Children are everyone’s business: Children’s Rights and Business Principles in Indonesia

“The UN once dealt only with governments. By now we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving governments, international organizations, the business community and civil society. In today’s world we depend on each other”

Kofi Annan Former UN Secretary-General
What do businesses have to do with children’s rights?

As the leading economic power house in South East Asia, Indonesia has made great progress in providing its children with the necessary opportunities to grow up healthy, obtain a good education and be protected from harm. However, each year still 150,000 children die before reaching their fifth birthday, in most cases from diseases that could be easily prevented and treated.

Children under 18 years old account for one third of Indonesia’s population. They are key members of the communities and environments in which businesses operate and hence their lives can be affected positively or negatively by business practices. They should also be recognized as key stakeholders for business – as consumers, family members of employees, young workers, and as future employees and business leaders.

With increased attention being paid to the role of the private sector in society in parallel to governments and other societal actors, and with greater awareness of the links between businesses and human rights, the focus on their impact on children is timely and necessary.

In recognition of the positive role that businesses can play in advancing the rights of children, in early 2012, UNICEF, Save the Children, and the UN Global Compact launched the Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBP). Developed through global consultations, the CRBP are the first comprehensive set of principles that identify concrete actions that all businesses can undertake to respect and support children’s rights through their core activities, strategic social investments.

As ever more attention is paid to corporations’ contributions to society, children’s rights should be central to the conversation. Becoming a child-friendly business that merges corporate strategy with an abiding respect for children’s rights can build on current corporate social responsibility efforts, leverage corporate influence to benefit and protect children, and generate real benefits for companies.

Child-friendly policies help a business to improve its reputation, build a trusted brand, and foster solid relationships with its employees and customers.

Furthermore, such policies will lead to:

- **Building reputation and enhancing the ‘social license to operate’** thanks to the beneficial impacts of child friendly products, responsible marketing and good relationships with local communities.
- **Achieving better risk management** – through incorporation of environmental and social issues, including human rights; ensuring health, safety and product responsibility safeguards.
- **Recruiting and retaining a motivated workforce** by providing fair wages and decent working conditions, enabling employees who are parents or caregivers with a conducive work environment.
- **Developing the next generation of talent** through apprenticeship programmes; collaboration and support for education programmes that will equip the next generation with workplace skills.
- **Contributing to a stable and sustainable business environment** – looking at sustainability in terms of its impact on children can help to galvanize company support for concrete actions.
How is UNICEF supporting the implementation of CRBP in Indonesia?

In 2012, UNICEF commissioned Ipsos Mori to assess the understanding and engagement of companies in Indonesia in corporate social responsibility. While almost three quarters of all companies showed a high level of commitment to act on CSR, much less are actually achieving quantifiable results already. And many are looking for guidance on how their CSR engagement can strengthen the realization of children’s rights in Indonesia.

The CRBP and related documentation provide such guidance to companies. In February 2013, UNICEF Indonesia, together with Save the Children, and the Indonesia Global Compact Network (IGCN) as well as the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA), organized a national release of the Principles and have since been working to promote the CRBP in Indonesia.

A key partner has been the Indonesia Association of Child Friendly Companies (APSAI), which was set up in 2012 following in initiative by KPPPA. APSAI now comprises 20 companies including Astra International, TUV Rheinland Indonesia, Toyota Manufacturing Indonesia, and Carrefour Indonesia among others.

Another key partner in the roll-out of the Principles has been marketing guru Hermawan Kertajaya, UNICEF Indonesia’s Business Champion for Children. Pak Hermawan already used his involvement with many networks a number of times to promote the Principles, including during the Jakarta Business Week and through his monthly editorial in the Forbes Magazine, Indonesia edition, UNICEF and partners are also collaborating with universities aiming to integrate the Principles in their courses on Corporate Social Responsibility.

UNICEF is inviting companies to assess their impact on children and, based on the results, adjust their business practices to bring them in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF Headquarters has developed information and training packages which provide guidance.

To encourage and accelerate the implementation of the Principles, UNICEF also seeks to establish a corporate leadership platform called the UNICEF Corporate Lab in a number of countries including in Indonesia. It will bring together leading sustainable businesses, government representatives and experts in child rights and corporate sustainability to pilot business practices that respect and support children’s rights.

As part of the initiative, UNICEF and partners aim to develop industry-specific guidance for the implementation of the Principles with a focus on consumer goods, information and communication technologies (ICT), travel and tourism and financial services, including banking and insurance. Thematic research will identify challenges and opportunities related to children’s rights and the corporate world. Based on the results, business-led action plans will be developed to address the most material child rights challenges.
The Child Rights and Business Principles

All businesses should:

1. Meet their responsibility to respect children’s rights and commit to supporting the human rights of children
2. Contribute to 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 the 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 fulfill children’s rights

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