

INTEGRATING CHILD RIGHTS INTO BUSINESS

INSPIRING CORPORATE EXAMPLES





**CHILDREN ARE
EVERYONE'S
BUSINESS**



All companies, whether small or large, have an impact on children, directly or indirectly. That is why companies also have a responsibility to promote and respect children's rights – in their own operations as well as in all business relations.

The purpose of this book is to give you hands-on guidance on how children's rights can be respected and promoted by business. It also includes examples of actions other companies have taken to broaden their approach to children's rights in their sustainability work.



THE WORKPLACE. For example, how does working conditions, health and wages for your employees affect their children and families?



THE MARKETPLACE. For example, how does your product, advertising and marketing affect children's health and values, and thereby their wellbeing?



THE COMMUNITY. For example, how does your business and production facilities affect the environment and community where children live?



THINGS TO HAVE IN MIND BEFORE YOU START

Integrating children's rights into your business is a long-term commitment requiring knowledge of how and where your company affects children. A first step in the process of implementing a child rights perspective in your business is therefore to map and analyze what impact your company has on children.

GET STARTED

- Make sure you have a commitment from top management to integrate children's rights throughout your business.
- Incorporate children's rights into your sustainability framework, policies, and codes of conduct.
- Map and analyze what impact you have on children and identify actions to respect and support children's rights.
- Provide access to childfriendly grievance mechanisms and carry out remedial actions for any situation where children's rights have been violated.
- Communicate and report your progress and work on children's rights – achievements as well as challenges.

HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE WITH A CHILD RIGHTS LENS YOUR ROADMAP TO ACTION



1.

POLICY COMMITMENT

Companies should make a public commitment to respect all human rights, including children's rights, referring to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and/or Children's Rights and Business Principles (CRBP). A clear commitment in policies and/or codes establishes expectations from personnel, suppliers, customers and other business partners. The statement should be public, communicated internally and externally and receive sign-off from company leadership and be embedded within procedures. UNICEF has developed a tool to provide guidance on the process of integrating children's rights into company policies.

2.

ASSESSING IMPACTS

Companies should understand the context in which they operate and map all business relationships and stakeholders affected throughout their entire value chain. An impact assessment should identify potential and actual impact, get the views of stakeholders and consider the risks faced by different groups of children. Your company should integrate children's rights considerations into a broader human rights impact assessment and UNICEF has developed a tool to support business to add a child rights lens to the process.

3.

INTEGRATION AND ACTION

Once your company has identified and prioritised its impacts, your business

should take action to prevent, mitigate and/or remediate the identified impacts. Your company needs to establish where it is causing, contributing or linked to the adverse impact and also assess the extent of leverage it has to address the impact. A business needs to set clear and measurable goals and embed children's rights into its corporate culture, for example by training its staff and amending business contracts.

4.

TRACKING PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING

Reporting on children's rights should be publicly communicated, transparent, independent and ongoing. Your reports can be woven into existing corporate reporting frameworks or separate. UNICEF has developed a tool to help companies align their child rights reporting with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and other frameworks such as the UNGC's Communication on Progress.

5.

REMEDICATION

Your company should ensure it provides for remedy or facilitates it through legitimate processes, including company grievance mechanisms. Mechanisms should be accessible, transparent and compatible with children's rights. Children should also receive help from someone who is trained to communicate with children to explain how the grievance mechanism works. A child's safety, identity and privacy must be protected at all times and extra care must be taken to ensure children and families are able to report instances of abuse.

All of these tools can be found on our website [unicef.org/csr](https://www.unicef.org/csr)



CASE STUDIES: IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN ALL PARTS OF BUSINESS

These case studies demonstrate how a number of Swedish companies from a variety of industries and in different stages of implementation work with the Children's Rights and Business Principles. The cases are intended to serve as inspiration, rather than to represent best practice.

In some cases, companies have worked with children's rights for many years, while others have only recently embraced this perspective. For some industries represented in the cases, it is obvious how children's rights connect to business, while it is not immediately clear in other industries. A similarity between the cases, however, is that the Children's Rights and Business Principles have served the purpose of widening the perspective on children's rights in the context of human rights at large.

We hope that these examples will be helpful in going forward with your own work implementing children's rights.



“It becomes very abstract if you only say that the overall principle is to see to the best interest of the child. What does that mean in a specific context, what are we really doing? I think that is really important to convey to our employees.”

Lulu Li, Sustainability Manager, Social Affairs

CODE OF CONDUCT

To include children's rights in the code of conduct is a vital tool for protection. SCA has revised its code to more distinctly include children's rights, and emphasizes the importance of real-world examples.

When hygiene and forest products company SCA initiated an update of their Code of Conduct in 2013, the *Children's Rights and Business Principles* were just launched, and SCA decided to include them in the new code.

For the policy commitment to be meaningful, SCA finds it important to acknowledge that some principles may not be that relevant to their particular business, and to have the “courage” to focus on some of the children's rights above others (and to explain why). Specifically, SCA is mentioning child labour and marketing of their products in its code, since these are two areas that are important to its operations.

When the update of the code was ongoing, SCA participated in UNICEF's pilot study of their *Children's Rights and Business Principles* tools, and used it to identify relevance and areas that might have been missed. The new content was reviewed by a reference group. The whole process to update the code took six months, including benchmark and stakeholder dialogues.

“The Children's Rights and Business Principles gave a wider perspective; I think it helped us to better understand what other areas to include, even if our main focus areas remain the same.”

In order to raise awareness internally about the Children's Rights and Business Principles, SCA has published an article on its intranet, giving examples on what the company is doing to respect children's rights and encouraging people to share their own stories to be shared within the organization. One example is the safety programs for families that the company is running at its mill in Vale, Spain. One of several components of the program is a playful and informative brochure for children about workplace safety. The brochure was distributed to employees and their families, and the initiative was celebrated with a big family party in the summer of 2014.

SCA finds it valuable to give concrete examples of what children's rights mean for its business, in the internal communication.

“It becomes very abstract if you only say that the overall principle is to see to the best interest of the child. What does that mean in a specific context, what are we really doing? I think that is really important to convey to our employees.”

All employees receive training on the Code of Conduct. SCA is planning additional training for its leadership teams and other relevant functions on children's rights.



“*In emerging markets electronic waste may end up with local entrepreneurs who want to recover precious metals and other valuable components from them. There is a possibility that children get involved to help take the electronics apart. This insight gave us an extra boost to deal with an issue that we were planning to take a tighter control of.”*

Milka Pietikainen, Vice President Corporate Responsibility

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A key element when integrating children's rights is to conduct an impact assessment. As Millicom experienced, it can bring unexpected child rights aspects to light.

Millicom develops and operates cellular and cable networks in Africa and Latin America. Millicom has used the *Children's Rights and Business Principles* to carry out an impact assessment. It was done on three levels: desk research on overall child rights risks for telecom companies, assessment of Millicom's global policies and controls, and a country assessment in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The results surprised Millicom: The one risk that had triggered the impact assessment – child labour – there was no evidence of in the DRC operation. But then there were other observations, which the company had not considered previously:

“For example, we use a lot of external security services to guard our base station sites and shops. We hadn't really thought about things like if you have under-aged intruders, would security forces know how to deal with that?”

Another example is electronic waste.

“In emerging markets electronic waste may end up with local entrepreneurs who want to recover precious metals and other valuable components from them. There is a possibility that children get involved to help take the electronics apart.”

Thanks to the children's rights perspective, Millicom realized that waste handling needed to be prioritized. The company now has a new process with pre-selected waste buyers in place.

One advantage of using children's rights as the main angle for the impact assessment was that it facilitated talking about human rights in countries where starting a discussion about this topic may be sensitive.

“When you are working in countries with a difficult and often violent history, and in some cases continued political instability, it is not always easy to talk about human rights. Starting from a child rights perspective allows us to address many wider issues without necessarily explicitly saying it.”

The impact assessment in DRC was time-consuming and expensive. Internal buy-in was mainly achieved through pointing to the reputational risks connected with child labour. The growing interest from investors has also helped to build longer-term internal support. Millicom has continued to work closely with UNICEF to develop a sector-specific self-assessment tool, which enables internal staff to do an assessment that is highly relevant but not as complex as in the DRC, and costs can thus be kept down.



It became clearer that children are stakeholders in so much of what we do, in everything from marketing to sponsoring to security arrangements in the stores."

Maria Smith, Senior Manager Environment & Social responsibility

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A structured approach to children's rights includes an impact assessment. Not only can it be a guide for action: food giant ICA found that it can also build internal awareness, knowledge and engagement.

For grocery retailer ICA, the *Children's Rights and Business Principles* turned out to be a useful tool for assessing how children are being affected in ICA's operations.

Each principle was turned into an overall assessment question, e.g. "How well is the safety of children in ICA's business activities and facilities ensured?" This approach required a review across the entire organization. ICA believes this would not have been achieved without the *Children's Rights and Business Principles*.

The assessment explored what worked well and what could be improved, and included a benchmark against best practice. It ultimately resulted in a number of recommendations and possible to-do-lists for each department (one list for HR, one for marketing, and so on).

One example from the nine pages of recommendations is that ICA should complement its children's panel with a parents' panel. Another example is that the social audits that are being performed in high risk countries should be extended to the US, since the US has not ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

The result of the assessment is not only the recommendations, however, but the knowledge that was built internally in the

process, about children's rights and how they connect to different functions. This is largely thanks to the interviews with staff that was part of the assessment, alongside a document review. Or "conversations" as ICA would say, as the purpose of the meetings was not to hold anyone accountable.

"I would say that the interviews were even more important. Because when the analyst talked to the marketing staff or the people who develop in-store babysitting services, it spurred a lot of interest – they wanted to know more – and it built knowledge."

The dialogues with staff were also very helpful in conveying why ICA works with a children's perspective. ICA believes that this has created the conditions to include children's issues in contexts other than what the assessment report covers.

ICA found that there were many eye openers along the way.

"It became clearer that children are stakeholders in so much of what we do, in everything from marketing to sponsoring to security arrangements in the stores. We realized that we have not pointed out children in our policy documents, despite the fact that we talk about children in our work."



“Thanks to the overall assessment we have been able to pinpoint what our risk areas are, and that has allowed us to talk about a lot more concrete issues. ‘Is there a risk that we screen out young workers in the recruitment process, to avoid child labour?’; ‘How can we ascertain our lowest wages cater for basic needs of workers and their families?’”

Malin Ekefalk, Director Social Responsibility

RISK ANALYSIS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

The child rights perspective can be integrated into the wider human rights work. For Electrolux, the human rights risk assessment led to an emphasized child rights focus in their revised Code of Conduct.

For home appliance company Electrolux, the *Children's Rights and Business Principles* are integrated into the implementation of the *UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights*. Electrolux has conducted a child rights risk analysis within the *UN Guiding Principles* framework, rather than a separate child rights assessment.

“We wanted to get the helicopter perspective on our business activities and value chain by reviewing them opposite the International Bill of Human Rights. We identified where the main risks are and discussed how they can be handled at policy level, with improved processes, education and other mitigating actions.”

Following this analysis, Electrolux revised its *Code of Conduct and Workplace Standard* in 2014. The revised code and standard further clarifies the provisions relating to child labour. If child labour is identified, Electrolux requires that the supplier continues to pay salary until the child has reached working age. The supplier must also work actively to reunite the child with its family and convince the child to complete its education.

Further, in the revised version, Electrolux is stating that young workers must not be discriminated against, in order to prevent

that they are screened out in eagerness to avoid child labour.

Additionally, the revised code includes a new clause regarding compensation, encouraging consideration of cost of basic needs when setting wages, to ensure that employees can support their families.

In order to build internal awareness and buy-in for children's rights issues, Electrolux has found it useful to talk about specific issues rather than general rights:

“I think it has worked well to engage employees around these issues by not talking generally about human rights or children's rights, because it is difficult to understand. Thanks to the overall assessment we have been able to pinpoint what our risk areas are, and that has allowed us to talk about a lot more concrete issues. ‘Is there a risk that we screen out young workers in the recruitment process, to avoid child labour?’; ‘How can we ascertain our lowest wages cater for basic needs of workers and their families?’ Then we can talk concretely with those within the company that may have an impact on how we address that issue.”



“In Mexico they brought the children in to the work place, to talk to all of the employees, and to remind them that ‘we are waiting for you at home’. That was actually incredibly powerful according to the local management. To let them have their voice heard directly.”

Mala Chakraborti, Vice President Corporate Responsibility

SAFETY FOR PARENTS

A central child rights issue is workplace safety for employees who are parents. To induce behavioural change, industrial company Atlas Copco addressed this issue from the perspective of the child waiting at home.

Atlas Copco is a business-to-business company that manufactures industrial tools and equipment for heavy manufacturing and extractive industries.

Atlas Copco has chosen to work with children's rights in the larger context of human rights, where the *UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights* serve as the main framework for the company. The UN Guiding Principles advocate for special attention to the human rights impacts on vulnerable or marginalized groups, including children. In order to address this, the guidance from the *Children's Rights and Business Principles* has been integrated into the Group's approach to impact assessment, especially in complex markets.

On the contrary to many other multi-nationals, child labour is not a main risk for Atlas Copco, given the nature of the business, which largely requires skilled workers. One of the company's most material children's rights issues is instead working conditions and health and safety for employees who are parents. Safety – not least on the road where many of the company's employees spend a lot of their working time – is about driving behavioural change. The local management teams are therefore putting constant

focus on such activities to emphasize the importance.

For this reason Atlas Copco has run safety campaigns from the perspective of their employees' children. In the company's *Safety First* program that was rolled out in the 90 countries where Atlas Copco operates, posters with photos of the employees' children were hung on the walls of the factories, as a positive reminder for employees to stay safe.

In Mexico, management took this even further:

“In Mexico they brought the children in to the work place, to talk to all of the employees, and to remind them that ‘we are waiting for you at home’. That was actually incredibly powerful according to the local management. To let them have their voice heard directly.”

Whether this approach, or another, will be used in other countries depends on each local management, but Atlas Copco is keen to share best practice internally and this example is expected to resonate particularly well.



“A lot of it is actually to highlight and structure what we are already doing to promote children’s rights within our core business, as well as through the remedial projects on education and children that the H&M Conscious Foundation is driving together with UNICEF.”

Luisa Book, Sustainability Business Expert-Human Rights

ROOT CAUSES & REMEDIATION

In order to achieve lasting results in the work for children’s rights, it is advisable to explore root causes to problems and concerns, and to have a remedy plan at hand. H&M is taking the long-term view.

H&M is one of the world’s largest clothing retailers and has worked with a children’s perspective in its operations for many years.

Currently, H&M is undertaking a gap analysis with respect to the *Children’s Rights and Business Principles*. The analysis is designed by using UNICEF’s and Save the Children’s tools such as the *Children’s Rights in Policies and Codes of Conduct* and UNICEF’s implementation workbooks. The gap analysis is based on a thorough review of policies and guidelines, but also on interviews with key personnel, and research on procedures and practices within the company.

H&M finds that one of the main benefits of the gap analysis is that it underlines what H&M is already doing:

“A lot of it is actually to highlight and structure what we are already doing to promote children’s rights within our core business, as well as through the remedial projects on education and children that the H&M Conscious Foundation is driving together with UNICEF.”

H&M has a child labour policy that addresses remediation, a responsible marketing policy specifically saying that the company does not advertise directly towards children, as well as strict product

and safety standards. H&M also recently completed a *Remedy Guide* that covers human rights, including children’s rights. The guide specifies what responsibility the company has in different situations in its value chain or in its own operations, and how to implement that responsibility.

H&M has conducted trainings on the *Children’s Rights and Business Principles* together with UNICEF, and is also highlighting the children’s perspective in their human rights trainings. H&M finds that having a logical and practical framework really helps to convey the message about children’s rights with staff of all roles.

H&M has a longstanding partnership with UNICEF in order to address root causes to child labour in its supply chain. The *All for Children* initiative is based on the vision that all children should go to school and not work. Projects have included various ways to provide access to education and to health care, to build social networks and to support local initiatives for children’s rights. This is a way for the company to work with a long-term social investment with direct connection to its operations, rather than just any charity cause that they cannot capture further up the value chain.




 Allowing young workers to work in appropriate positions supports their skills development so that they can get a head start on the labour market. When they work in a good factory they learn to see what 'good' looks like."

Saskia Dieleman-Jamin, Compliance Manager, Group Staff Sustainability at IKEA Services AB and Julia Olofsson, Senior Policy Advisor, Public Affairs at IKEA Group

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS BEYOND CHILD LABOUR

In many industries, child labour is what first comes to mind when talking about children's rights. IKEA found the Children's Rights and Business Principles helpful to widen their employees' view.

Furniture retailer IKEA has been committed to children's rights for a long time. While IKEA has worked diligently to prevent child labour since the mid-1990s, the *Children's Rights and Business Principles* are helping the company to identify how they can strengthen their support of children's rights throughout the entire organization. IKEA has identified three focus areas for children's rights: through the IKEA range of products, IWAY supplier code of conduct and the IKEA Foundation.

"Many parts of the organization contribute towards having a positive impact on children's rights. However, since it is a natural part of their work, they didn't initially see how the commitment to children's rights is integrated throughout the company. The Children's Rights and Business Principles are helping to create awareness internally and allowing co-workers to take a more proactive approach."

For example, IKEA's customer relations team works closely with the stores to create a family-friendly environment, including play facilities throughout the store, changing tables in restrooms and high chairs in the restaurant. Further, the product development teams working with the Children's IKEA range consult with child development experts, and children themselves, to take a child's perspective

when developing the range. IKEA want their children's toys to stimulate development through play.

At the same time, child labour continues to be at heart of IKEA's child rights work. IKEA has put a lot of effort into identifying the root causes of child labour. Through a long-standing partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children, the IKEA Foundation has for example run projects to empower women so that they can support their families, thereby increasing the chances that their children will go to school.

IKEA also works to prevent child labour and to protect young workers directly through their supplier code of conduct.

"We ask our suppliers to look at the factory from a young worker perspective, and to identify in which areas young workers could work. Allowing young workers to work in appropriate positions supports their skills development so that they can get a head start on the labour market. When they work in a good factory they learn to see what 'good' looks like. You create a next generation of workers with the right skills to advance both in their career and in life. In addition, it helps the young workers to generate more income when they move on to the next step in their career."

THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

Due to the impact that companies have on children's rights and lives, UNICEF together with the UN Global Compact and Save the Children, have developed a set of principles guiding companies on how to respect and support children's rights. With the help of these principles you can start integrating children's rights into your company's operations – and discover new opportunities to actively support and promote the positive development of children.



- 1 Meet the responsibility to respect children's rights and commit to supporting the human rights of children.
- 2 Contribute towards the elimination of child labour, including in all business activities and business relationships.
- 3 Provide decent work for young workers, parents and caregivers.
- 4 Ensure the protection and safety of children in all business activities and facilities.
- 5 Ensure that products and services are safe, and seek to support children's rights through them.
- 6 Use marketing and advertising that respect and support children's rights.
- 7 Respect and support children's rights in relation to environment and to land acquisition and use.
- 8 Respect and support children's rights in security arrangements.
- 9 Help protect children affected by emergencies.
- 10 Reinforce community and government efforts to protect and fulfil children's rights.

PHOTOGRAPHERS:

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