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Stop sex trafficking of children and young people –
a unique ECPAT and Body Shop campaign

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Introduction

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) and The Body Shop have created a unique partnership through the global “Stop sex trafficking of children and young people” campaign to strengthen the protection of children and young people from trafficking for sexual purposes. The Body Shop, which positions itself as the original natural and ethical beauty company, has an established record of campaigning on many important social and environmental issues. In order to fulfil the late Dame Anita Roddick’s request to work against human trafficking, The Body Shop approached ECPAT in 2007 to initiate work on a possible campaign. Believing that working with the private sector and business is crucial to combat successfully such crimes against children, ECPAT International, a network of organisations in over 75 countries working specifically against the commercial sexual exploitation of children, committed to the partnership with The Body Shop in creating this campaign.

The “Stop sex trafficking of children and young people” campaign is a three-year global campaign (2009-2011), which aims to provide immediate relief to child victims and create long-term changes through public awareness raising and to lobby decision makers to strengthen concerted action against child trafficking for sexual purposes. The campaign has three main advocacy goals:
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- community-based prevention programmes to stop child trafficking for at-risk populations;
- incorporating international legal standards for protecting children from trafficking into the national legal framework; and
- integrating specialised government services for child victims of trafficking into national policies.

The goals were selected in response to the various calls to action found in human rights instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and other relevant treaties and commitments, such as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the 2008 Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children. Moreover, the campaign’s advocacy goals are complimentary to both the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, as well as other regional and international standards. This paper will highlight how the campaign integrates these calls to action and legal and policy provisions, particularly those of the Council of Europe conventions, in addition to providing insight into the campaign progress. Although still in implementation, the campaign and partnership between The Body Shop and ECPAT can demonstrate how stakeholders, such as global businesses not directly linked to the issue and an international network of child protection non-governmental organisations (NGOs), can successfully collaborate and take meaningful action towards improving the lives of millions of children worldwide.

80. The outcome document of the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents held in November 2008 in Brazil, where the partnership was presented publicly for the first time.
Campaign awareness raising and reaching out

The “Stop sex trafficking of children and young people” campaign, through its awareness raising initiatives, aims to inspire people to take action towards creating sustainable positive outcomes in preventing child trafficking and the protection of children from such exploitation. The campaign takes advantage of ECPAT’s worldwide country network and The Body Shop’s ability to reach millions of customers through more than 2,500 stores in 64 countries.

In August 2009, the campaign was officially launched in Bangkok, Thailand, with over 100 media and representatives of NGOs, UN agencies and government partners in attendance. At the launch, the campaign base-line report, “Their protection is in our hands – the state of global child trafficking for sexual purpose” was released (ECPAT and The Body Shop, 2009). The report reiterates that the trafficking of children and young people for sexual purposes in many countries is increasing and governments need to do more to tackle this problem and protect them. The campaign report provides an overview of the trends and manifestations of child sex trafficking across the world's regions and the various combinations of factors putting children at risk. It also examines the types of interventions and good practices that are necessary to “prevent, protect and assist children” in the trafficking process that are in harmony with the major international and regional legal frameworks for child protection.

The campaign report concludes by identifying specific commitments and promises that states have made to uphold the rights of the child and to protect children from sex trafficking. It details how the campaign aims to promote and improve the application of relevant national, regional, international laws and commitments. For example, the report’s recommendations are very much in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, as it focuses on the protection of child victims by safeguarding their rights as well as calling for specific prevention and protection efforts and prosecution of traffickers.
In addition, the report calls for strengthening efforts to identify child victims whilst also highlighting that the child should be able to access specialised government services, basic care standards and where necessary repatriation and reintegration that is in line with their best interests. The campaign goals also complement the legal provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. For example, the campaign specifically calls upon states to set up appropriately trained police units that can respond to crimes against children, including trafficking and sexual exploitation. Such units would investigate these crimes with a child-sensitive approach and ensure that child victims are provided with the type of protection that is in their best interests and are not re-traumatised by the criminal justice process.

After the global launch, there was a series of national launches in over 25 countries implementing the campaign. Promotion at The Body Shop stores included large, eye-catching visual displays, among which window posters and interior banners; there were also other displays and booklets containing background information on child sex trafficking. Some stores set up interactive corners, where customers could ask questions on the campaign while testing out the official campaign product.

Moreover, the campaign utilises different media platforms in local languages to reach out to the public, such as TV, advertising, print media and websites, including online social sites such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. During the first year of the campaign, many ECPAT groups reported an increase in inquiries for information on child trafficking and requests from the public to volunteer and to run news stories in the media. The campaign’s efforts were acknowledged at the Fifth Annual Clinton Global Initiative meeting in 2009, when former US President Clinton singled out The Body Shop and ECPAT campaign as “an exemplary approach to addressing a specific global challenge”.

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Anti-child trafficking initiatives and the Soft Hands Kind Heart hand cream

The Soft Hands Kinds Heart hand cream is the official campaign fund raising product created by The Body Shop. It sold 500 000 units globally in the first year, which was 70% over the expected target sales. For each country, all sales profits made from the campaign product are donated to ECPAT groups providing immediate support to children affected by sex trafficking, and to prevention and awareness-raising programmes implemented by ECPAT worldwide.81 Projects range from: conducting research on internal / domestic child trafficking; lobbying for international and regional legal standards on protecting children from trafficking to be incorporated in the national legal framework; specialised training of key stakeholders to identify child victims and implementation of child-friendly approaches; empowering child survivors and at-risk youths to conduct advocacy against child trafficking; and supporting shelters especially for child victims that offer specialised care services.

Holding governments accountable

An important advocacy component of the campaign is the country progress card system, which ECPAT and The Body Shop created to assess the progress of states’ action on specific commitments and promises made internationally to uphold the rights of the child to protection from sex trafficking and all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

“Monitoring state progress to protect children and young people from trafficking for sexual purposes” reports the findings of the initial assessment carried out during the first year of the campaign, based on progress cards for 41 countries (plus 1 regional progress card for the Middle East). The findings show that only 12% of the countries have made significant progress in combating child sex

81. For latest updates on the campaign, including news on activities and anti-child trafficking projects, visit <http://www.ecpat.net/tbs/ecpat-tbs.html>.
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trafficking. The assessment provides an in-depth examination of state action specifically targeting the three advocacy goals for the campaign: prevention, legal framework and care for child victims of sex trafficking. For example in the prevention field, data show that 41% of states assessed do not conduct awareness-raising campaigns on child trafficking.

In terms of legal framework, the country progress cards showed that 27% of all the countries reviewed have not yet fully adopted the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Two in three countries reviewed have adopted legislations that are only partially in line with the UN trafficking protocol, and consequently offer only partial protection for children. The country progress cards monitor the ratification of both the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Twenty-four European country progress cards show that approximately 54% have ratified the Council of Europe's trafficking convention, while only 12.5% have ratified the its convention on sexual exploitation and abuse.

With the assistance of the ECPAT groups, the campaign has identified targeted national calls to action around 12 specific policy-related indicators in each of the countries directly engaged in the campaign. The existence of these policies is considered to be a first fundamental step towards concrete action as well as a tool for the public to call for accountability. The Body Shop and ECPAT will closely monitor state progress on these frontline indicators that play a key role in stopping child sex trafficking.

The country progress cards support the “call to action” for the national campaign petitions which will be run in each country during this year’s campaign activities (year 2). For year 3 (2011), plans have been made to increase the campaign’s momentum and present the national campaign petition to governments in each country, as well as present a global campaign petition to the United Nations.
Conclusion – engaging the public and private sector in advocacy

Effectively combating global problems such as child trafficking requires successful collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. Many businesses have already taken positive steps by implementing corporate social responsibility policies, conducting philanthropy and assisting organisations on environmental and social issues. The private sector has the potential to become a highly effective partner in preventing human trafficking, protecting children and supporting care and rehabilitation of victims. Both The Body Shop and ECPAT are encouraging other private sector companies to join and take specific actions to combat human trafficking and the campaign partnership is expanding in many countries.

Currently, the “Stop sex trafficking of children and young people” campaign is still ongoing.\(^82\) As noted earlier, the main goal for the first phase of the campaign involves empowering the public to understand what states have done to counter the issue via the country progress cards and to take action by signing national campaign petitions based on the various calls to action.

The Body Shop is committed to calling for change in important social issues such as child trafficking – a philosophy that is based on an understanding that successful advocacy can bring long lasting and wide reaching policy and practice changes. The long history of The Body Shop campaigns when combined with ECPAT’s global experience of protecting children from sexual exploitation can result in a partnership that extends its reach through the public worldwide to decision makers and duty bearers at all levels.

This unique partnership ensures that the advocacy messages are targeted and specific to national and international contexts. The involvement of ECPAT groups at the national and community level is essential as they provide a critical insight to the issues and needs.

\(^82\) See the campaign website at: <http://www.thebodyshop.com> (click on values and campaigns).
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to combat child sex trafficking based on their specific expertise and experience which informs the key advocacy messages. The Body Shop stores ensure that the messages reach and engage millions of customers. Thus, the collective voice of the people can be heard.

References