

The Body Shop Stop Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People Campaign

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Monday, June 13th

House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

At The Body Shop we believe business should be both profitable AND a force for good. The principle way we do this is by using our beauty boutiques as a platform to inform customers about social and environmental issues. In doing so, we invite them to join us and, together campaign to create long term change. This approach was pioneered by the founder of our business, Dame Anita Roddick, who created The Body Shop in the UK in 1976, and grew our brand from one boutique to over 2,600 across 65 countries today.

I would imagine that for many of you in this room, the fact that more than ONE million children are trafficked every year and are sexually exploited in virtually every country across the world is something you have known for many years. For The Body Shop, a business that has spent 35 years campaigning for social and environmental change, it was only five years ago that we became aware of the extent of this underground issue. It was then a natural next step for us to explore how we could contribute to providing a solution.

We responded by creating a global partnership with ECPAT International (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) and together we launched the Stop Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People campaign in 2009. In the US & Canada we have partnered with ECPAT, and the Somaly Mam Foundation to achieve very specific goals.

In the first instance, our goal has been to raise funds to bring immediate relief to help children and young people who have been impacted by sex trafficking. Ultimately, we are working to inspire long-term change by raising awareness of the issue by facilitating the voice of the consumer to be heard by those with decision-making powers.

From the outset, our campaign strategy focused on the belief that abuse on this scale could be stopped if decision-makers took action. Yes, fundraising is important to support immediate relief but this is only a band aid. The real answer to create sustainable change lay in influencing decision-makers to change legislation.

How do we do this? As an international retailer with boutiques in high profile locations in shopping malls and street locations across the world, we have an incredible opportunity to reach literally millions of people from all walks of life by using our boutiques to communicate and inspire action. We have the ability to create a platform that captures and mobilizes the voice of our customers.

Add to the equation another incredible asset – 50,000 dedicated staff across the world who are trained to talk about the campaign with our customers, we have the ingredients to deliver something ground-breaking.

If we can inspire customers to lend their voice by signing a campaign petition, we can create a loud and united voice which, we believe decision makers will respond.

Of course, the petition call to action must be nationally relevant and very specific to the changes we want to achieve. To deliver this, we and ECPAT International created specific calls to action relevant to country specific issues.

Here are some of the examples

1. In the UNITED STATES, we are calling for all states to introduce "safe harbor" to protect and prevent any person under the age of 18 from being charged, prosecuted or incarcerated for prostitution. In some states this exists. In most it does not.
2. In GERMANY we are calling for the government to strengthen protection of victims during investigation and legal proceedings
3. In SOUTH KOREA the call to action centers on training police and teachers to help prevent child trafficking.

While we know we have a long way to go to fulfil the potential of our campaign, we have already had some successes which have created

change to protect children and young people not just today, but long into the future

Around the world, in less than 12 months, more than 6.2 million people have come to The Body Shop and signed our petition in 50 countries around the world. This is the biggest petition in the proud 35 year history of The Body Shop.

So far, we have presented petitions to governments in nine countries and already helped to create legislative change. Here are just a few examples:

- In Malta the government responded to our campaign by signing the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Child Abuse, a major international treaty which will greatly improve the protection and support for children
- In Malaysia the government responded to the petition by committing to ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention of Child Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
- In the Netherlands, the Minister of Security and Justice responded by accepting personal responsibility to increase police protection and support children affected.

We have also helped to change legislation in Switzerland and Norway, and have received assurances by Ministers in South Africa and Portugal that our call to action will be delivered.

We believe this is just the start. With 33 petitions to be presented to governments around the world in the coming months, we are confident we can help create further change. We are also preparing a presentation to both the European Union and the United Nations Human Rights Council in the hope we can influence even greater action.

We are proud of our achievements in gathering the support of more than six million people worldwide on the issue of child sex trafficking; of raising more than US\$3 million to support relief and advocacy efforts. We are very aware that there is a long way to go in the fight to protect children and young people from sex trafficking but are committed to this issue and confident we can continue to work with our customers to make a difference.

I pay tribute to our customers and my colleagues around the world who have demonstrated beyond any doubt, that as a business, if you empower people to become involved and make a difference they will gladly respond, and speak out to help create change.

I am grateful to have been invited here today to share details of The Body Shop commitment to tackling child sex trafficking, and hope that what the subcommittee has heard is helpful in inspiring the private sector to play its role in eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people.

Thank you for listening.