

# DEEP DIVE

THE CORPORATE SECTOR AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE NORDIC REGION



## ISS: MANAGING RISK AS A BUSINESS MODEL

ISS is a global integrated facilities services provider with market presence in 5 continents. The company employs approximately 500K people around the world. ISS provides services in a range of areas in support of their clients' primary activities. Services include facility management, cleaning, support, property, catering and security services.

### ADDRESSING CHILD LABOUR

As a service provider, ISS recognizes that clients increasingly expect a high level of corporate responsibility. Managing risks in this area in a credible and effective way thus has become a vital part of the ISS business model.

Consequently, ISS has identified risks related to labour standards, including child labour, as one of its most important material issues, seen as very important by their stakeholders and with high possible negative impact to the business itself.

The risk of child labour is mitigated primarily through the company's Code of Conduct, a component of all employee contracts, as well as the Supplier Code of Conduct, which all suppliers are required to sign off on as part of their contracts. Code compliance is verified through company self-assessments at the country level, as well as internal and external audits, including site visits. In the annual sustainability report, the company also discloses the results of the audits. In addition, "Speak Up Policy", a company internal whistle-blower function has been established, allowing employees to anonymously report any suspected breach of the Code of Conduct.



(Photo credit: ISS)

### ISS' TOP INDICATORS

Child Labour Policy

Other children's rights issues

Transparent Reporting



(Photo credit: ISS)

# ISS AT A GLANCE

**COMPANY PROFILE:** The ISS Group is one of the world's leading Facility Services companies, founded in Copenhagen in 1901

**REVENUE:** USD 11,25 billion (2016)

**MARKETS:** In total 75 countries across Europe, Asia, North America, South America and Pacific

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

In 2014, following the disclosure of a case of child abuse by ISS cleaning staff at a school in Indonesia, the company experienced a profound crisis. It became apparent that the situation could not be handled as an isolated case. There was real risk throughout the company's operations wherever ISS staff worked in environments with children present. To manage this risk, a Policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults\* was put in place at group level, with the requirement that each subsidiary adopt a national policy. The policy specifies that all ISS staff working near children (examples include schools, kindergartens, youth clubs, hospitals and mental facilities) must know what constitutes appropriate behaviour towards children (defined as anyone below 18 years) and act accordingly to provide safe environments for the users of ISS' services. If an employee is suspected of having acted in violation of this policy, they may be suspended. If then found to have acted inappropriately, they can be relocated or even, in some cases, have their employment terminated.



"It's not about the adults setting restrictions on their interactions with children: it's the children who set their own boundaries and the adults have to understand how to act in respect of that."

Lo Hjorth, Director People & Culture  
ISS Facility Services AB, Sweden



## THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults at country level, has two components. All countries are required to have in place recruitment and vetting procedures as required by law and/or customer requirements for staff with exposure to children or vulnerable adults. It's also the responsibility of each country operation to ensure that all staff working near children have received induction and regular training, ensuring that they are aware of the policies and procedures concerning the special requirements in place regarding children. To facilitate this, ISS has developed a short video explaining the content of the policy. The video is then showed at all relevant work places and followed up with discussions among staff to better equip them to handle different types of situations in a correct manner.



"It's important that we as a company clearly signal that we find any type of inappropriate behavior towards children as completely unacceptable."

Lo Hjorth, Director People & Culture  
ISS Facility Services AB, Sweden



\* The group level policy can be downloaded from here:  
<http://www.globalchildforum.org/resources/deep-dive-iss>