



# IZA Guiding Principle on Children's Rights

## Purpose

Businesses everywhere have a responsibility to respect children's rights and to avoid complicity in the abuse of those rights. Corporate responsibility to respect human rights is defined as "avoiding the infringement of the rights of others and addressing any adverse human rights impact with which the business is involved."<sup>1</sup> Business responsibility is based on protection, respect, remedy, support and championship.

In short, businesses have a responsibility to ensure that no child is harmed or exploited by their actions. This requires proactive efforts on the part of businesses to identify and address its potential and actual impacts on boys and girls. This responsibility applies to a business' own activities and throughout its relationships connected to those activities.

## Guiding Principles

All businesses should:

1. Meet their responsibility to respect children's rights and commit to supporting the human rights of children.
  - a. Put in place appropriate policies and processes to identify and assess any actual or potential impact; to integrate and take action upon finding; and to monitor and track effectiveness of response
  - b. You may want to conduct a human rights due diligence process and consult with children and their families and promote best business practices
2. Contribute towards the elimination of child labor, including in all business activities and business relationships
  - a. Do not employ or use children in any type of child labor.
  - b. Prevent, identify and mitigate harm to young workers and protect them from work that is prohibited for workers under 18 years old
3. Provide decent work for young workers, parents and caregivers
  - a. Respect the rights of children above the minimum age for work
  - b. Provide decent work opportunities for young workers that include age-appropriate social and health protection; quality education and vocational training; livelihood development programs and opportunity to earn a living.

## Child Labor is:

Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. This includes work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; work that interferes with their schooling; and engaging in work children who are under the minimum working age(s) set by national legislation, or international standards.

## A Young Worker is:

A child who is above the minimum legal working age and engaged in economic activity. It is an age group that is subject to designation as child labor if the work or working conditions are hazardous.

<sup>1</sup> Children's Rights and Business Principles; Save the Children, UN Global Compact and UNICEF, 2012

- c. Provide decent working conditions that support male and female workers in their roles as parents and caregivers
4. Ensure the protection and safety of children in all business activities and facilities
  - a. Address safety and protection risks posed by company facilities and staff
  - b. Develop and implement a child protection code of conduct
5. Ensure that products and services are safe, and seek to support children's rights through them
  - a. Ensure that products and services for children or to which children may be exposed are safe and do not cause mental, moral or physical harm
  - b. Maximize accessibility and availability of products and services that are essential for child survival and development
6. Use marketing and advertising that respect and support children's rights
  - a. Comply with business conduct standards in World Health Assembly instruments related to marketing health
  - b. Use marketing that promotes children's rights, positive self-esteem, healthy lifestyles and non-violent values
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. Reinforce community and government efforts to protect and fulfill children's rights
10. Reinforce community and government efforts to protect and fulfill children's rights



## Business Benefits

**Contributing to a stable and sustainable future:** Businesses that comply with laws relating to children's rights help to build strong, stable, communities and durable economic structures.

**Improving recruitment and retention of workforce:** Providing a family-friendly environment for employees with responsibility for children can improve recruitment, retention, and loyalty.

**Attracting investment:** Respecting and supporting children's rights can build confidence among concerned investors. It can also attract investment from the growing socially responsible market.

**Enhancing corporate reputation:** A company's reputation is a magnet to attract consumers, investors, employees, and other business partners. Stakeholders are proud to support companies that take their social responsibility seriously.

**Building good will:** The intangible benefits of nurturing good will strengthens relationships with local communities.

**Creating value for consumers:** Enterprises that diligently scrutinize the impact of their activities on children's rights will remain viable in a market with increasing consumer demand for ethically produced goods.

International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and work	The minimum age at which children can start work	Possible exceptions for developing countries
<b>Hazardous work</b> Any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18.	<b>18</b> (16 under strict conditions)	<b>18</b> (16 under strict conditions)
<b>Basic Minimum Age</b> The minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, which is generally 15.	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Light work</b> Children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.	<b>13-15</b>	<b>12-14</b>

## Member Success Stories

**Compania Minera Antamina** developed The Antamina Mining Fund (FMA) to organize “social projects that improve the quality of life for residents of Ancash.” The fund supports four main efforts: health and nutrition, education, productive development, and infrastructure. Through their work with children, the reading proficiency of students rose from 3.8% to 18.6%. Ten playgrounds have been built for children age 0-3. Malnutrition and anemia decreased 12% and 17% respectively in children under 3. The fund not only affects children, but their parents and community as well. In 2010 alone, 18,555 residents received specialized medical care to which they otherwise wouldn’t have had access.<sup>2</sup>

**Hindustan Zinc** is involved in a number of initiatives that aid their communities. One of these is the Mid-Day Meal project. Fresh, healthy meals are prepared in high-tech kitchens then delivered to primary and secondary school children in the remotest areas in three districts. More than 182,000 Indian children benefit from this project. The overall goal is to increase dietary nutrition for these children, but another positive result has been an increase in school attendance by 90%. The Mid-Day Meal program is jointly operated by Hindustan Zinc, the Government of Rajasthan, and Naandi Foundation.<sup>3</sup>

**MMG – Sepon Mine in Laos** is implementing a project to increase mother and child health in their community in Laos. The program aims to improve the health of children by ensuring that expectant mothers get adequate nutrition and healthcare. Additional objectives are to improve the skill level of healthcare workers and the capacity of district staff, which, in turn, advances the quality of service available to children in the community. As part of this effort, a vaccination program in which mothers and children are issued vaccination cards has been very successful. Sepon Mine is an **MMG** operation (Minerals and Metals Group) and collaborates with the Macfarlane Burnet Institute and Vilabouly District’s Department of Health to implement the mother and child health program.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Antamina. “Antamina Mining Fund.” [Web](#).

<sup>3</sup> Vedanta. Socio-economic projects: Mid-day Meal Program. [Web](#).

<sup>4</sup> MMG. “Mother and Child Health.” [Web](#).

## Corporate Responsibility Regarding Children’s Rights:

**Protect.  
Respect.  
Remedy.  
Support.**

### Helpful Resources

- Articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Click [here](#) to access.
- Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. Click [here](#) to access.
  - “Executive Summary of Mapping of Links between Business & Children’s Rights”
  - “Children’s Rights & Business Principles Initiative (CRBPI) Concept Note”
- Children’s Rights and Business Principles; Save the Children, UN Global Compact and UNICEF, 2012. Click [here](#) to access.
- Children are Everyone’s Business. UNICEF workbook. Click [here](#) to access.
- International Labor Organization. Click [here](#) to access.
- Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. Click [here](#) to access.