How the Children's Rights and Business Principles Can Advance the Rights of the Girl Child

September 2015 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), a global recognition of and commitment to achieving women’s equality and rights in all spheres, including economic empowerment. The Beijing Platform for Action covers 12 critical action areas including women and the economy and the substantial role women play in development, as well as ensuring the rights of the girl child.

Although there has been some improvement on protecting girls’ rights in recent years, girls remain vulnerable to cultural practice, education inequality and son preference in many parts of the world. Based on the 2014 MDG report, women account for 60 per cent of the adult and youth population afflicted by illiteracy. Girls are also more at risk of suffering discrimination in food allocation and healthcare.

The Children’s Rights and Business Principles, co-developed by UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children, identify actions that all businesses can take to respect and support children’s rights. This resource includes selected examples from the compilation “Children’s Rights and Business Principles — Good Practices per Principle”, http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/CRBP/GoodPracticesPerPrinciple.pdf that specifically focus on how companies can have a positive impact on girls’ rights around the world.

Good Practices to advance the Rights of the Girl Child

A major technology company in the health care sector provides compact, portable ultrasound technology in India offering significant potential health benefits to millions who suffer from painful or potentially life threatening diseases. The company has also implemented a poster campaign to promote the ‘Rights of the Girl Child’ in response to allegations that their products have been misused to facilitate female feticide in the region.

A major computer security software corporation has delivered a number of ground-breaking programmes designed to help educate younger generations to be safe and ethical online citizens. They have supported, through their expertise and funding, a curriculum related to online safety’ by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts; and the ‘Growing Up Digital’ initiative being piloted by the Victoria Department of Education in Australia.

An American multinational corporation specializing in Internet-related services and products launched an initiative to get school-aged girls coding early. The initiative includes coding projects, video profiles of girls and women who explain how they’re using code to do what

1 Please note that these working examples have not necessarily been reviewed by the companies concerned and may be subject to further editing.
they love and a resource directory for parents and girls to find more information about new local events, camps, classes, and clubs.

A large conglomerate based in India works to give young under-privileged girls an education by supporting NGOs that aim to ensure these girls are given the opportunity to attend primary school and provide them with textbooks, school bags, uniforms and a nutritious meal during school hours.

A global food, personal care and home products company has launched a social ‘movement’, which raises awareness of sustainability and child rights issues. It promotes a range of positive values around sustainability, healthy lifestyles, child rights and increasing girls’ self-esteem through sponsoring events, grant making, partnering with not for profit organisations and communication campaigns.

The charitable foundation of a multi-national sporting goods company has launched a programme that promotes the rights of girls and young women. It is a collaboration between the company’s charitable foundation, other not for profit organisations, and the UN Foundation. The movement promotes its messages through films and a range of communication tools and resources.

Recognizing the wider societal benefits of educating and empowering young girls, a UK based banking company has invested in a targeted Corporate Social Responsibility campaign that supports girls around the world to gain an education. Company employees have volunteered 170,000 hours and supported around 50,000 children in 22 countries.