DEEP DIVE
THE CORPORATE SECTOR AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN SOUTH AMERICA

MILLICOM: MAKING THE INTERNET SAFE

MILLICOM
THE DIGITAL LIFESTYLE

MILLICOM is an international telecommunications and media company and offers a wide range of digital services primarily under the "Tigo" brand. Through their due-diligence and community initiatives, the company is committed to mitigating potential risks to children posed by their operations. Millicom also engages with the communities in which they operate in an effort to promote the opportunities technology can offer children and to build awareness of children's rights.

ADDRESSING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

Millicom has five focus areas that form the foundation of their corporate responsibility work and support sustainable execution of their "digital lifestyle" vision: 1. Diversity in the workforce; 2. Child protection; 3. Environmental protection; 4. Privacy and freedom of expression; and 5. Responsible supply chain.

Since 2012, when children’s rights became part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda, Millicom has pioneered tangible initiatives for safeguarding children’s rights in its core markets. By hosting awareness workshops, rolling out a code of conduct to suppliers, and working closely with UNICEF to develop universal tools for child rights impact assessment, Millicom is setting an example for other companies.

GOING FORWARD

Governance and Board Accountability

Millicom closely tracks its initiatives using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across the business, the results of which are reported monthly to the executive committee. Progress is also monitored and discussed quarterly by the board of directors. Yearly results are published in the Millicom Annual Report. Millicom has also made its Child Labour and Young Workers policy and Supplier Code of Conduct available publicly on its website.

Materiality Assessment

The UNICEF Children’s Rights and Business Principles checklist helps companies understand where children may be at risk in their operations. Millicom ran the pilot version of the checklist internally and discovered a host of potential indirect impacts their operations could have on children. These were potentially direct, such as in distribution, or indirect.

MILLICOM’S TOP BENCHMARK INDICATORS

- Collaboration with children’s rights organizations
- Involvement with other children’s rights issues
- Materiality Assessment
MILLICOM AT A GLANCE

COMPANY PROFILE: Telecommunications and media company, founded in 1990, and focused on emerging markets.
REVENUE: 6.2 billion USD (2016)
MARKETS: 8 countries in Latin America, 5 countries in Africa

such as in the supply chain or through the handling of electronic waste at recycling sites where children may work in dangerous conditions. Millicom subsequently developed a partner code of conduct, specifying higher age limits (18 years) for positions where young workers are at risk, including drivers, freelancers who sell phone cards, and workers performing building and technical maintenance of base stations.

Since the first assessment, Millicom joined with UNICEF to create a simplified version of the assessment to be used by the telecom industry worldwide. The tool was published in July 2016, and Millicom has since made use of it to carry out further assessments in five of its markets.

Millicom also actively seeks to have a positive impact on children, primarily through offering mobile educational tools, promoting school connectivity and ensuring children’s online experiences are safe. At the end of 2016, Millicom had connected over 1,000 schools to the internet. Its EduMe platform offers children and schools access to high quality educational material anytime and anywhere, through their mobile devices.

In 2014, Millicom signed a three-year agreement with UNICEF to develop tools for assessing impacts on children’s rights in company operations and to work jointly on child online protection.

Issues Beyond Child Labour

Online protection is an increasingly important topic for Millicom. The company supports parents in creating a safer online environment for their children through various awareness-raising materials and trainings. The company also has awareness campaigns for children on how to be safe online and fight cyber-bullying. Over 122,000 children have taken part in such trainings.

Millicom also supports child helplines in several of its markets to support both online and offline concerns. Millicom recently announced their support of helplines in conjunction with UNICEF in Central America.

SUPPORTING LOCAL AWARENESS AND ACTION

Millicom hosts online child protection workshops in local communities with industry players, regulators, law enforcement, NGOs and expert organizations, such as ICMEC, INHOPE and IWF. The workshops focus on awareness building and capacity building, as well as tangible action plans for local authorities. Workshops have resulted in the establishment of national focus groups for child online protection and industry commitments to collaborate on safe online environments. To date, workshops have been conducted in seven Latin American markets.

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