CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA
26 November 2015, The Royal Palace, Stockholm, Sweden
Initiated in 2009 by Their Majesties King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden, the Global Child Forum is an international, independent platform for research, dialogue, information and action in support of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a multi-stakeholder platform, the Global Child Forum brings together businesses, governments, academia and leaders of civil society, facilitating informed dialogue and thought leadership on issues facing children worldwide. The organisation showcases best practice and case studies from all over the world relating to pioneering ways of achieving and expanding cooperation across sectors with the goal of inspiring action and tangible results in the implementation of children’s rights.

At Global Child Forum, we want to inspire business to see children differently – as key stakeholders, everyday consumers, future employees and leaders. We want businesses to view their engagement with children’s issues not only as a responsibility, but also as an opportunity. The seventh Global Child Forum at the Stockholm Royal Palace identified some ways that business can contribute to the realisation of children’s rights.

In his opening statement, H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf, Honorary Chairman of the Global Child Forum, touched upon the importance of this event for both Global Child Forum and the Swedish Royal Family, saying, “By being here today, you are also making Stockholm and Sweden a centre of knowledge on children’s rights.”

Nearly 400 leaders and decision-makers from the private sector, civil society, academia and government came together at the Stockholm Palace for a day full of dialogue, thought-leadership and action to explore new opportunities that would accelerate children’s rights globally. With a lineup of distinguished speakers and panelists, Global Child Forum set the stage for a day of inspiration and innovation on some of the most pressing challenges facing children today.

Poverty. Exploitation. Conflict. Today, the world is facing unprecedented challenges for our young generation. The refugee crisis is creating a “lost generation” with all told some 30 million children on the move and in situations that are desperately precarious. In his opening remarks at the Forum, Mr Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, spoke of the terrible impact of forced migration on children and explored how our societies can better manage and solve this escalating crisis.

Against the backdrop of this profound crisis, however, there was also a sense of optimism among delegates stemming from the set of new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to transform our world by 2030. Several of the Goals relate directly to children and present opportunities for businesses to work towards their achievement by designing corporate strategies that respect children.

Global Child Forum will continue to work to become a centre of knowledge for children’s rights. With a special focus on the role of the private sector, we strongly believe that all companies, large or small, in all industries, have a significant role to play in advancing children’s rights. This report highlights some of the words, ideas and snapshots from the day’s event. But we also hope that the report serves as an inspiration for what we can achieve together in partnership to advance children’s rights.
9am

p.10 WELCOME
H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf

p.11 OPENING OF THE FORUM
Mr Ulf Kristersson, Chairman, Global Child Forum

p.12 SETTING THE SCENE
Mr Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Ms Hilary Parsons, Public Affairs Manager, Nestlé S.A.
Ms Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, Oxfam International
Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

11am

p.22 ACTIONABLE SESSIONS
1. Paying dividends: Investing in future generations
2. Crossing borders: Multi-sectoral solutions to refugee crises
3. Putting the Sustainable Development Goals to work: Integrating the goals into your corporate model
4. Responsible marketing to children

1:45pm

p.30 CHILDREN’S RIGHTS WITH THE Excellence awarded to
H.E. Dr Shaikha Al Maskari, Chairperson, Al Maskari Holding

4pm

p.40 WELCOME BACK – KEYNOTE ADDRESS
H.M. Queen Silvia

p.42 AGENDA 2030 – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD
Ms Sandra Polaski, Deputy Director-General for Policy, International Labour Organization
Ms Carol Batchelor, Director of Division of International Protection, UNHCR
Mr Michael Meehan, Chief Executive, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
H.E. Dr Shaikha Al Maskari, Chairperson, Al Maskari Holding

p.48 INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER
Sir John Holmes, GCVO, KBE, CMG, Chair, International Rescue Committee UK

p.50 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION BY THE GLOBAL CHILD FORUM
Closing remarks

6pm

Networking buffet dinner at the residence of the County Governor of Stockholm
A warm welcome from H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf

It is indeed a great pleasure for me as the Honorary Chairman of the Global Child Forum to welcome you all to the seventh Global Child Forum in Stockholm.

Today we will focus on the opportunities within the business and finance sector to contribute to the advancement of children’s rights.

Our purpose is to make the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child something to count on for children and young people in the future. How can we achieve this? Well, experience shows that we need to collaborate. We need to form creative partnerships between all parts of society. And we need to put children’s rights on the agenda. By doing this we will be able to speed up the necessary actions to improve the situation for children. At previous forums here in Stockholm, in Dubai for the Arab world and in Pretoria for the South African states, we have seen many good examples of cooperation between government, businesses and civil society, all of them leading to substantial and concrete results.

We will hear of more such examples later on today. Looking around this big Hall of State, I see that many of you, new friends and partners from, for instance, Africa and the Middle East, have been able to join us here in Stockholm today. I see also international leaders, and experts from all parts of society representing important institutions from the entire world. And this makes me both happy and proud. By being here today, you are also making Stockholm and Sweden a centre of knowledge on children’s rights.

I would like to encourage you all to take an active part in today’s Forum and to participate and to share your experience. Make this an important day for you and your organisation, for our children and for future generations. I wish you all a warm welcome and the best of luck.

Global Child Forum!

Introduction to the seventh Global Child Forum

Whenever we imagine childhood, we often think of positive images from our own time as a child or times with our own children, or grandchildren. What almost no one in this room thinks back to, however, are the following frightening numbers.

Nearly 170 million children are today forced to work instead of getting an education. Some 30 million children are forced to migrate due to war, violence and persecution, and every tenth child is living in a war- or conflict-affected area. For a sustainable future, we cannot ignore the millions of children whose rights to life, protection, freedom, education and identity are violated.

The children of today will be the parents, leaders, business executives, teachers, investors, politicians and consumers of tomorrow. The future of the world depends on how well we invest in this next generation. Have we done enough? Do we give our future generations a fair chance to build a better world than the one we see today?

All children, and frankly all people, are directly or indirectly affected by business and financial operations. The business community is an untapped resource: capable of supporting and helping to guarantee children’s rights in various ways. That’s why we are gathered here today, to put children’s rights at the heart of the corporate sustainability agenda. Sustainability is not only about environmental protection – it is about protecting the human as well.

Global Child Forum’s vision is that every part of society shall play its part in the protection and support of children’s rights. Businesses and finance, governments, civil society and academia all have a responsibility for the future. Investing in cross-sector partnerships has a particular potential to create real and lasting change – if we can work together.

Global Child Forum is a universal platform to support stakeholders with facts, inspiration and leading examples on how to move forward. Key findings from our various Global Child Forums Corporate Benchmark studies show that those companies who do refer to children’s rights primarily do so regarding child labour. Our studies also reveal that the Children’s Rights and Business Principles launched in 2012 are not widely known or used. They reveal that only around 10 per cent of corporate boards realise that they are accountable for children’s rights issues. The companies that do have child-related activities and policies tend to focus on charity initiatives and brand damage limitation instead of long-term strategies, within their sphere of influence, that have an impact on children’s rights and their futures.

More research is essential, and Global Child Forum will continue to develop tools and best practices to push the sustainability agenda forward. Together with UNICEF, Global Child Forum has recently developed the Children’s Rights and Business Atlas for businesses. A first-of-its-kind online global risk assessment tool. An interactive, data-driven platform enabling companies and financial institutions to realise their significant potential to respect and support children’s rights throughout their business operations and investments. It is also a unique, free and open source of information for NGOs and governments all over the world.

With this unique Children’s Rights and Business Atlas, in the future, no one shall escape accountability by just saying, “We did not know.” Do not forget that what we do to our children today, the children will do to the world tomorrow. Welcome to the Global Child Forum!

“Do we give our future generations a fair chance to build a better world than the one we see today?”
Setting the scene for action

Five speakers set the scene for the 2015 Global Child Forum by examining the most challenging issues facing children today – from the refugee crisis to gender and economic inequality – and how we can effectively take action to overcome them.

In the autumn of 2015, the world was shocked and saddened by the death of a three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned trying to cross the Aegean Sea. This single tragedy represents a wider humanitarian crisis that is just as devastating. As Mr Al Hussein explained, “All told, some 30 million children are on the move today in situations that are desperately precarious.”

This state of affairs isn’t just morally inexcusable, it’s legally indefensible. “International law is clear: all children need and deserve protection. Whether or not they have visas – and whatever the motivations that compelled them to take flight – the rights laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be guaranteed for migrant children, just as they are for all children under the jurisdiction of every state,” said Mr Al Hussein.

Bringing the crisis home

The child migrant crisis isn’t just happening on our watch, it’s on our doorsteps. But often, the way children are treated at places of refuge is just as bad as the places they are trying to escape.

“It is hard to tell what is more intolerable: The suffering and deprivation these children endured in their countries of origin. The fear, and often vicious violence they brave on their journey. Or the lack of humanity so frequently and shockingly displayed by us, their host countries.”

The hidden impact

Of course, the visible suffering a migrant child experiences while travelling or at borders is only half the story. “Irregular migrant children may also be deprived, by law, of their rights to fundamental public services. Their often justified fear of detection and deportation also creates barriers to their access to vital services. As a result, across Europe and in other parts of the world, many children are going unvaccinated, their mental trauma is going untreated, and many child victims of sexual violence are not being cared for in any way.”

“I am also concerned about what happens to migrant and refugee children once they reach 18. From one day to the next, they may be thrown out of government shelters, refused education and training, and deported to countries where they may face danger.”

Our rights, our responsibilities

The detention of children because of their migration status is a violation of child rights. So what is the solution? What can we as individuals and companies do to overcome this urgent challenge? Mr Al Hussein offered this solution:

“The best solution to forced migration is to resolve the human rights violations that compel so many families to leave their homes. All of us can help to support peace and sustainable development, to ensure that children can grow up with hope and dignity where they live – in societies that are respectful of their rights. All of us – in business, in government and as global citizens – can raise our voices to send a positive and principled message on migrants’ rights.”

“Mr Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein speaks of the terrible impact forced migration is having on children, and explores how our societies can better manage and solve the migratory crisis that has escalated sharply in the past year.

Confronting the child migrant crisis with humanity
The UN’s Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights have given companies a much clearer definition of their role in addressing the needs and rights of future generations, a development which Nestlé welcomes.

“As companies, we need to fully recognise that our position in society comes with opportunities and responsibilities, responsibilities that include conducting our business in a way that ensures we respect human rights and that we have a positive impact on the well-being of children.”

Ms Hilary Parsons
Public Affairs Manager, Nestlé S.A.

Speech delivered on behalf of Mr Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Chairman and former CEO of the Nestlé Group

In her address, Nestlé’s Hilary Parsons pointed out that upholding children’s rights isn’t just the right thing to do – it’s good for business.

Transparency creates trust
“For a company, transparency is key to building trust. It is up to us to connect with society and be explicit about what we do and how we go about it.”

This approach manifests in the company’s “Nestlé in Society Report,” which summarises the company’s performance and key challenges – including critical topics such as child labour in the supply chain and the responsible marketing of breast milk substitutes.

Feeding the future
Looking ahead, Nestlé has worked with stakeholders to create 38 commitments to society, 15 of these concern nutrition, and many of these directly concern children. From reducing fat, salt and sugar in products to promoting healthy lifestyles, Nestlé is taking the opportunity to create a healthier future for children. On behalf of Nestlé, Ms Parsons concluded that the opportunity to work together is something that shouldn’t be missed:

“Today’s Forum provides an excellent opportunity for us all to consider how we can improve our collective efforts for children. We have a tremendous opportunity to show commitment and leadership regarding the rights of children.”

Ms Winnie Byanyima
Executive Director, Oxfam International

Putting children’s rights at the heart of business

“Today’s Forum provides an excellent opportunity for us all to consider how we can improve our collective efforts for children.”

Lifting children from poverty: tackle the twin pillars of economic and gender inequality

For the millions of girls and boys living in poverty today, the new Sustainable Development Goals represent a leap of ambition: to eradicate poverty. But is the promise to “leave no one behind” possible? Winnie Byanyima believes it is, but only if we tackle economic and gender inequality together.

Economic inequality or, as Ms Byanyima puts it, “the great social immobilizer,” traps children in a cycle of poverty. Ms Byanyima describes herself as “lucky.” Her father was a schoolteacher and could afford to send her to school.

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The interconnected issues
“Gender inequality is just the start. It is linked to economic inequality. For the hundreds of millions of girls and boys in poverty today, the new SDGs represent a leap of ambition, not to reduce poverty but to eradicate it. That’s exciting. Is the promise of leaving no one behind possible? “We thank yes, but only if we are to tackle the twin pillars of economic inequality and gender inequality.”

Economic inequality or, as Ms Byanyima puts it, “the great social immobilizer,” traps children in a cycle of poverty. Ms Byanyima gave two examples of what she means by enabling children to reduce inequalities and lift children out of poverty.

Quality public services
The first is quality universal public services – particularly health and education – free for all children at the point of use: “These provide the basic capability for children to grow up and be active, productive citizens who can benefit then from economic opportunity,” she said. Ms Byanyima noted that one of the big messages from SDGs is “for companies and governments to work together on development.” Ms Byanyima welcomes this with caution, especially when it comes to public services, or when public finance – taxpayers’ money – is being leveraged by the private sector. “This model of partnership between governments and private sector is too often flawed, and it does not work for the poorest children for whom markets don’t reach.”

To harness the potential of the private sector, Ms Byanyima’s recommendation is this: “We need to move from partnerships, which we’ve been celebrating at the SDG summit, to policies. To have truly sustainable development, we urge businesses to develop, implement, and advocate for policies through their operations, through their supply chains, and through spheres of influence to ensure social impact.”

Fair and progressive taxation
The second enabler to lift children out of poverty is fair and progressive taxation. The poorest children need their governments to have the resources to deliver on basic public services.

“I believe that the biggest contribution that companies can make to children is to pay their fair share of taxes in countries where they work and break this habit of harmful tax competition.”

Ms Byanyima noted the need to go beyond philanthropy and shift the way we think: “Companies and governments have to respect links between fiscal policies, inequality and human rights. This is the way to make progress on children’s rights so then we can get to a point where no child is left behind.”
UNESCO’s Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, believes that education for every child is a critical step in reaching the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. To improve access to education, Ms Bokova highlights the need for innovative partnerships between the public and private sectors.

For Ms Bokova, the right to education is the key to fulfilling the potential of the Global Goals. “I do believe that the beginning of this wonderful journey of implementing the 2030 Agenda should start on the benches of schools.”

To back up this claim, she pointed to the tremendous progress made on the education-related Millennium Development Goals while also emphasising that we still have a long way to go. “We know that still 59 million children remain out of primary school today. Out of these, 32 million are girls. The rate of progress isn’t fast enough, especially for the world’s poorest children. If we have the same pace of progress, the poor girls in the poorest communities in sub-Saharan Africa will get into school in 2086 – so it means 70 years from today. I don’t believe it is an option for us. We have to accelerate this movement.”

Going beyond the classroom
As Ms Bokova explained, the case for investing in education is incredibly strong for humanitarian reasons, as a developmental multiplier and a security imperative. “If all girls had secondary education, there would be 64 per cent fewer early marriages and 59 per cent fewer early pregnancies. If all children left school with basic skills, 170 million could be lifted out of poverty. Each additional year of schooling is associated with 35 per cent higher GDP per capita.”

To properly embrace the transformational potential of education, we have to widen the lens. As Ms Bokova sees it, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal – to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities – is best interpreted as a “new call for inclusive societies.” That means everyone – educators, civil society and the private sector – has a role to play.

Scaling impact
Ms Bokova believes that private companies will play a vitally important role in taking education to the next level. “We see partnerships with the private sector not just as a source of financing but as a source of innovation, of new ideas, creating open platforms, using new technologies, using innovation, investing in skills for young people – this is where the private sector can make a huge difference.”

She outlined UNESCO’s projects with Samsung, as well as partnerships with Procter & Gamble and Ericsson, noting that it is these kinds of partnerships – catalysed by initiatives like the Global Child Forum – that allow businesses to join forces and make their impact reach even further.

The best way for Samsung to contribute to a better global society is by devoting talent and technology to children. “Children are the life of our societies. And as the leaders of today, we must all work together to give a brighter future for our leaders of tomorrow. At Samsung, we are dedicated to this cause. We will do our part helping children to learn and grow. Helping them today so that they may eventually make their own contributions to society.”

Samsung sees the need to collaborate with organisations such as Global Child Forum and UNESCO to bring this commitment to life, and Samsung is excited about what this collaboration will accomplish in the future.

The Samsung Group, founded in 1938, has, like Korea itself, gone through ups and downs. And while today the company has grown into a global leader, they have never forgotten their roots. Mr Kim says, “It is in our very DNA to find a way to support disadvantaged children, helping them overcome their challenges and fulfil their dreams of a better life.”

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The Smart School Initiative
The future of education is about accessing information and collaborating locally and globally. “Smart Schools bring together UNESCO’s expertise in education with Samsung’s innovative technology to create interactive and collaborative learning environments for the next-generation classroom.”

The Samsung Smart School solution is a multimedia alternative to traditional classrooms. The scheme offers schools a converged digital education package that provides schools with interactive e-Boards and Samsung Galaxy Note devices with software for teachers and students. The fully integrated platform allows teachers and students to interact and access data for learning in real-time. The Smart School Initiative is already in operation in Brazil, China, Russia, the US, South Africa and Kenya.

“The future of education is about accessing information and collaborating locally and globally.”
Although many companies are working hard to address child labour issues in their supply chains, research from Global Child Forum shows that just 18 per cent of the world’s largest companies address children’s rights issues other than child labour. At the same time, more and more investors expect companies to ensure they take responsibility for the promotion and protection of children’s rights.

This ActionLab explored how different tools – such as the Children’s Rights Business Principles and Global Reporting Initiatives – could deepen understanding of companies’ impact on children’s rights. It also questioned whether a policy or ‘best practice’ approach would better empower companies to take positive action, and whether there is a lack of knowledge available to support companies in efforts to identify material aspects of children’s rights.

Stakeholders from academia, governments, business and civil society gathered to discuss the best way to improve business’s understanding of children’s rights and therefore embed proactive respect and support of children’s rights into business practices.

Paying dividends – investing in future generations

Moderator
Ms Gabriella Ahlström / Journalist & Author

Expert Hosts
Ms Åse Backström / Managing Director, Global Child Forum
Mr Andrew Mawson / Chief of Children’s Rights and Business, UNICEF
Ms Hanna Roberts / Chief Executive Officer, GES

Contributors
Mr Michael Meehan / Chief Executive, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
Ms Anna Ryott / Chief Executive Officer, Swedfund

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Investors need to identify the level of integration and understanding of children’s rights and incorporate it into their investment-making process.

2. Businesses of all sizes require the support of multi-stakeholder initiatives, which should also complement existing tools. The most helpful kind of support is sector-specific.

3. Civil society organizations can provide much of this understanding – guiding and supporting businesses with their expertise on how children’s rights impact and affect business.

4. Overall, businesses need more thematic and sector-specific understanding, frameworks and guidelines on how their core business impacts children’s rights.
Emergency situations significantly increase risk to children’s rights. The migration crisis is proof of this. Half of the world’s 60 million displaced people are children, increasing the risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking and forced military recruitment – threatening their very survival.

Approximately 100 delegates gathered to share examples of successful cross-sectoral partnerships and discuss how to take action in the short and long term.

As evidence mounts that climate change, loss of livelihood and continued social unrest and conflict mean the current refugee crisis is only the beginning, this ActionLab asked: can the world mobilise to safeguard children – and our collective future?

The outputs of the ActionLab included a set of critical short-term goals for protecting children’s rights and a four-part strategy for tackling the long-term impact of the ongoing migration crisis.

1. The goals: to protect and meet survival and support needs, to provide access to health care, with a focus on survival and ‘health barriers to learning,’ and to offer educational continuity.

2. The four-part strategy: to put out an international ‘call to action,’ to ensure meaningful multi-sector engagement, to plan at scale and to implement aggressive “upstream” interventions to promote peace and stability.

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Putting the sustainable development goals to work for children – integrating the goals into your corporate model

Moderator
Dr Joanna Rubinstein / Senior Advisor, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Expert Host
Ms Charlotte Petri-Gornitzka / Director-General, Sida

Contributors
Mr Björn Gillsäter / Head of Secretariat, Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
Mr Per Heggenes / Chief Executive Officer, IKEA Foundation
Ms Archana Patkar / Programme Manager, The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC)
Ms Kersti Strandqvist / Senior Vice President, Group Function Sustainability, SCA
Ms Sonia C. Velázquez / Executive Director, Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing (ECLT) Foundation

This ActionLab explored new, practical ways that businesses can integrate some or all of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals into their daily practices and long-term strategies.

The Sustainable Development Goals for Agenda 2030 are a critical ingredient to creating a safer, happier, healthier world for children – but we’ll only achieve them with the help of business. The purpose of this ActionLab was to explore the leadership and action required for embedding SDGs into the heart of businesses everywhere.

The delegates in this ActionLab heard from a collection of thought leaders in this field, sharing their different perspectives. The presentations ranged from outlining key success factors of cross-sectoral partnerships and the monitoring thereof, to the need of integration of CSR across everything a company does to how the SDGs provide a more focused agenda addressing the root causes of child labour. Following these opening speeches, the delegates were given the following challenge: in what ways can business play a key role in ensuring the new goals are met, especially the ones that have an impact on children’s rights?

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1. Go local. There is a need to bring more “on the ground” businesses into the mix. Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) understand their local market and can effect change faster.

2. Larger businesses should physically travel along their value chain and visit their suppliers and partners in the places where they operate.

3. Hire women. Not only are women proven to be a good long-term investment for business, but when they have employment, it has a hugely positive knock-on effect for children and families.
Is any marketing to children ethical? What are the relationships between advertising and healthy, well-developed children? What roles do the state, civil society and business have in monitoring, assessing and regulating these issues?

In ActionLab 4, delegates explored how states and the corporate sector can ensure their communication and marketing approaches are designed in a way that is right for children.

**Responsible marketing to children**

**Moderator**
Prof. Brian Ganson / Head, Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement, University of Stellenbosch Business School

**Expert Host**
Dr Mark Boutros / Managing Partner, Kreab

**Contributors**
Dr Kevin Franklin / Chief Operating Officer, Verisk Maplecroft
Ms Anne Larilahti / Vice President and Head of Sustainability Strategy, TeliaSonera
Ms Johanna von Bahr / Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Political Science, Stockholm University
Mr Johan Öberg / Senior Partner and Managing Director, The Boston Consulting Group Sweden

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

1. **Make better use of the power of globalisation.** Big businesses have a huge reach and can use it to spread a global standard in advertising to children and make sure SMEs around the world understand and implement best practice in their communication strategies.

2. **Review both process and product.** It’s not enough just to monitor the messaging in marketing to children, we also must consider how the marketing is developed and across which channels it is spread.

3. **Understand the gap between the digital world and the ‘real world.’** It is important that businesses and regulation appreciate the speed at which the digital world operates, and understand that children and young people have very different expectations about the role of digital marketing in their lives.

4. **Respect children’s perspective and choice.** If we know more about how children want to be educated and entertained, we’ll be better able to empower them to make informed choices about the products and services they consume.

**Businesses make money by selling to children.** This ActionLab explored how states and companies ensure that their communication and marketing approaches are conducted in the best interest of the child.

Is any marketing to children ethical? What are the relationships between advertising and healthy, well-developed children? What roles do the state, civil society and business have in monitoring, assessing and regulating these issues?

In ActionLab 4, delegates explored how states and the corporate sector can ensure their communication and marketing approaches are designed in a way that is right for children.
The 2015 Global Child Forum was held just one week after the 26th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – the most widely ratified human rights treaty of all time. Ms Yoka Brandt believes we have much to celebrate as a result of this landmark convention. “Compared to 25 years ago, children are far more likely to go to primary school. The under-five mortality rate has dropped by nearly 50 per cent. And more children benefit from access to safe water, sanitation and nutrition.”

However, these achievements must not obscure the fact that millions of children around the world are not yet living better lives. “The children caught in the crossfire of brutal, protracted conflicts. The children that see their hopes of an education and a future evaporate. The children made to flee far from their homes, making the dangerous, heartbreaking journey to safety.”

Good or bad: business has an impact
Ms Brandt believes that the corporate world can help reach the millions of children who are currently left behind. However, she warns that businesses have the potential to make both a positive and negative impact on children, drawing attention to issues such as child labour in the supply chain, treatment of employees and their families and the marketing of products. UNICEF is working with over 60 companies around the world to make sure corporate impact is as positive as possible. Together with UN Global Compact and Save the Children, they have created the Children’s Rights and Business Principles, which exist to give businesses a clear idea of where and how they might impact children. Ms Brandt also would like to see businesses be more proactive in their approach to children’s rights issues. For example, “Companies can use the relationships they have through global supply chains to improve the lives of children. And they can influence governments, consumers and other enterprises, making a huge contribution to finding solutions to societal problems.”

Protecting children, protecting the future
Although Ms Brandt emphasised the moral imperative for improving children’s rights, she’s also focused on the business case for action. Investing in children’s rights, for example, can enhance reputation and increase workforce motivation. Ms Brandt also pointed out, “When we invest in children’s rights, we’re also investing in workforces and innovators who will drive our countries’ businesses and economies forward.”

The private sector can play – indeed, has played – an important role in improving not only children’s futures, but through them in improving the futures of their communities and economies, too.”

As we celebrate the hugely positive impact of 26 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we must also remember that millions of children are still being left behind. UNICEF’s Yoka Brandt believes that, through investment, commitment and action, businesses will play a critical role in reaching those millions.
**Ensuring the positive impact of business**

Stora Enso, a global pulp and paper producer, learned the hard way the impact children’s rights can have on business. Mr Karl-Henrik Sundström, CEO, shares his experience of leading the company on a challenging but rewarding journey to better business practices.

**Learning from mistakes**

Today, Stora Enso is working hard to reduce risk and rebuild trust by improving its impact across the value chain. The company now has a new approach to working with children’s rights issues: “It’s all about a sustainable, systematic management approach. It starts with three basic pillars: trust, transparency and competence.”

This approach has also affected the business structure: “We have internally rearranged the governance structure, making sure that there are sustainability responsible persons at every level, including the management team.”

To close, Mr Sundström emphasised this key learning: “Employees want to work in a company they feel proud of and that has the right values. And suppliers and customers want to be with somebody who shares their high values.”

Further reading

From Promise to Performance, Stora Enso’s Journey towards Mitigating Child Labour by the Global Child Forum. Available at globalchildforum.org.

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**The Sustainable Development Goals represent a transformative agenda for change.**

However, they are just the beginning. We now need to live up to the promises set out in the SDGs. Plan International’s CEO explains that, while doing the right thing might not be easy, it will lead to a better world for all.

**Which side of history will you be on?**

Ms Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen

Chief Executive Officer, Plan International

Ms Albrectsen opened her address with a quote from Oscar Wilde: “When the gods want to punish us, they answer our prayers.”

She was referring to the hold and transformative agenda for change that the Sustainable Development Goals represent and how, “we now have the excruciatingly punishing task of ensuring that we all change ourselves.”

Why will the road ahead be punishing? “The power structures underpinning our societies, our economies and our communities will have to change,” explained Ms Albrectsen. “So the question is: which side of history will you be on? What change will you make? What change will I make?”

Conscious choices

Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen once said, “Equal consideration for all demands unequal consideration in favour of the most disadvantaged.” For Ms Albrectsen this means “We must now make a conscious choice and stand for all children’s rights through a focus on girls and other disadvantaged children.”

One way to deliver that fairness is through good business behaviour, such as paying corporate taxes, which generates domestic revenue and ensures that the marginalised have access to improved services.

**Partnerships create progress**

Ignoring children’s rights issues is a risky practice. Many businesses have suffered as a result of their inactivity or ignorance in this regard. “Investing in children’s rights is good for business.”

“Plan International, over the past five to ten years, has seen partnerships with the private sector on children’s rights grow exponentially. In the 70 countries where we work today, we have over 500 corporate partnerships. We partner with Ericsson on girls’ education in Indian slums, with Kesko to create a fishing industry in Asia free of exploitative child labour, and with Accenture to develop digital birth registration to help ensure all children are counted and have access to their rights.”

Bigger, bolder and braver

Despite this progress, Ms Albrectsen is firm in her call for “bigger and bolder steps.” To get close to achieving the SDGs, she wants to see partnerships that are more ambitious, that multiply, and that grow faster. “That means companies need to go beyond bottom line and risk management and “embrace the fact that a world where rights are upheld, where the planet is protected and where rule of law actually rules is a better world for all. For example, ‘If we invest in girls’ education, each additional year of schooling boosts long-term growth by 0.58 percentage points per year.’”

At the same time, Ms Albrectsen recognises that “must partnerships between civil society and companies take many years to develop.” Her solution? A courageous approach to transparency, accountability and innovation. While admitting failure is difficult, transparency creates credibility and can fast-track strong partnerships. The same is true of accountability: “We need to dare to give children and young people the tools and technology to hold all of us accountable.”

She concluded: “I look forward to working with all of you at keeping our promises and leaving no one behind.”

Further reading

Plan International’s annual State of the World’s Girls Report. Available at: plan-international.org
Let your food be your medicine

Dr Gunhild A. Stordalen
Founder and Director, EAT Initiative

With climate change and the rise in chronic diseases such as cancer and type two diabetes, our health and the health of our planet look uncertain. So what is the solution to creating a healthy, sustainable future for children? As Dr Stordalen put it: you ate it for lunch.

In its present form, the global food system creates havoc with both the environment and our health. Responsible for 30 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions – almost half coming from the livestock sector alone – the food system is the biggest driver of deforestation, biodiversity loss and the depletion of our marine ecosystems. What’s more, diet-related chronic diseases such as heart disease and type two diabetes have overtaken infections like AIDS and malaria as the world’s biggest killers.

“We can’t successfully tackle climate change without getting it right with food, nor can we ensure a sustainable healthy future for our children,” according to Dr Stordalen.

“In just one generation, the world’s diet has changed from plant-based, locally sourced fresh food cooked at home to meat-based, sugar-coated and often processed food eaten on the run.”

However, Dr Stordalen believes that this radical change in our eating patterns and the food system could also represent our greatest opportunity. We have the power to start eating the world and ourselves healthy tonight.

Getting food production right

As a first step, she urged scientific collaboration across disciplines in order to "better define diets and food production systems that are good for us, good for the planet and good for those who produce food." Politicians are also vital. Dr Stordalen appealed for politicians to act on existing evidence, saying they must “dare to back ambitious goals with even bolder regulations.”

And businesses, too, need to become part of the solution. “The industry has a major role to play in inventing, reformulating and marketing healthy, sustainable, affordable and, of course, palatable food for modern families.”

Dr Stordalen also advocated early education. “The curriculum must teach children about what makes them healthier, smarter, more energetic, and about the environmental footprint their food choices leave behind. And then the children’s homework will be to take their lessons back to their families.”

The new vaccine

In a society where our response is to treat, repair or adapt to climate damage, Dr Stordalen urged a shift to prevention. “Wherever possible, prevention of diseases and prevention of environmental damage is not only more attractive and effective, but more efficient.”

Dr Stordalen concluded her speech on an optimistic note: “Many of the solutions to our health and environmental problems are right in front of us. You had it for lunch. It’s on your plate. Healthy and sustainable food is the vaccine 2.0, and fixing the broken global food system is probably the closest we will get to a silver bullet to simultaneously improve the health of people and the planet.”

Due to population growth, by 2050, food production will have to increase by 70% of global greenhouse gases accounted for by the global food system.

“We can't successfully tackle climate change without getting it right for food, nor can we ensure a sustainable healthy future for our children.”

Inspirational speaker
Norges Bank Investment Management is the manager of the Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund. Its responsible investment strategy outlines six distinct focus areas – one of which is children’s rights. As Mr Johnsen explained, focusing on this issue makes sense for two reasons: first, “children’s rights are important for the overall legitimacy of the markets we invest in,” and second, “respecting children’s rights is part of good risk management and business operation.”

In other words, not only are children’s rights an essential ingredient to a thriving modern market, they’re also a good indication of a well-run business.

Raising the bar for companies
Since 2008, Norges Bank has elevated children’s rights through its Expectation Document, which outlines the ways in which the bank expects companies to respect children’s rights.

Mr Johnsen revealed exciting news about the bank’s progress: “I am happy to announce that we are today publishing a revised version of our Children’s Rights Expectation Document.”

The revised Expectation Document has a new focus on governance. “It is the responsibility of the board to ensure that the company has a policy to respect children’s rights and that relevant measures are integrated in company strategy, risk management and reporting of the company.”

As for the future, Mr Johnsen concluded: “We do believe we have a role to play, and we are committed to continuing our efforts.”

The Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund
Norges Bank manages the Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund, which is formally owned by the Ministry of Finance. The bank’s task is to achieve the highest return over time within limits set by the Ministry.

- The Fund is worth more than 7,000 billion kroner.
- It invests in 9,000 companies and 50 governments.
- It is committed to not spending more than its real return over time, giving it a uniquely long-term approach to risks and returns.

Further reading
Norges Bank Human Rights Expectations Towards Companies
- available at nbim.no/en
Child labour in the Indian Cottonseed sector
Child labour in the West African cocoa sector
- available at ilpi.org

“Not only are children’s rights an essential ingredient to a thriving modern market, they’re also a good indication of a well-run business.”
Global Child Forum and RobecoSAM launch the first thematic investment fund focusing on children’s rights

Mr Mats Andersson  
Chief Executive Officer, Fourth Swedish National Pension Fund

Mr Michael Baldinger  
Chief Executive Officer, RobecoSAM

Ms Åse Bäckström  
Managing Director, Global Child Forum

The RobecoSAM Global Child Impact Equities Fund – a fund investing only in companies focusing on children’s rights – was launched during the Forum as a collaboration between Global Child Forum and RobecoSAM. It is the first fund that enables investors to contribute to the well-being of future generations.

The Fund offers investors a portfolio of companies that are 

leading the way in terms of supporting children’s rights. It is 
suitable for investors who wish to make a positive societal impact 
in areas related to children’s rights and welfare.

The RobecoSAM Global Child Impact Equities Fund is 
based on proprietary sustainability data from the RobecoSAM 
Corporate Sustainability Assessment and is supported by 
input from the Global Child Forum’s Benchmark, which scores 
companies based on their performance on a range of sustainability 
and key child-related criteria. A portfolio of about 40-60 stocks of 
companies that excel in protecting children’s rights and 

promoting children’s welfare while exhibiting strong business 
fundamentals and trading below fair value has been developed.

As the Fund develops, it will continue to integrate data from 
the Global Child Forum Benchmark into the investment process, 
and work will be done to further enhance the Fund’s purpose 
and performance. The ambition is also to include even more 
criteria focusing on children’s rights into the RobecoSAM 
Corporate Sustainability Assessment.

Ms Åse Bäckström, Managing Director of Global Child Forum said “Investors have a lot of influence in today’s world affairs and 
this new fund gives them an attractive opportunity to contribute 
to the well-being of children. Those who invest in companies 
that lead in supporting children’s rights take to heart the spirit 
of sustainable investing by safeguarding the needs of future 
generations.”

Mr Michael Baldinger, CEO of RobecoSAM, noted, “I am 
personally very proud that RobecoSAM has developed an 
investment product that gives investors a way to shape the 

world and make it a better place for future generations.”

The Global Child Impact Equities Fund is supported by 
an initial investment from The Fourth Swedish National Pension 
Fund (AP4) and will report quarterly on the impact of the 
portfolio with regards to children’s rights. It is available via 
RobecoSAM and Nordnet Bank AB (nordnet.se).

The Global Child Forum and UNICEF launch the Children’s Rights and Business Atlas

Mr Andrés Franco  
Deputy Director for Private Sector Engagement, 
Private Fundraising and Partnership Division, UNICEF

Dr Fiona Rotberg  
Research Director, Global Child Forum

Comments by Greg Priest, Head of Sustainability Policy, IKEA Group

Global Child Forum and UNICEF introduced the Children’s Rights and Business Atlas, a data-driven platform for companies 
endeavouring to support children’s rights.

One of the challenges that prevents many companies from being 
more proactive with respect to supporting children’s rights is a 
lack of knowledge and understanding as to the material impact 
their decisions have on children.

The Children’s Rights and Business Atlas is the first 
comprehensive resource to guide companies in assessing risks 
to children within industry sectors and regions of operation.

Children’s Rights and Business Atlas

The Children’s Rights and Business Atlas is the only risk 
assessment tool on the Internet that allows users to analyse and 
interpret complex data sets relating to children’s rights in an 
intuitive way.

The Atlas measures risk, the state protection of children’s 
rights, and the industry respect and support for children’s rights. 

It highlights areas for positive and proactive change around 
children’s rights.

Through its indices, interactive maps and country scorecards, 
the Atlas provides a quantitative assessment on the degree 

to which children’s rights are protected within 198 countries 
and across 10 industries.

The Atlas is built on the Children’s Rights and Business 
Principles – a 10-point checklist for corporations that 
endeavour to respect and support children’s rights. 

Available at childrensrightsatlas.org.

“The Children’s Rights 
and Business Atlas guides 
companies to identify, 
assess and monitor the 
risks their operations 
pose to children’s rights.”

Dr Fiona Rotberg, Research Director, 
Global Child Forum
The Swedish Prime Minister began by asking those present to cast their minds back to childhood. ‘Do you remember being frustrated when you were a child? I guess we remember all the fun, we remember our friends, sometimes also the fights we had. But I am convinced that at times, we felt frustrated. For example, when we realised that most of the decisions affecting our lives were made by adults. We often felt completely powerless and that is why having rights is so essential.’

He reminded Forum participants of the importance of looking at the world through a child’s eyes, because only then can adults understand how to create a society children can thrive in. This outlook is crucial for investors and enterprises and can lead to new conclusions.

‘Abolishing child labour and ensuring that children are protected from harmful products and harmful environments can only be seen as a beginning. To respect children’s rights, we must also respect parents’ needs. ‘So when employers pay a living wage, offer good working conditions and provide proper and paid parental leave to both mothers and fathers, children will also benefit.’

Good business is essential to good societies

Children are not only dependent on their parents but also the whole society. ‘When companies pay their fair share of taxes, what they are really doing is investing – investing in schools, health care and social security for future generations.’

‘When companies question gender stereotypes, for example in advertising or recruiting, what they are really doing is respecting all children – both boys’ and girls’ – ambitions and dreams to be whatever they want to be. ‘And when companies secure modern and sustainable production and transport, what they are really doing is securing our children’s future.’

Taking action together

For these reasons, enterprises, unions, organisations and governments must take action together. The Children’s Rights and Business Principles established in 2012 set clear goals, and tools such as the Children’s Rights and Business Atlas, launched by Global Child Forum and UNICEF, will help us to reach those goals. Prime Minister Löfven closed his remarks with a powerful personal call to action: ‘If we work together to strengthen children’s rights, supporting parents and building sustainable societies, the results can be amazing.

‘I know, because I am the product of such efforts. I came to my family as a foster child when I was about 10 months old. I had nothing. But thanks to loving, supporting parents, but also a caring and supporting society, I received opportunities that have led me to achieve more than I could have dreamed of: Independence. Education. And the privilege of working with you all, so that those opportunities that were given to me will also be given to others.’

In this keynote address, Mr Stefan Löfven shares his belief that, if we approach children’s rights as a societal challenge, we will have what it takes to create a better world.

“Creating a world of change for children”

Mr Stefan Löfven
Prime Minister of Sweden

“When companies pay their fair share of taxes, what they are really doing is investing – investing in schools, health care and social security for future generations.”
Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals is an essential building block in creating a brighter future for children. Ms Polaski described that future as one, “where children are in school, and where adults have access to quality jobs and decent wages to support and invest in the future of their children.” However, getting to that point will not be straightforward.

“To achieve these goals will be an even bigger challenge than the Millennium Development Goals. The very good news is we’re starting from a better place.”

Since 2000, the number of children in child labour has decreased from around 250 million to around 160 million in 2012, a major achievement given the complex nature of child labour. In addition, the number of children – especially girls – attending school has increased. There is, however, some less encouraging news.

“Millions of children are still forced to work in hazardous environments in various forms of child labour. About 86 million boys and girls, almost half of all child labourers, toil in conditions that are detrimental to their health, their safety or morals.” Ms Polaski pointed out that, “If we only keep up the current pace of reduction, there will still be 100 million child labourers in 2025.”

The role of business
How then to best accelerate the speed of positive change? Ms Polaski offered several solutions.

“It requires strong public policies, many of which are now well-tested and proven, and shifting business practices towards long-term engagement with communities where child labour is prevalent. Business has to be a part of the solution.

“The private sector can also help governments to play their role by advocating and supporting public policies that address the socio-economic root causes of childhood labour.”

In addition, “Policies financed through tax revenue should be welcomed by the private sector as an investment in future generations and the workforce and consumers of tomorrow.”

An alliance
Protecting every child’s rights is an enormous challenge, and business won’t be able to accomplish it on its own.

That’s where Alliance 8 7 becomes important – a new platform for stakeholders already involved in the struggle against child labour and for those who are keen to join it. The Alliance was formed by the ILO in conjunction with the launch of the SDGs and is designed to improve co-ordination within the UN and beyond, including a broad range of private sector partners.

“The Alliance’s progress will be measured against a set of agreed-upon criteria and will be grounded in international labour conventions and statistical standards. Alliance 8 7 will be connected to other Agenda 2030 goals. It is meant to function as a big camp for many smaller issue-based alliances.

It will bring the knowledge, experience, measurements, data and resources of all these initiatives together,” which Ms Polaski believes could be game changing in the fight for children’s rights.

To conclude, the clock towards 2030 is now ticking. We can be the first generation to eradicate child labour, and we can be the last generation to tolerate abuses to children, the waste of their human potential and the violation of the human rights of those most vulnerable young people.”
Ms Batchelor opened her address with some alarming statistics: “Close to 60 million people are forcibly displaced daily. A total of 19.5 million are refugees, and the saddest part of this is that more than half of these people are children. In 2014, 34,000 unaccompanied children lodged asylum applications.”

Despite the media attention these statistics attract, it can be hard to imagine the reality of life for the young people behind the numbers. UNHCR is working hard with its partners to support as many of these children as possible, and to anticipate and address the issues this displacement crisis will cause in the future.

The long-term impact of forced migration

It is, perhaps, easy to think that forced migration is a transitory situation. However, Ms Batchelor explained that is not the case: “The average time spent in displacement is 17 years. For children, this is their whole childhood. We meet many girls and boys each day who know nothing other than living the life of a refugee.”

This kind of life is full of unacceptable dangers. “Children in displacement are exposed to countless risks including sexual violence, early marriage, trafficking, child labour, recruitment into armed groups and other forms of exploitation.”

Education is one key to protection yet remains out of reach. “In refugee communities, entire generations are left behind as they’re denied the opportunity to develop and gain skills.”

Beyond the immediate impact this has on children as individuals, Ms Batchelor pointed to the long-term consequences: “Children denied supportive, safe and stable environments during their formative years will not reach their potential. When whole generations from countries railed by conflict are distressed and left behind, it gives way to problems for entire societies in the future.”

Business can unlock change

Ms Batchelor called on those present to ensure concrete action so that displaced children and those fleeing war are not left behind. She also drew special attention to Target 16.2, which calls for an end to all forms of violence against children, and related targets, which call for an end to harmful practices including child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Governments have an important role in ensuring we advance on these targets. They also need to allow refugee children to access education, health care and child protection. But the role of business is also critical. Businesses act as drivers for economic growth, which can be invested to deliver on the SDGs. Further, as Ms Batchelor explained: “The private sector is key in providing opportunities for displaced families to earn a living.”

Ms Batchelor also sees the great potential in public-private partnerships. “UNHCR’s long-standing partnership with Ikea has resulted in the development of innovative refugee housing units for refugee families. With Vodafone, UNHCR is setting up a cutting-edge digital classroom concept in countries in Africa, going to where children are.”

Unleashing the potential of future generations

Widespread displacement requires urgent action. While this must be built on political solutions at the source of the problem, it must also include practical solutions for the millions of refugees today. Ms Batchelor believes this starts with providing opportunities for refugee children. “Children and adolescents are extremely dynamic and resourceful. With a passion for achieving a better future for themselves and their families, young people are often the first to grasp opportunities and can be powerful agents for positive change within their communities.”

Failing to protect children from abuse or leaving them uneducated will delay their countries’ development by many years, a huge missed opportunity. So, as Ms Batchelor concluded: “Until those solutions are found, we must do everything to protect and nurture this generation of children.”
Better standards mean faster progress

Mr Michael Meehan
Chief Executive, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

The Sustainable Development Goals represent a fundamental shift in how we work together towards positive change. Mr Michael Meehan, Chief Executive of the Global Reporting Initiative, explores this shift and explains how his organisation is helping businesses, governments and other institutions work together successfully to achieve their goals.

Mr Michael Meehan opened his speech by saying he wanted to talk about two things: goals and action. For Mr Meehan, the Sustainable Development Goals represent something completely new: “The SDGs are a fundamental shift in the way that policy works with businesses around the world. They are here to align business and government towards 17 common goals, and they set the agenda not only for business and government, but also for policy and the way we work for the next 15 years. Children are clearly a main focus of those goals.”

“These are the goals that the world is getting behind, which is great, because the world needs goals. But more than goals, the world needs action.”

Moving beyond the Millennium Development Goals

According to Mr Meehan, the SDGs differ in four key ways from the Millennium Development Goals and will be more successful as a result. Firstly, they’re different because they engage the private sector; and they always have. The Millennium Development Goals were put together without businesses in the room, which is one of the reasons they were only partially successful.

“Secondly, they engage the investor community, which is a key stakeholder in making sure these things work. Number three, they’re not reinventing the wheel. They’re taking what worked in the Millennium Development Goals and throwing out what didn’t. And lastly, they’re building on existing infrastructure, global standards like GRI, to reach more companies, more investors, and more policy makers.”

Identifying risks creates action

As the world’s largest sustainability standards company, Mr Meehan explained how the GRI creates a platform for all sustainability data. Thousands of businesses use this data to identify their risks – those worth talking about, and those worth taking action on, which means businesses can incorporate them into their policies and investment plans.

Over 50 governments are using the standards in a similar way: having identified and prioritised risks, they can “incorporate them into their foreign direct investment in emerging markets to ensure that things like human rights, child labour, corruption, the environment are being taken into account.”

Protecting the sanctity of a child’s mind

H.E. Dr Shaikha Al Maskari
Chairperson, Al Maskari Holding

Many children in today’s world are exposed to violence and suffering from a very young age. H.E. Dr Shaikha Al Maskari believes that, unless we take action, this will create a generation of lost souls who cannot create the social harmony we need to deliver a more peaceful and progressive world.

Although protecting the health and improving the education of children is incredibly important, for Dr Al Maskari there is no right worthier of protection than the sanctity of the development of a child’s mind. As a result of wars, “we have a generation of lost souls who have grown up seeing bombings, murders, massacres, and all the hatred is festering in their brains. We have to decide today, and take action as a global platform, to make sure that we are going to insist on the sanctity of the child’s brain.”

“The children who are left today suffering under the bombing, the children left to fend for themselves on the streets, grow up with no values. And ladies and gentlemen, there is no weapon stronger – no weapon of mass destruction – than a youngster who has nothing to lose.”

Celebrating diversity

The celebration of diversity within our societies is the key to protecting the sanctity of a child’s mind. In practice, this means the widespread propagation of “cross-cultural, inter-faith, cross-class, cross-nationality” understanding.

Dr Al Maskari maintained that the best place for this celebration of diversity to take place is in the home: “From the time a child is born and sits on its mother’s lap, we have to ensure the training of parents in good global citizenship. [We] have to train a child’s mind to appreciate diversity in our society. The diversity of ethnicity, faith, colour, shape and class to be viewed with wonder and beauty.”

Dr Al Maskari likened the child’s mind to a human ecosystem that must be safeguarded from mental pollution. Education has an important role to play here. “From the school textbook – we must have a way to ensure that textbooks contribute to nurture in the child’s mind the 4 Cs: confidence, conscience (based on universal right and wrong, beyond specific scripture, invalidating stigmas and prejudices), compassion and collaboration, as a means to foster mutual understanding and camaraderie towards social harmony.”

Further, television, gaming and social media – the biggest polluters of children’s minds, according to Dr Al Maskari – are conducive to aggression rather than the development of self-confidence and conscience. “I am appealing that we unite as civilised governments to ensure the upbringing of all children is holistic to the actual safe, healthy mindset towards good global citizenship in the future.”
How business can help humanitarian crises

Sir John Holmes
GCVO, KBE, CMG, Chair, International Rescue Committee-UK

As businesses become an increasingly powerful force for change, will they change our response to humanitarian crises – particularly those affecting children?

Sir John Holmes, Chair of the International Rescue Committee-UK, is confident that the private sector has an important role to play in alleviating suffering and helping to rebuild communities.

Today’s biggest crises affect everyone
Sir John believes that the private sector can no longer, if it ever could, imagine it lives in a protected space unaffected by global problems. He called for more practical, specific, individual partnerships between humanitarian and civil society organisations, and private sector companies and foundations, partnerships that are larger, more sustainable, and more proactive than they are now – education being an obvious area.

The humanitarian world is moving in directions where private sector involvement makes more sense than ever. First, with more displaced people in urban settings, not in rural camps, they’re closer to normal economic life and to the possibility of private sector help, livelihoods and training. Second, humanitarians now accept that their role after a crisis is not only to provide immediate resources to aid life, but also to find ways of encouraging local people to work with communities in attempting to quickly rebuild normal economic infrastructures, something that comes naturally to business people.

“We look forward to sharing knowledge, expertise and commitment with all of you to make a difference to the millions of children whose lives have been shattered.”

Partnerships for positive impact
- IRC and Ericsson – combining skills to connect the internet to Syrian refugees living in camps in Iraq.
- IRC and MasterCard – offering cards and cash so those in need have the power to make choices.
- IRC and Nike Foundation – working together to provide economic opportunities for adolescent girls in Nairobi, both Kenyans and refugees.

“By pooling our efforts, we have a much better chance of improving the lives of children affected by crisis. This could also fulfil the aspirations of so many people who work in the private sector, to make the world a better place, as well as to help their companies prosper.”
As she began her closing speech, H.M. Queen Silvia was particularly touched by an earlier reference to Folke Bernadotte, the Swedish royal family member and diplomat who negotiated the release of 31,000 people from concentration camps during World War II.

She continued: “Today, it has been an exciting and productive day for all of us. As a mother and grandmother now, my children and grandchildren are, of course, close to my heart every day. But like many of you, I also care about the children of the world who are not as fortunate as ours. I have during my professional life initiated and supported many Swedish and international child and youth organisations. It has given me and my life meaning and purpose. But of course, also a lot of worries and pain.

“The importance of investing in our next generation is what we have talked about today, and it is a big challenge for all parts of society. This on a much larger scale than ever before in order to obtain a sustainable future. Today’s Global Child Forum, however, has given me new hope and shown me great new opportunities.”

“Please continue to spread this enthusiasm in the world where many children need so much help. Spread the facts and practical examples from our Forum to everyone in your sphere of influence. Tell them that there is a better way to invest in the world’s most valuable resource, our future generations.”
Global Child Forum would like to acknowledge the following organisations for their partnership, cooperation and support:


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