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GLOBAL CHILD FORUM IS INITIATED BY  
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# CORPORATE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

## GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICE

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IN COLLABORATION WITH:

**BCG**

THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## TAKING STOCK OF KNOWLEDGE FROM OVER 2,500 COMPANIES

Global Child Forum and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) initiated the Corporate Sector and Children's Rights Benchmark study series in 2013 to fill a gap in the existing research on how the corporate sector addresses children's rights, both within their operations and in communities. We have produced one global and five regional studies: the Nordic region, the Middle East and Northern Africa; Southern Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. To date, we have systematically assessed over 2,500 companies across 9 industries using 7 indicators (see Figure 1) to screen publicly available data.

This data provides us with a detailed understanding of how businesses integrate children's rights in their governance and core operations, their policies and reporting, and their partnerships, programs and charitable giving.

Based on this extensive knowledge, we are now delving deeper into our data in order to provide guidance for companies on how to further their efforts to implement the Children's Rights and Business Principles.<sup>1</sup>

### GOVERNANCE & CORE OPERATIONS

- 1 BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY 
- 2 MATERIALITY & RISK ASSESSMENT 

### POLICIES & REPORTING

- 3 CHILD LABOUR POLICY 
- 4 ADDRESSING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ISSUES OTHER THAN CHILD LABOUR 
- 5 PERFORMANCE REPORTING 

### PARTNERSHIPS, PROGRAMS & CHARITY

- 6 COLLABORATIONS WITH CHILD RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS 
- 7 CHARITY AND/OR PROGRAMS RELATED TO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS 

Figure 1:  
The Corporate Sector and Children's Rights Benchmark Indicators

<sup>1</sup> Developed by UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children - the Children's Rights and Business Principles (the Principles) are the first comprehensive set of principles to guide companies on the full range of actions they can take in the workplace, marketplace and community to respect and support children's rights. <http://childrenandbusiness.org/>

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It is evident when analysing our data that almost half (46%) of all businesses establish their own programs and/or donate to charity. Along with having a child labour policy (57%), it is the most common way that companies in our studies take action for children's rights.

## WHAT MAKES CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROGRAMS WORK?

We define a corporate program for children's rights as a company initiative to support children outside the scope of core business activities. The difference between this approach and simply donating to charity is based on the level of company engagement and the contribution of more than solely financial resources.

However, companies can drive programs and donate to charity in different ways, with varying levels of impact for children and business. In order to deepen our understanding of what works well, and to be able to provide businesses with guidance, we have studied 13 companies<sup>2</sup> and their children's rights programs, with a spread in terms of industry, geography, business size, and type of program.

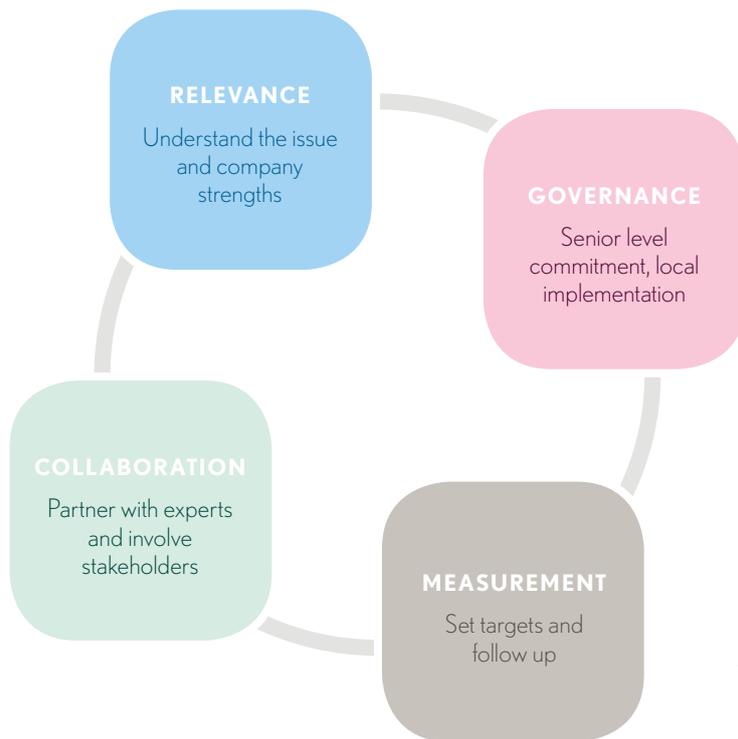
The focus has been on understanding how these programs function and identifying pertinent common features that can be used as building blocks for other companies and programs. Assessing the impact of the programs is beyond the scope of this study. All insights are based on interviews with business representatives and publicly available information.

## FOUR BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CORPORATE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROGRAMS

The benefits of a successful children's rights program extend beyond doing good for children. In the business community, corporates are increasingly seeing links between maximising societal impact and maximising shareholder value. Benefits to companies of such programs include identifying and gaining access to new locations, markets, and customer segments as well as generating new insights for innovation and product development.<sup>3</sup> Thus, rather than seeing investment in social and environmental impacts as representing simply a responsibility, such investment should be recognised as an opportunity, especially if it is aligned with a company's core business.

<sup>2</sup> AstraZeneca, Atlantica Hotels, Deutsche Post DHL Group, LEGO, Minesa, Nisolo, Safaricom, Sanofi, Sansiri, Standard Chartered, Telge Energi, Tetra Pak, Thai Union. Seven of these were selected through Global Child Forum and Boston Consulting Group company benchmarking databases, and the rest via recommendations from Global Child Forum staff and affiliates. We would like to extend our warmest gratitude to these companies for sharing their experiences with us for this study.

<sup>3</sup> Boston Consulting Group (2017) Total Societal Impact - a new lens for strategy. p.6  
[https://www.bcg.com/Images/BCG-Total-Societal-Impact-Oct-2017-R\\_tcm9-174019.pdf](https://www.bcg.com/Images/BCG-Total-Societal-Impact-Oct-2017-R_tcm9-174019.pdf)



*Figure 2:  
Building Blocks  
for Children's  
Rights Programs*

There are four building blocks that we believe are needed in order for a corporate children's rights program to achieve maximum positive impact: Relevance, Governance, Collaboration, and Measurement (Figure 2). To increase the likelihood of success a program needs to be:

- **RELEVANT** - focusing on a child-related issue where the company can best contribute;
- well **GOVERNED** through a senior level commitment, global support structures and local implementation ownership;
- run in **COLLABORATION** with relevant children's rights organisations and involving key stakeholders; and
- assessable, having adequate **MEASUREMENT**, with clear targets and a process in place for follow-up and adjustment, linked to financial performance.

All building blocks are needed, but the order in which they are addressed can differ depending on company context.

In the following pages we describe each building block in detail, followed by examples of three corporate children's rights programs, run by Standard Chartered, AstraZeneca and Deutsche Post DHL Group. The examples provided from these three different industries should not be taken as blueprints to copy and paste, but rather viewed as sources of inspiration for various approaches in applying the building blocks. Businesses need to establish or participate in programs that best fit their unique characteristics. At the end of this guide, a list of useful resources is provided.

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# BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CORPORATE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROGRAMS

## RELEVANCE

Understand the issue  
and company  
strengths

### **RELEVANCE:** PROGRAMS USE COMPANY STRENGTHS TO BENEFIT CHILDREN

There are a myriad of different children's rights programs, aiming in various ways to ensure that children are protected and supported according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>4</sup> in relation to issues such as education, health, gender equality, climate change, digital safety, migrant workers or sexual exploitation. Traditionally, these programs have been run by aid organisations in locations where government efforts are insufficient, but corporates are now increasingly seeing their role in using company resources and know-how to contribute to this work. The question then becomes: what are the relevant issues to focus on?

We find that a first step for all businesses is to understand the larger impact of their products and services on children (both positive and negative) and what additional positive contributions can be made. This, together with concentrating on a few distinct focus areas, is important for credibility and for generating a significant positive impact. Running a program should not involve picking a good cause at random and allocating efforts there – it needs, rather, to be a strategic decision underpinned by background research on needs, materiality as well as on other initiatives already in place. Companies need to understand what is reasonable - given their business profile and the situation for children in the local context - for them to focus their resources on.

This also requires grounding the program in a clear business and social impact case, one that can be easily communicated to, for example, investors, shareholders, employees and customers. There are several ways a business can benefit from a program. Companies can attract employees, gain access to new markets, generate insights for product development and increase credibility among customers and investors.<sup>5</sup> This is different from merely donating to a charity, which is often simply an attempt to do good and boost a company's reputation.

<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> BCG 2017, p.6

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*"Good corporate citizenship programs drive employee engagement. If a company gets involved in a critical issue at the local level, and gives employees opportunities to solve that issue, it creates a lot of engagement which is good for business."*

Christoph Selig,  
Global Manager 'GoTeach', Deutsche Post DHL Group

## **GOVERNANCE:** PROGRAMS HAVE LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND SENIOR LEVEL COMMITMENT

As we previously noted, a solid business case for the program is required, and it should be linked to the core business of the company. To ensure this, governance and management structures need to be taken into consideration. First and foremost, regardless of how a particular program is managed, businesses must establish commitment and involvement from the senior levels. Given that they set the overall direction of a business, senior management should also be responsible for the direction of the program in order for it to remain relevant and supported. This can be accomplished by having executive directors on the program steering committee and/or establishing regular reporting to the board.

Traditionally programs tend to be managed by a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) department and are fairly disconnected from the rest of the business. However, companies are increasingly linking their social impact programs to their core capabilities, for instance, by having business units manage programs. We recommend this practice because it serves to strengthen the link between such programs and the business. However, this might not be feasible for all companies. In cases where a program is run by a separate CSR department, it is crucial that there is a clear mechanism for maintaining senior management engagement.

To generate the greatest impact, businesses should focus on only one or a select number of high priority programs, designed to scale. Such programs are often supported by a unit at company headquarters,

*"In our program we ensure senior level commitment by having four members from the global management team on our program committee. One of them had to overcome many challenges in her life to reach where she is today – her story relates personally to those of the girls we empower in the program."*

Natasha Kwakwa,  
'Goal' Program Director, Standard Chartered

### GOVERNANCE

Senior level  
commitment, local  
implementation

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while the specific local projects that are part of the program are designed and managed by local offices. Local ownership ensures the relevance of a program as it is tailored to specific local needs, involving the appropriate stakeholders and using methods best suited for a specific context. The unit overseeing things at company headquarters provides expertise and inspiration from other local projects, general tool-kits, and the overall program strategy. The headquarters also connects the dots and incorporates local projects into a common, cohesive story about how a given company acts for the benefit of children.

## COLLABORATION

Partner with experts  
and involve  
stakeholders

### COLLABORATION: PROGRAMS PARTNER WITH EXPERTS AND INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS

Once a company identifies which children's rights issues to focus on and determines how to organise and manage the program, the next building block - collaboration - highlights the importance of partnering with experts and involving key stakeholders.

Businesses are generally not experts on how best to tackle children's rights issues, and even in cases when they are, it is still relevant to partner with organisations that have a deep understanding and expertise within the local context in question. These organisations can include, for example, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or government ministries in the country of operation. Partners complement a company's expertise, providing extensive knowledge on social issues, contacts with local stakeholders, experience in project implementation and significant credibility. Partners also have familiarity with other initiatives in the area, and they can assist in setting up large-scale, high impact programs.

In addition to organisations, companies need to engage with stakeholders such as employees, customers and children in order to understand the

specificities of their needs and wishes. For many consumers, it is important to buy from businesses that are truly committed to generating social impact rather than just donating to good causes as a marketing effort. By openly asking questions such as: "What impact would you like to see?" and "What can we be doing for children, given our expertise?" companies increase their credibility and ensure that their programs are relevant.

*"If the focus is on youth, you need to make sure that young people are part of the process, from implementation to delivery. We have a belief in authentic youth engagement to ensure successful programs."*

Helen-Marie Seibel,  
Manager Global Community Investment,  
AstraZeneca

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*“It is important to have a clear purpose for your program, but you don’t need to have a precise plan of what is going to happen – leave planning to country level and always focus on what’s good for the young people in the local context. We have targets for both the youth and the employees that volunteer.”*

Christoph Selig,  
Global Manager ‘GoTeach’,  
Deutsche Post DHL Group

## **MEASUREMENT:** PROGRAMS TRACK IMPACT AND ADJUST GOALS WHEN NEEDED

In order to know that a program delivers on its promises and potential, businesses need to set targets and follow up on them. Initially, it can suffice to have a sense of the overall direction of the program to enable flexibility, later determining more specific targets as the program is concretised. There should be a clear picture of what the needs are, and what kind of impact the company can generate.

In addition to setting explicit goals for a desired social impact and subsequently following up on them, we recommend businesses monitor a program’s effect on financial performance. In this way, companies can ensure that their programs deliver positive results and are relevant for the business. In the short term, the impact on financial performance might be difficult to discern. It can therefore be useful to measure other company-related metrics such as employee involvement or increased reach for the products of a business. Most of the companies in our study measure this in quantitative terms, such as the number of employees involved in volunteering. It could be equally relevant, though more difficult to measure, qualitative outcomes, for example, effects on employee satisfaction and the public perception of the company.

Equipped with their knowledge in a given field, partners and key stakeholders can help businesses set adequate targets. It is useful to align targets with those being pursued by external stakeholders, such as governments, who often have targets related to education, health, equality, etc. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also useful in this regard. Achievements and progress made as a result of a company’s program should be highlighted and communicated to investors and other stakeholders.

### MEASUREMENT

Set targets and follow up



Goal participants in Jordan. Photo: Standard Chartered



Young Health Programme participants in India. Photo: AstraZeneca



GoTeach participants in Indonesia. Photo: Deutsche Post DHL Group

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# COMPANY EXAMPLES



Standard Chartered is a leading international banking group operating across 68 countries with a focus on Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

In their Goal program, they empower girls to take on leadership roles in their communities through a curriculum that focuses on sports and life skills education.

## **GOAL** - EMPOWERING GIRLS TO BE CHANGE AGENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

### RELEVANCE

The bank operates in many low-income countries where investing in girls has considerable impact

First piloted with 70 girls in India, then scaled up to more than 20 countries

Goal relates to company's gender equality goals for senior management

Recently added an employability module and a mentorship program with the bank's women's network

### GOVERNANCE

Managed by a director in the 'Public Affairs & Sustainability' department

Four global managers on the program committee

Goal is one of the company's main community investment programs

An advocate from the local bank office at each program site

### COLLABORATION

Strategic partnership at global level with NGO Women Win, which contributes practical know-how to program implementation and ensures quality

WomenWin has expertise in girls' empowerment through sports and a network of local NGO partners

Bank employees are encouraged to volunteer in the program, to support the girls and the NGOs

### MEASUREMENT

Measures the number of girls completing the program and their personal development

Questionnaires related to the topics of the Goal curriculum, and case studies

Video diaries with some of the girls, tracking progress over a 5-year period

Measures financial contribution to programs and number of employee volunteers



Pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca centers their global community investment around the pressing challenge of preventing non-communicable diseases.

They do this by focusing on adolescent health and major risk factors such as tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy eating. The Young Health Programme (YHP) combines behavioral programs with research and advocacy.

## **YOUNG HEALTH PROGRAMME -** INVESTING IN THE HEALTH OF ADOLESCENTS

### **RELEVANCE**

- Analysis showed needs within adolescent health and insufficient action to address those needs
- Narrowed the focus to non-communicable diseases in order to concentrate efforts
- Enhancement of company credibility as they are engaged in preventive measures against diseases for which they market medicines

### **GOVERNANCE**

- Managed at central company level by a manager for Global Community Investment
- The Chief Financial Officer is the advocate for the program, reports to board
- Country programs managed at local level, with site-specific focus
- Global level provides tools and guidance, ties together the overall program narrative

### **COLLABORATION**

- Global partnership with Plan International for behavioral programs and advocacy efforts, and with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health for research
- The company funds a full-time advocacy manager at Plan International
- Partnership with 22 local NGO partners, employees encouraged to volunteer locally
- Involvement of young people in program planning and implementation

### **MEASUREMENT**

- Measures the number of young people informed by the program, the number of peer educators and the number of health providers trained
- Measures the financial contribution to community investment initiatives and number of employee volunteers
- Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation in 2017 to determine impact

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## Deutsche Post DHL Group

Logistics company Deutsche Post DHL Group involves employees and local offices in the GoTeach program, which focuses on increasing educational opportunity and employability among socially disadvantaged youth.

GoTeach is carried out in partnership with two established organisations: Teach For All and SOS Children's Villages. The latter partnership is highlighted here and involves mentorship programs, internships and workshops.

### GOTEACH - EMPLOYEES AS A RESOURCE TO SUPPORT YOUTH

#### RELEVANCE

Company wanted to position themselves in the field of education and use their employees as a resource

Within the framework of the partnership with SOS Children's Villages, they chose to focus on the theme of youth employability

Program increases employee engagement, generating productivity and loyalty

#### GOVERNANCE

Managed by a global manager at the company and a Key Account Manager at SOS Children's Villages in cooperation with regional coordinators

Each country program is designed based on local needs and requests, with support from the global team

Contact person from the company and SOS Children's Villages for each local program

#### COLLABORATION

The company researched relevant organisations in order to find the most appropriate for their goals and chose SOS Children's Villages

The company funds a full-time position at the charity

Involvement of company employees is a central feature of the program

#### MEASUREMENT

Program focus was initially not rigidly defined as program creators wanted flexibility to adapt after early stages

Now there are targets for both the youth and the employees, focusing on their personal development

In 2013, a storytelling method was used in seven of the countries involved in order to understand the personal development of participants

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# RESOURCES

In this section we first present a list of useful tools to assist businesses in their work with integrating the program building blocks, and then a list of a few key global children's rights organisations. However, our recommendation is to begin the journey internally in order to understand the specific company context, what relevant work has already been done, and what relevant partnerships are already in place.

## TOOLS

### BCG REPORT ON TOTAL SOCIETAL IMPACT

This report looks at five industries (consumer packaged goods, biopharmaceuticals, oil and gas, retail and business banking, and technology) and the link between performance in specific environmental, social and governance (ESG) topics (such as ensuring a responsible environmental footprint or promoting equal opportunity) and market valuation multiples and margins.

### CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS ATLAS

The Atlas is an online risk assessment tool that enables businesses to identify the potential for direct or indirect infringement of children's rights across 198 countries. It enables companies to realise their potential to respect and support children's rights throughout their business operations and investments. It is a joint collaboration between UNICEF and the Global Child Forum.

### SASB MATERIALITY MAP

Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB)'s Materiality Map identifies likely material sustainability issues on an industry-by-industry basis. This map serves as a snapshot of likely material sustainability issues at the time of our initial analysis and may be subject to change given that issues and industries are constantly evolving.

### SDG COMPASS

The SDG Compass provides guidance for companies on how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their contribution to the realisation of the SDGs.

### SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an outcomes-based measurement tool that helps organisations understand and quantify the social, environmental and economic value they are creating. Social Value UK has published a guide on SROI, providing a clear framework for anyone interested in measuring, managing and accounting for social value or social impact.

### 2017 MOBILE INDUSTRY IMPACT REPORT<sup>6</sup>

The mobile industry is having a profound impact on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. (SDGs) This is the second edition of the Mobile Industry Impact Report, and it assesses the industry's progress towards the SDGs.

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

There are several organisations that work with children's rights, on the global, national, regional and/or local

levels. Those mentioned here are a selection of the main global organisations, often with regional/local offices. Companies should also research additional organisations in areas where they want to develop programs.

### CHILDHOOD

Childhood is a children's rights organisation that primarily works with groups who are at the greatest risk of exposure to violence and sexual abuse. They have local offices in Brazil, Germany, Sweden and the USA, and work on local projects around the world. Their focus areas are a protective family environment, promoting protection from exploitation in the travel and tourism industry, ensuring safety of children when online, and making social and legal systems child friendly.

### ECPAT INTERNATIONAL

ECPAT International is a network of local civil society organisations and coalitions in 93 countries with one common mission: to eliminate the sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT conducts cutting-edge research and coordinates evidence-based advocacy at all levels to strengthen national justice and protection systems and increase investment in the fight against sexual exploitation of children. The ECPAT International Secretariat is based in Bangkok, Thailand.

### PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Plan International is a development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. They see clear links between fulfilling children's rights, achieving gender equality and ending child poverty. Some of their focus areas are education, sexual health and rights, early childhood, and youth activism. Plan International is active in over 70 countries across the world.

### SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children comprises Save the Children International and 28 member organisations working to deliver change for children in 120 countries. They provide humanitarian aid, improve children's access to food, healthcare and quality education and protect the world's most vulnerable children. They focus on building long-term, mutually beneficial strategic partnerships with the private sector.

### SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

SOS Children's Villages is the largest non-governmental organisation focused on supporting children without parental care and families at risk. They work with communities and state partners to provide children with loving and supportive alternative care, training and education. They focus on key areas such as poverty, inequality, education, health, social and child protection, and decent work.

### UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a United Nations (UN) program that works in 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential. They work closely with multi-national corporations, national companies and small- to medium-sized businesses to identify, design and implement alliances that leverage the strengths of the corporate sector on behalf of the world's children.

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6 This is an IT industry tool but can be used as reference for other industries.



WE WOULD LOVE  
TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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#### **GLOBAL CHILD FORUM**

FOUNDED IN 2009 BY THE SWEDISH ROYAL FAMILY, GLOBAL CHILD FORUM IS A LEADING FORUM FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS DEDICATED TO INNOVATIVE THINKING, KNOWLEDGE-SHARING AND NETWORKING. WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY OF BUSINESS, WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALL PARTS OF SOCIETY, TO CREATE A PROSPEROUS, SUSTAINABLE AND JUST SOCIETY FOR THE WORLD'S CHILDREN. IN ADDITION TO OUR FORUMS, GLOBAL CHILD FORUM DELIVERS RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES, BEST PRACTICES AND RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS DESIGNED TO UNLOCK OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS TO INTEGRATE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS INTO THEIR OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITIES. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [WWW.GLOBALCHILDFORUM.ORG](http://WWW.GLOBALCHILDFORUM.ORG)

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