Tool 1: Encouraging Multi-Stakeholder and Multi-Brand Engagement

For brands that want to take action to protect migrant workers from broker-induced vulnerability to forced labor and human trafficking, in their own operations and across their supply chains, there is no shortage of potential for engagement. Brands are in a unique position to take effective action on many fronts, including policy development, internal capacity building and public policy advocacy.

Brands that want to reach out and work in cooperation with other stakeholders to broaden their impact also have many options. These engagements can be flexible to the needs of the brand and the realities of the supply chain: for example, a bilateral partnership with a civil society group, or ongoing involvement in a multi-stakeholder initiative (MSI). Joint actions like multi-brand or multi-stakeholder partnerships amplify impact and create sustainable opportunities to combat some of the worst forms of abuse in global supply chains. As the UN Global Compact has noted, participating in a strong multi-stakeholder initiative can be a means to develop a "broader, more comprehensive response to the problem of forced labor." [1]

THE BENEFITS OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER AND MULTI-BRAND ENGAGEMENT

Some Multi--Stakeholder and Multi--Brand Initiatives
Better Cotton Initiative
Business Social Compliance Initiative
Business for Social Responsibility
Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition
End Human Trafficking Now! Campaign
Ethical Trading Initiative
Fair Labor Association
Fair Wear Foundation
Forest Stewardship Council
Global Reporting Initiative
Global Social Compliance Program
Institute for Human Rights and Business
International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies
International Cocoa Initiative
International Trade Union
Confederation/Anti--- Slavery International
Kimberly Process
Madison Dialogue
Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
Social Accountability International
United Nations Global Compact
United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking
See Tool 3 of this suite for descriptions of these initiatives.

Engaged brands can do a lot in the fight against forced labor and human trafficking in their supply chains. But with limited resources, they can't do it all on their own. Multi-stakeholder and multi-brand engagements offer important opportunities for joint action in the fight against forced labor and human trafficking by offering brands:

- An opportunity to learn from others about good practice and what works and what doesn't within a specific sector or across industries, to avoid reinventing the wheel;
- A chance to gain more accurate information about conditions facing migrant workers within a particular country or region;
- A forum for multi-brand or industry-wide training and capacity building;
- A place to find solutions to complex challenges and issues; and
- A collective platform from which to advocate for legal, policy or regulatory reform to improve social compliance dimensions of a given business environment (e.g., the strengthening of local law and public enforcement mechanisms).
- Each brand's specific needs will be different. But through multi-stakeholder or multi-brand initiatives, brands can work towards addressing 'big picture' issues like legal and regulatory requirements that can produce large impacts but are difficult to tackle without effective partnerships.

[1] See: http://human-rights.unglobalcompact.org/dilemmas/forced-labour/.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT TO ADDRESS DIFFERENT NEEDS

In considering joint action and the partnership approach, brands may choose to work with a variety of potential partners, including:

- Other brands operating within the same or related industries;
- Business or employers' organizations to which they hold membership;
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives;
- Civil society groups such as human or labor rights organizations;
- Trade unions; and/or
- Public and governmental bodies, including international organizations.

Action can be taken at a variety of levels: national or local levels, the communities of operation for the company, the global supply chain, or even the commodity base of a particular industry. Whatever the geographic scope of action, a collaborative approach allows a brand push beyond its boundaries to address issues and problems in a more systematic and comprehensive way. The following forms of action can benefit from a multi-brand or multi-stakeholder approach:

- Code of conduct and corporate policy development;
- Internal and supply chain awareness raising and capacity building;
- Policy implementation, assessment and compliance monitoring;
- Transparency and communications campaigns;
- Corrective and preventive action programs;
- Public policy advocacy; and
- Community-based engagement and public awareness campaigns.

PARTNERSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Brands have many options available to them in selecting other business or multi-stakeholder partnerships and programs. Examining existing partnerships can help brands envision their own initiatives. For example:

- Microsoft has worked closely with the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) and the End Human Trafficking Now! (EHTN) Campaign to elaborate an eLearning tool for business on combating human trafficking.
- Manpower Group was the first company to sign the Athens Ethical Principles of the EHTN! Campaign, which declare a "zero tolerance" policy to working with any entity that benefits from human trafficking. The company has also worked with the International Organization for Migration to combat human trafficking in Colombia by providing skills training and employment opportunities to internally displaced persons, primarily women and young people.
- In partnership with the International Labor Organization, the US Council for International Business and the US Chamber of Commerce, the Coca Cola Company hosted a multi-stakeholder conference at its US headquarters in Atlanta on engaging business and addressing forced labor. This conference brought together 80 representatives of companies, employers' organizations, officials from the US Departments of Labor and State, the ILO and civil society groups to share knowledge and experiences in combating forced labor.

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In Focus

Forced Labor and Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives

A growing number of multi-brand and multi-stakeholder initiatives are addressing a combination of labor, human rights, and environmental standards in a variety of industries; but trafficking and forced labor issues may be only a relatively small item on these initiatives' agendas.

For a more in-depth look at multi-brand and multi-stakeholder engagement against forced labor, see the Case Studies in this section of the Toolkit.

Related Tools: **Case Studies in Multi-Stakeholder and Multi-Brand Engagement**

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