

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

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I. Lay of the Land: Gaining Saliency Internationally

Human trafficking first started to gain traction in the late 1980s and early 1990s, thanks to 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.ⁱ Facing international recognition and pressure, the U.S. and the European Union began to pursue initiatives to combat trafficking in the late 1990's.

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.”ⁱⁱ In January 1999, the U.S. 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 three 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.

Back in the U.S., 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 (1) prevention, (2) protection and support for victims and (3) prosecution of traffickers.ⁱⁱⁱ While this directive was a step forward, it lacked the impetus for real change. Months later, a loose-based coalition joined together 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 have remarked, the beauty of the anti-human trafficking campaign was its ability to bring together “strange bedfellows” (ie: Evangelical Christians, human rights organizations and feminist groups) and mobilize them towards a compelling vision of ending “modern-day slavery.”

This loose-based coalition of NGOs, key congressional office staff members, and religious groups, had first coalesced in the religious liberty campaign of the mid-1990's. Michael Horowitz, the Director of the Hudson Institute's Project for International Religious Liberty prodded Evangelical Christians, Jewish organizations and feminist groups to work together to exert pressure on Congress.^{iv} 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 Department of State's Office of International Religious Freedoms. Leveraged with additional partners that focused on refugees and anti-slavery, the Coalition coalesced again to pressure the U.S. government to utilize their 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” to organize around. They decided 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 time (approximately 6 months), members embraced the strategy of coalescing 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” (ie: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Equality Now, various feminist groups, labor unions) and “the right” (ie: 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 it came down to the fact that images of 12 year old girls sold into prostitution were 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, constituents of faith-based groups responded to the moral call of duty to save victims of prostitution and sex crimes (“what would Jesus do?”), whereas global justice principles would resonate with human rights activists (“what should the U.S. do to stop this global tragedy?”) and calls to strengthen women’s economic and social rights would be powerful for feminists (“your sisters are in need”).

Three P’s: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution

At some point, the “three P’s” language was incorporated into the talking points on the Hill, which was likely taken from Clinton’s initial framework. Interviewees speculated that this must have been when the drafted legislation was handed over to the State Department, Justice

Department and 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, Institutionalized Anti-Slavery Regime

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; it 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 negligible countries.

No \$ 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 pure bill centered around values, moral imperative and American stewardship. Ten million was added for each of the five agencies at the last minute and funding 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 it would have been impossible with all members at the table. There were still numerous disagreements and "bloody battles" over intentions and semantics. However, 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 negligible 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 such as Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX). The coalition was very proud that VTPA was the one of the only bills- if not the only- 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 is "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 VTPA 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 onboard. 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 U.S. 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."^v

Executive Agencies: Exerting Pressure from Within

Recognizing that the greatest pushback often comes from administrative agencies, the coalition also worked diligently to maintain regular communication with their contacts on the inside, especially within the State Department. Coalition members kept "insiders" informed of 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 time-frame (1.5-2 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 chief tactics was to pitch the editorial boards and engage investigative journalists of the 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, stories can spread like wildfire after the first big story. For instance, female magazines like *Marie Claire* and *Cosmopolitan* caught wind of human trafficking after a big story in the *Washington Post* and subsequently wrote pieces. Women’s fashion magazines were an unexpected tool because they are popular and have a huge reach throughout the U.S.

Spokesperson Strategy: Star Power

Early on in the campaign, the coalition reached out to celebrities with a “global perspective,” such as Bono, Sigourney Weaver and Angelina Jolie, and featured them at congressional events and hearings. They also looked to renowned humanitarian icons, such as Elie Wiesel and Muhammad Yunus, whose issues were an easy cross-over to modern-day slavery. Once they had celebrities on board, they 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 the 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),^{vi} the VTPA of 2000 is considered a monumental success. Specifically, VTPA comprehensively addressed the “three P’s” of human trafficking and institutionalized critical government programs and initiatives (see figure 1).

This momentum carried over with bipartisan support relatively seamlessly 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 and assured that U.S. law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, INS and DOJ’s Civil Rights Division, would cooperate closely to upgrade efforts to combat trafficking. And 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 an 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- \$10 million each was allocated to 1) prevention, 2) protection and 3) assistance to countries to help them 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, U.S. 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 federal level. As of July 2006, the U.S. government had obligated approximately \$375 million for international projects to combat trafficking in persons since 2001.^{vii}

Raised Public Awareness and Media Coverage:

There is no doubt that advocacy groups have significantly raised public awareness of modern day slavery, particularly since the passing of the VTPA. Human trafficking continues to be featured in major newspaper articles, television programs and conferences throughout the country. Many organizations, particularly faith-based groups, articulate optimism that awareness is having a “boomerang effect,” which will eventually lead negligible countries to take actions to end modern day slavery.

“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.”^{viii}

“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.”^{ix}

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.”^x

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”: 1) the faith based and feminist organizations, which argue that prostitution is always exploitative and work to “rescue fallen women” and 2) 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-based 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, they achieved their goals of raising saliency among the public and on the Hill, passing progressive legislation and building an anti-modern day slavery regime.

VIII. Analysis: Best Practices and Lesson Learned

Best Practices

Partnerships: Loose-based “Left-Right” Coalition with Singular Focus

The movement was successful largely because it leveraged the strength of an existing loose-based coalition, which 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 (1.5-2 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 also 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 and 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 leadership of feminists and evangelicals. Moreover, the coalition ensured that there was always something to write about through working with editorial boards, producing reports and hosting events. The coalition solicited celebrities and humanitarian icons to represent their issue, whose involvement was instrumental in attracting media interest 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 a 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.”

IX. List of Interviewees (in chronological order)

Tracy Johnson, former Chief of Party for the Anti-Trafficking Task Order, Chemonics Inc.; Spoke with on February 16, 2007. Email address: tracypilar@gmail.com.

Andrea Bertone, Director of HumanTrafficking.org Project, AED. Spoke with on February 20, 2007. Email address: abertone@aed.org.

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. Spoke with on March 13, 2007. Email address: 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. Spoke with on March 15, 2007. Email address: ledererlj@state.gov.

Requested interviewees with:

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

X. Works Cited

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^{iv} Mark Elliot, "Faith-Based Responses to Trafficking in Women from Eastern Europe." Page 8.

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

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^{viii} 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.

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