

## The A21 Campaign “21 Cities” Project

The A21 Campaign is a global non-profit. Since 2008, A21 has worked to abolish slavery throughout the world. Sexual exploitation and trafficking, forced slave labor, bonded labor, involuntary domestic servitude, and child soldiery are increasing threats to vulnerable communities. A21’s mission is "to abolish slavery everywhere, forever," using their unique approach “Reach – Rescue – Restore.”

Although A21 has 18 locations in 13 countries, many American youths are not aware of the magnitude of human trafficking in the U.S. Often human trafficking is believed to be something that takes place only in third world communities. With the creation of the outlined strategic communication campaign, “21 Cities” will reach younger generations like they never have before and encourage young citizens to act in their communities.

"21 Cities" is a grant program for students in the U.S. Any student enrolled in high school or college is eligible to submit a 30 second to 1 minute video addressing the rising threat of human trafficking in A21's outlined “21 U.S. Cities Plagued by Human Trafficking” study. The five winners of the competition will receive a \$2,100 grant, recognition on A21 and affiliate media sites, and free admittance to any A21 event for a year.

The outlined campaign strategy addresses how "21 Cities" will allow A21 to gain increased recognition in the U.S., promote youth education advancement, and create awareness of the rising danger of human trafficking in the U.S.

### Research

Through extensive research strategies, A21 will reach the youth community to measure the perception of human trafficking and gain awareness on potential campaign engagement.

- I. Social Media Survey: A21 will employ the quantitative survey research method, allowing A21 to gather real-time information from a young audience. The survey will be exclusively on Instagram and Facebook. Facebook carousel ads will display the A21 “21 Cities” campaign information with a short survey to unlock the submission requirements. A21 will also post Instagram stories with voting buttons, allowing viewers to inform A21 of their opinion quickly. This social media-based survey method is critical to connecting with younger generations, as 18 to 24-year-olds makeup 22.8%<sup>1</sup> of all Instagram users. Shocking statistics state that “11% of U.S. parents say their 9 – 11-year-olds use Instagram,”<sup>2</sup> implying that increasingly younger audiences are using social media.
- II. School Focus Groups: A21 consistently visits schools worldwide, informing students on the dangers of human trafficking. However, A21 will now conduct focus groups at U.S. high schools and universities to determine what students know about human trafficking

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<sup>1</sup> Tankovska, H. “Instagram user share in the United States 2021, by age group.” Statista (2021).

<sup>2</sup> Sehl, Katie. “Instagram Demographics in 2021: Important User Stats for Marketers” Hootsuite (2021).

and how likely they are to get involved with the “21 cities” campaign. This quantitative research approach will allow for a more in-depth awareness of students' mindset and their potential involvement in future A21 advocacy programs.

### Situation analysis

In 2000, U.S. Congress passed the first legislation addressing human trafficking.<sup>3</sup> Due to the newness of laws surrounding human trafficking, there is still little awareness of the crisis. Further examination shows that due to the secretive nature of the crime, the public is vastly unaware of the extent of human trafficking in the U.S. This proposes potential backlash from those who view A21's efforts as less important than other social work issues.

Another potential problem for A21 is the subject matter itself. Adults may receive human trafficking as inappropriate for young listeners, and parents may have issues with their children researching such a bleak subject matter.

A21 has an opportunity with the “21 Cities” campaign to change the narrative on human trafficking. The horrific nature of the crime only proves it should not be left avoided, especially by youth that are the primary age group at risk of being trafficked. The “21 Cities” campaign allows submission participants to learn by their own research, create open dialogs with parents, and grasp a better understanding of possible threats.

### Objectives

#### I. Generate A21 Participation

A21 has a certified high school program called "Bodies are Not Commodities" to inform and educate youth on threats of human trafficking. Through the "21 Cities" campaign, A21 hopes to increase students' active participation in helping thwart human trafficking. This motivational objective is critical to the growth of A21 by ensuring younger generations are engaged in volunteer efforts.

#### II. Inform to Protect

Illuminating the real and present threat of human trafficking to students is critical. Without the knowledge of potential human trafficking situations, students cannot defend themselves against potential abusers. This informational objective is vital to the safety of youth in the U.S. and the growth of A21. A21 cannot operate without the support and efforts of younger generations.

### Programming

The A21 "21 Cities" campaign target audiences are Millennials and Gen Z U.S. students. This latent public group has the potential and drive for involvement, especially in the current political and social climates in the U.S. Proactive messaging will propagate the concept of human

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<sup>3</sup> Steverson, Leonard A. “Human trafficking” Britannica (2021).

trafficking to the target audience while promoting A21 as a credible and necessary organization.

- I. Media and Publicity: According to *Digital Information World*, people aged 16 to 24 spend the most time on social media – 3 hours and 1 minute daily.<sup>4</sup> The A21 "21 Cities" campaign will focus on primarily marketing on social media to attract the target audience's attention. Some other ways to highlight A21 are as follows:
  - Reach out to activist bloggers to promote A21.
  - Collaborate with sponsors and affiliates to generate community viewpoints and media influences.
  - Publish Op-Eds from leading advocates in anti-human trafficking.
  - Extend an invitation to celebrity involvement to raise media attention.
  - Make a portion of the "21 Cities" winner selection based on social media voting.
  - Create a hashtag for competitors to promote their "21 Cities" video and A21.
- II. Crowdsourcing: Allowing the public to create their content is an effective way to generate A21 publicity. Crowdsourcing will spearhead youth creative and active involvement, develop unique and diverse viewpoints from young audiences, and create media buzz for The A21 "21 Cities" campaign.

### Evaluation

The ongoing success of A21 relies on the ability to reach younger generations. The A21 "21 Cities" campaign seeks to improve Millennials and Gen Z students' volunteer involvement and gain notable recognition for A21. The key performance indicators A21 will use are:

- I. Competition Submissions: The objective to generate A21 participation relies on student involvement in the "21 Cities" campaign. Depending on the volume of video submission participants, A21 can assess the potential increase in youth involvement.
- II. Metadata Tag Usage: To enter the "21 Cities" campaign, a candidate must use the hashtag #21Cities when promoting their video content. Since part of the winner selection is based on votes from the public, submission competitors will assumably use #21Cities often to enlist peer votes. This tactic meets the informational objective to promote A21 human trafficking awareness.

### Stewardship

A21 promotes their unique "Reach – Rescue – Restore" model for trafficking victims and all youth in the world. A21's brand stewardship works to empower all youth to get involved in their communities, advance their education, and promote compassion and acceptance. A21 aims to

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<sup>4</sup> Salim, Saima. "How much time do you spend on social media" *Digital Information World* (2019).

practice ongoing stewardship with “21 Cities” winners, submission participants, sponsors, and partners.

- Winners will receive a \$2,100 grant and recognition across all A21 platforms.
- A21 will continue the relationship with schools for possible future partnerships and events.
- A21 will add all submission participants to a monthly newsletter informing them of volunteer opportunities, potential scholarships, and future events and competitions.
- All submission participants will have their content featured in a “21 Cities” promotional video reel on all A21 platforms.

The A21 mission “to abolish slavery everywhere, forever” is a long and tiresome crusade. However, with the support from volunteers, partners, sponsors, and supporters, A21 will impact the lives of so many. The “21 Cities” campaign will further the A21 mission while igniting youth creativity and involvement, generating unique, age-driven perspectives, and promoting positive marketing for the A21 brand.

### **Works Cited**

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4. Salim, Saima. “How much time do you spend on social media” *Digital Information World* (2019). <https://www.digitalinformationworld.com/2019/01/how-much-time-do-people-spend-social-media-infographic.html>