The media was naturally drawn to the coalition’s paradoxical leadership, including feminists like Gloria Steinem and conservative religious leaders like Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Feminists and conservatives had fought for decades over reproductive rights and here they were sharing a podium and agenda. From the media’s perspective, this odd partnership was a story in itself, and photos of the duo were priceless.

One of the coalition’s main tactics was to pitch editorial boards and engage investigative journalists of major newspapers. As one of the interviewees said, “It’s not news until the *Washington Post* or *New York Times* reports it.” The coalition kept the media engaged with continuous events, reports, and opinion editorials. “We wanted to make sure that there was always something to write about.” Because there is a lot of “cross-pollination” in the media, subsequent stories can spread after the first big story. For instance, women’s fashion magazines such as *Marie Claire* and *Cosmopolitan* learned about human trafficking after a big story in the *Washington Post* and subsequently wrote pieces.

Spokesperson Strategy: Star Power

Early on in the campaign, the coalition reached out to celebrities with a “global perspective,” including Bono, Sigourney Weaver, and Angelina Jolie, and featured them at congressional events and hearings. The coalition also looked to renowned humanitarians Elie Wiesel and Muhammad Yunus, whose causes are easily connected to modern-day slavery. Once celebrities were on board, the coalition went to the television networks. A monumental win was when Elie

Wiesel, a Nobel Peace Prize winner and Holocaust survivor, spoke on *60 Minutes* accompanying a documentary on human trafficking.

VII. EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Bipartisan momentum: Reauthorizations, appropriations, and enhancements

The coalition's efforts were extremely effective in harnessing the energy, resources, and political will needed to combat modern-day slavery. While there have been numerous criticisms of the U.S. approach and demands for fundamental changes (such as improving information gathering and reporting, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of agencies, documenting the rationale and support for country rankings, and increasing funding),⁶ the TVPA of 2000 is considered a monumental success. Specifically, TVPA comprehensively addressed the “three P’s” of human trafficking and institutionalized critical government programs and initiatives.

This momentum carried over relatively easily with bipartisan support into the Bush Administration and the 107th Congress. In March 2001, former Attorney General John Ashcroft announced that the fight against trafficking would be a top priority for the Administration. He assured the public that U.S. law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, would cooperate closely to upgrade efforts to combat trafficking.

In July 2001, the State Department issued its first congressionally mandated *Trafficking in Persons Report*, which rates countries according to whether their anti-trafficking commitment and policies meet “minimum standards.” Countries that do not cooperate in the fight against trafficking (Tier 3 category) are subject to sanctions, including termination of non-humanitarian and non-trade-related assistance. In February 2002, President Bush signed an Executive Order establishing the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

The Foreign Operations Appropriations Act of 2002 provided \$30 million to fight trafficking and assist victims, including allocations of \$10 million each to prevention, protection, and assistance to help countries meet minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. With the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2003, the Bush Administration authorized more than \$200 million to combat human trafficking. This TVPRA mandated new information campaigns to combat sex tourism, refined the federal criminal law, created a new civil action provision allowing victims to sue in federal district court, and expanded eligibility for federally funded services and benefits for victims and their families.

In December 2005, Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) of 2005. For the first time, the legislation explicitly addressed the demand side of trafficking and called for further prosecution and punishment for the perpetrators — pimps, customers, and traffickers — instead of the victims. Also significant, the TVPRA of 2005 addressed the issue of prostitution, or a commercial sex act, as separate from trafficking on the

⁶ GAO, *Human Trafficking: Better Data, Strategy and Reporting to Enhance U.S. Antitrafficking Efforts Abroad*, Report to the Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary and the Chairman, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, July 2006, p. 37.

federal level. Between 2001 and July 2006, the U.S. government had obligated approximately \$375 million for international projects to combat trafficking in persons.⁷

Raised public awareness and media coverage

Clearly, advocacy groups have significantly raised public awareness of modern-day slavery, particularly since the passing of the TVPA. Human trafficking continues to be featured in major newspaper articles, television programs, and conferences throughout the country. Many organizations, particularly faith-based groups, express optimism that awareness is having a “boomerang effect,” which will eventually lead negligent countries to take actions to end modern-day slavery.

According to Mary Ellen Dougherty, the coordinator of the United States Conference on Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) anti-trafficking efforts, “Knowledge of human trafficking is spreading [and] more and more people are becoming educated about it... There is [growing] power and authority behind the message against human trafficking. Governments across the world are converging around this common cause. Where they are not, there is the constant and concrete reminder to them that this is, universally, a human rights issue. National and international media are addressing that.”⁸

Similarly, Mark Elliott writes, “Although the anti-trafficking campaign is still in its infancy and faces an entrenched, absolutely unprincipled and extraordinarily wealthy adversary, [it] can take heart in the fact that it is becoming increasingly clear, even to indifferent and corrupt governments, that opposition to trafficking will not go away and it will continue to grow.”⁹

Tension between activists

On the other hand, several human rights groups lament the messaging and argue that media coverage has been skewed, to the detriment of victims.

“Within the last six years, major media coverage and international conferences on human trafficking have been misleading, tending to cover the plight of those trafficked globally for sex, but not labor. This apparent media bias... towards representing the accounts, fears, and needs of female victims and survivors of sex trafficking to the near-complete exclusion of labor trafficking victims and survivors, or men’s experiences...is unfortunate for all victims and survivors of human trafficking because the public learns...to care about some people more than others.”¹⁰

⁷ GAO, *Human Trafficking: Better Data, Strategy and Reporting to Enhance U.S. Antitrafficking Efforts Abroad*, Report to the Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary and the Chairman, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, July 2006, p. 8.

⁸ Mary Ellen Dougherty, “The Role of Faith-based Organizations in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons,” U.S. Embassy to the Holy See Conference, “A Call to Action: Joining the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons,” Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, Italy, <http://Vatican.usembassy.it/policy/events/tip2004/dougherty.asp>, 17 June 2004.

⁹ Mark Elliot, “Faith-Based Responses to Trafficking in Women from Eastern Europe.” Page 24.

¹⁰ Christina Arnold, *Agendas and Ideological Bases of “Anti-Trafficking Actor: Representations, Moralities and Realities in US/ Southeast Asian Experiences*. Senior Honors Thesis in Political Science, American University, April 22, 2004, p. 38-39.

This sentiment reflects a fundamental debate and continuous source of tension within the human trafficking community. Some have argued that there are two “activist camps”: the faith-based and feminist organizations, which argue that prostitution is always exploitative and work to “rescue fallen women”; and human rights groups, which operate from a human rights paradigm and support women who have made a conscious decision to be sex workers. The aforementioned loose coalition managed to involve many — but certainly not all — of these disparate groups in their effort to exert pressure on the U.S. government. While not a perfect process, the movement achieved its goals of raising saliency among the public and in Congress, passing progressive legislation, and building a regime against modern-day slavery.

VIII. ANALYSIS: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSON LEARNED

Best Practices

Partnerships: Loose “left-right” coalition with singular focus

The movement was successful largely because it leveraged the strength of an existing coalition that had already achieved two significant single-issue victories. The coalition brought together “strange bedfellows” towards a focused and compelling vision of ending modern-day slavery. Operating with a short timeframe (18 months to two years), they coalesced around a specific piece of legislation and mobilized their disparate grassroots constituencies to exert pressure on specific legislators and committees. Coalition members also utilized an insider strategy to work alongside key congressional offices and representatives from relevant executive agencies.

Messaging: Simple, compelling, and flexible

The coalition agreed upon a simple yet visionary message to end modern-day slavery and enabled members to cater the message to their particular audiences. Members used powerful visuals and testimony to capture the devastation of trafficking, particularly for victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation.

Campaign goals: Victim-centered, sustainable anti-slavery regime

The coalition set out to pass a victim-centered piece of legislation that institutionalized government initiatives and programs. They consciously decided on an authorizing bill, rather than appropriations, because they wanted it to be a “heart test” — a values-centered bill about American stewardship.

Targets: Congressional leaders with political will; bipartisan support; executive agency insiders

The coalition sought leadership from senior members of the majority party with political will and the willingness to fight tirelessly for the legislation. The “left-right” coalition employed both insider and outsider strategies to attract bipartisan support and strategically influence key legislators and committees. The coalition also worked diligently with contacts in various executive agencies to exert pressure from within.

Strategies: Horizontal-vertical public outreach; continuous media engagement; star power

Coalition members delivered messages through their traditional grassroots methods as well as encouraging higher-profile dissemination tactics, particularly from church leaders. Media were

naturally attracted to the coalition because of its unlikely co-leadership of feminists and evangelicals. Moreover, the coalition ensured that there was always something to write about through approaching editorial boards, producing reports, and hosting events. The coalition solicited celebrities and humanitarian icons, which were instrumental in attracting media attention and congressional interest.

Lesson learned

Diverse coalitions are difficult to manage and require negotiation and a true commitment to overall vision

While the diversity of the coalition was its greatest strength, it was also its greatest challenge. Coalition members disagreed and had “bloody battles” over many issues, related to the legislation and beyond. In order to move forward, negotiations were made, which some have argued weakened or compromised the integrity of the legislation. However, they succeeded in maintaining broad support and passing progressive legislation. Furthermore, groups agreed to disagree and were never asked to sacrifice their principles. As one interviewee indicated, “[The negotiation] required a great deal of emotional and political discipline, but we learned that if you can manage the relationships, you get the best wins.”

VIII. INTERVIEWEES

In chronological order

Tracy Johnson, former chief of party for the Anti-Trafficking Task Order, Chemonics International Inc. Interviewed via phone on February 16, 2007. Contact: tracypilar@gmail.com.

Andrea Bertone, Director of HumanTrafficking.org Project, AED. Interviewed via phone on February 20, 2007. Contact: abertone@aed.org or 202-884-8000.

Sharon Payt, former aide to Senator Brownback when TVPA of 2000 was passed; current Advocacy Director for Middle East and Eastern Europe for World Vision. Interviewed via phone on March 13, 2007. Contact: sharon_payt@wvi.org.

Laura Lederer, founder of the Protection Project; current senior adviser on trafficking in persons to Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs. Interviewed via phone on March 15, 2007. Contact: ledererlj@state.gov or 202-647-2990.

Requested interviews:

Dr. Julianne Duncan and Kevin Appleby, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Anne Jordan, Director of the Initiative Against Trafficking for Global Rights

Melanie Orhant, Break the Chain

Dr. Mohammed Mattar, Executive Director of Protection Project

Becky Bavinger, The Emancipation Network and Made by Survivors