

## Stopping Human Trafficking: I Am the Cause, I Am the Solution

### A HOW-TO GUIDE ON BEING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE



You have the power to change lives. Sometimes there are “causes” of global injustice that can be addressed from within the United States. This is especially true with human trafficking, where demand originates from within wealthier countries or regions. Overseas, CRS works with partners to implement programs to address the root causes of poverty and injustice; in the United States, YOU are our partner.

This resource will guide you from “I am the Cause” to “I am the Solution,” with a careful exploration of two aspects of human trafficking: orphanage tourism and labor trafficking. You will learn about the issues, examine what is happening on campus, offer possible alternatives and solutions, and communicate your impact.

### ORPHANAGE TOURISM

#### 1. Learn About the Issue

“Children were intentionally malnourished to increase the severity of the situation in order to motivate visiting volunteers to donate more, or adoptive parents to increase their ‘childcare donation’ while waiting for their adoption to be finalized.” – Former Orphanage Live-In Volunteer<sup>1</sup>

Research tells us that, even in orphanages that look nice and seem to provide well, children lag behind those in families in physical, emotional, social and many other ways. In the worst places, we uncover abuse, neglect and human trafficking. What is even more shocking is that anywhere from 80-90% of children living in orphanages have at least one, if not both, living parents. So how do they end up there? The resources below will introduce you to the *Changing the Way We Care* initiative, which aims to get children in orphanages back to families, support vulnerable families to care for and stay with their children, and promote family care for vulnerable children who, for whatever reasons, cannot stay within their biological families.

Children are sometimes recruited from their families to live in orphanages. The very existence of an orphanage in a community “pulls” children in when otherwise they would stay with their families. Parents make unimaginable decisions when they think their children will get better food, better education and other services at the orphanages. Many orphanages recruit children in order to stay in business, have a place for visitors and volunteers, and to please foreign donors. When this kind of recruitment happens, it is a form of human trafficking. It is using a child to their detriment and for the benefit of a facility director, staff, donors and visitors. Additionally, research shows that growing up in orphanages leaves all children especially vulnerable to other forms of trafficking such as sex or labor trafficking because they are disconnected from families and communities to protect them.

#### WATCH:

- [Changing the Way We Care: A Family Torn](#) [CRS VIDEO]

- [Broken Dreams: Why Volunteering at Orphanages is Part of the Problem](#) [CRS VIDEO]
- [Children Need Families Not Orphanages](#) [LUMOS VIDEO]

READ:

- [Orphanage Entrepreneurs: The Trafficking of Haiti’s Invisible Children](#) [LUMOS REPORT]
- [The ‘orphan’ I adopted from Uganda already had a family](#) [CNN ARTICLE]
- [The business of voluntourism: do western do-gooders actually do harm?](#) [THE GUARDIAN ARTICLE]
- [Child Institutionalization & Human Trafficking in the 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report \(pg.22-23\)](#) [US STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT]
- [Part 1: The Lasting Pain of Children Sent to Orphanages, Rather than Families](#) [NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE]
- [Part 2: How to Really Help Children Abroad](#) [NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE]
- [Who Counts in Ethical Decision Making?](#) [AMOS ARTICLE written by CRS STAFF]

REVIEW:

- [Changing the Way We Care](#) [CRS WEBSITE]

DISCUSS:

- How does the very existence of orphanages separate children from their families?
- How is the recruitment of children into orphanages an example of human trafficking?
- How are orphanages linked to family poverty? What children do you think might be most vulnerable to being separated from their families (for example, children with disabilities)?
- In the video “Broken Dreams,” Ruth Wacuka urges that we “Treat the disease, not the symptoms.” What do you think this means? How can YOU treat the disease and not the symptoms?

## 2. Examine What is Happening on Your Campus

Sometimes service-immersion or mission trips visit orphanages. Although well-meaning, orphanage volunteering and visiting can harm children. It often provides resources and support for the destructive practice of separating children from their families and putting them in orphanages. Does your campus send volunteers to serve in orphanages? Do other service trips include a visit to a local orphanage? Find out if any departments, offices or programs on campus conduct service trips that volunteer at or visit orphanages.

## 3. Offer Possible Alternatives and Solutions

If you find that campus service opportunities financially support or even just visit orphanages, you can advocate for change. If you work through an organization that is planning the trip for you, advocate directly to them. Start by sharing the educational information above and engaging in a conversation about the issue. If you can change their practices, you will not only be part of the solution, but you will also bring others into being the solution, which has a greater impact. If you are designing your own trip, you have the power to determine the direction, scope and intended outcome. Use this freedom to continue the conversation about root causes and take action.

**Advocate to the service program:**

1. Tell them that you do not want to visit an orphanage and explain why.

2. Ask what alternatives they can offer.
3. Offer to help brainstorm what those alternatives might look like.
  - a. This resource is a great starting point for ideas: [7 Best Practices in Short-term Mission that Benefit Orphans and Vulnerable Children](#) (pages 7-17) [FAITH TO ACTION TOOLKIT]
4. Reach out to CRS [[university.crs.org](http://university.crs.org)] for suggestions about other partners for immersion and mission trips and for help with evaluating potential sites.

**Brainstorm how you can support vulnerable families:**

If we can address poverty for vulnerable families, we can help families stay together. One way to do this is to ensure that everything we purchase supports a living wage for parents to be able to take care of their children. See the section below on addressing labor trafficking and exploitation on campus, and be sure to check out companies like [GOEX](#), which produces apparel and branded materials in a way that supports a living wage for families.

#### 4. Communicate Your Impact

First, make sure to thank your supporters! Then, don't forget to share the impact you have made with CRS, other campuses and others in your community who may be interested in learning from the work you've done. Use traditional media & social media to market your success:

- Consider writing an Op-Ed in your local paper on why this change was needed.
- Share your story with your University communications team and with CRS! ([university@crs.org](mailto:university@crs.org)).
- Post on your social media accounts and tag @crsuniversity.

## LABOR TRAFFICKING

### 1. Learn About the Issue

Often hidden in tenement style makeshift factories, on dangerous construction sites, in illegal mines or on large plantations, millions of people are forced to work in dangerous, inhumane conditions with little to no compensation.

According to the International Labor Organization, 24.9 million people are estimated to be in forced labor.<sup>1</sup> This number does not include the millions more who are underpaid, exploited, or working dangerous conditions. At CRS, we work to increase vulnerable people's access to livelihoods and income so they have opportunities to receive fair pay. Here in the US, we can support fair supply chains and create demand for products produced without slave labor or exploitation.

WATCH:

- [Power Behind Your Purchase \[CRS VIDEO\]](#)

READ:

- [CRS Faculty Learning Commons: Complexities of Labor Trafficking](#), especially the following links and articles within this platform:
  - [All Your Clothes Are Made with Exploited Labor](#)
  - [Farmworker Protections and Labor Conditions in Brazil's Coffee Sector](#)
  - [Slavery Footprint](#)

### 2. Examine What is Happening on Your Campus

Think about the purchasing decisions that are made daily on your campus. From cleaning supplies to food to computer parts to the shirt on your back, thousands of people are making these products, and it's possible that some are victims of forced, exploitative labor practices. The following are some helpful tips as you begin exploring how your college or university can make a more positive impact on workers and root human trafficking out of the supply chains of the products purchased on campus.

- All universities structure how decisions are made about purchasing differently. Find out who the decision makers are. There may be different decision makers in different areas: catering and dining, athletics, equipment, and other supplies may all be purchased by different procurement teams. Set up initial meetings with key decision makers to find out how they make choices about what to purchase and what some of the most-purchased items on campus are so that you can do some research into the supply chains of those items.
- Start with something that you have more access to or control over. Do the offices you work most closely with (i.e. campus ministry, center for service and justice, your academic department, etc.) purchase t-shirts, coffee or chocolate? Are these items purchased from an ethical company?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

- Learn more about your university’s mission statement. If you attend a Catholic university, you can make clear connections to Catholic identity and the importance of the dignity of all workers. Other universities likely also include elements of being global leaders and ethical citizens, which you can draw on in your conversations with key decision makers. You can frame the conversations around helping the institution to better live its mission.
- Identify others on campus who are passionate about human trafficking and ask for their support.
- As you learn about the companies and products that your campus sources, do some research to see if they have any policies or guidelines on protecting against human trafficking in their supply chains.
- Identify those who might be resistant to changing their purchasing decisions, and brainstorm what information would appeal to their needs and priorities. How could their self-interest be taken into account?

### 3. Offer Possible Alternatives and Solutions

As you investigate, you will likely realize how complex supply chains can be, but you can act and turn a “cause” into a “solution.” Advocating for change beyond your personal purchasing decisions helps your entire institution to be a force for good and magnifies your impact. If you find that there are opportunities on campus to transform your purchasing, you can start organizing students, faculty, and staff on campus who care about ethical trade and the University’s impact on human trafficking to advocate for changes in University purchasing policies and procedures.

Once you have some initial information about your campus’s purchasing decisions, you can follow up with various decision makers to ask them to consider more ethical purchasing.

#### Tips for your conversations:

- With catering/dining services:
  - a. Ask if they provide any fair-trade food or drink options for students on campus.
  - b. Be prepared to share what you learned in the “Learn about the issue” section above so that it’s clear why you care. Many of the companies below include stories on their websites about the people who produce their products, which may be helpful to share as well.
  - c. Ask if they would consider sourcing products from ethical companies to ensure that there is no human trafficking in the supply chain. See below for some recommendations.
- With institutional purchasing:
  - a. Ask if they evaluate current suppliers for their social and environmental practices. The [Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council](#) has some great tools to do this.
  - b. Ask if they require suppliers to sign and adhere to a Suppliers Code of Conduct. Check out this [Code of Conduct](#) developed by the United Nations as an example.
  - c. Be prepared to share what you learned in the “Learn about the issue” section above so that it’s clear why you care. Many of the companies below include stories on their websites about the people who produce their products, which may be helpful to share as well.

- d. Ask if they would consider sourcing products from ethical companies and establishing policies around protection of producers to ensure that there is no human trafficking in the supply chain. See below for some recommendations.
- With the bookstore/athletics:
    - a. Ask where your branded merchandise comes from (T-shirts, hoodies, water bottles, etc). Are these produced ethically?
    - b. Be prepared to share what you learned in the “Learn about the issue” section above so that it’s clear why you care. Many of the companies below include stories on their websites about the people who produce their products, which may be helpful to share as well.
    - c. Ask if they would consider sourcing products from ethical companies to ensure that there is no human trafficking in the supply chain. See below for some recommendations.

**Alternative companies to offer:**

- [Ethix Merch](#) – an ethical source of promotional items made in the USA, in fair trade factories, paying people a living wage, and/or with the environment in mind. This is a good option for branded materials or products you want to design yourself with your school logo.
- [GOEX](#) – a company that creates living wage jobs in Haiti and the US to support employees in caring for their families. This is a good way to address the lack of income that creates vulnerability for children to be placed in orphanages.
- [CRS Ethical Trade Purchasing Guide](#) – this site provides a couple of options for ethical purchasing of coffee, tea, apparel, and more.

**On-Campus Advocacy Ideas:**

- Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor of your campus paper
- Petitions
- Ongoing meetings with key decision makers
- Networking with other CRS Student Ambassadors at other campuses

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<sup>i</sup> Orphanage Entrepreneurs: The Trafficking of Haiti’s Invisible Children