

Google donating \$11.5M to fight modern slavery

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(AP) -- Tech giant Google announced Wednesday it is donating \$11.5 million to several coalitions fighting to end the modern-day slavery of some 27 million people around the world.

In what is believed to be the largest-ever corporate grant devoted to the advocacy, intervention and rescue of people being held, forced to work or provide sex against their will, Google said it chose organizations with proven records in combating slavery.

"Many people are surprised to learn there are more people trapped in slavery today than any time in history," said Jacqueline Fuller, director of charitable giving and advocacy for Google. "The good news is that there are solutions."

The Washington-based International Justice Mission, a human rights organization that works globally to rescue victims of slavery and [sexual exploitation](#), was chosen by Google to lead the efforts.

It will partner with Polaris Project and Slavery Footprint and a handful of smaller organizations for the multi-year effort to rescue the enslaved, push for better [infrastructure](#) and resources for anti-slavery enforcement agencies overseas, as well as raise awareness here in the United States and help countries draft anti-slavery legislation.

"Each year we focus some of our annual giving on meeting direct human need," Fuller said. "Google chose to spotlight the issue of slavery this

year because there is nothing more fundamental than freedom."

Gary A. Haugen, president of the International Justice Mission, said the coalition would focus on three initiatives: A \$3.5 million intervention project to fight forced labor in India; a \$4.5 million advocacy campaign in India to educate and protect the vulnerable; and a \$1.8 million plan to mobilize Americans on behalf of the millions currently at risk of slavery or waiting for rescue around the world.

The remaining \$1.7 million will go to several smaller organizations working to combat slavery.

"It's hard for most Americans to believe that slavery and human trafficking are still massive problems in our world," said Haugen.

"Google's support now makes it possible for IJM to join forces with two other leading organizations so we can bring to bear our unique strengths in a united front."

Those leading the U.S. efforts will meet in Washington on Wednesday to kick off the joint initiative. The project will focus on improved legislation to protect vulnerable children and adults in the United States, as well as a push for more accountability and transparency in the U.S. supply chain by retailers and manufacturers to make sure their products are "slave-free."

The trafficking of women for the sex trade is common in big American cities. Some illegal immigrants find themselves forced to work in sweatshops, in private homes as domestic servants or on farms without pay under the threat of deportation.

The new effort will launch new initiatives that ordinary Americans can take to help abolish modern-day slavery, such as understanding how their own clothing or smartphones might contain fabrics or components

manufactured by forced labor.

"Whether it's by calling the national human trafficking hotline, sending a letter to their senator, or using online advocacy tools, millions of Americans will be able to use their voices to ensure that ending this problem becomes a top priority," said Bradley Myles, executive director of Polaris Project.

Google.org - the philanthropy arm of the Silicon Valley firm - announced the anti-slavery effort as part of its \$40 million in end-of-year giving that brings its charitable donations to more than \$100 million in 2011. The grants will also support science, technology, engineering and math education; girls' education in the developing world; and the use of technology for social good.

Justin Dillon, the founder of Slavery Footprint, said the Google grant would allow the movement to move from "anecdote and emotion," to tangible action that could make a dent in history.

"Having a company like [Google](#) recognize the value of our work marks a major turning point for the anti-slavery movement," said Dillon, whose nonprofit gives consumers some tools to determine whether slaves were used in the making of their goods and teaches them to use social media to sound off about slavery and engage with corporations about their supply chains.

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