

7 July 2014

H.E. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
USA

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

I am pleased to confirm that Aspirations Education reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In this annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations.

We also commit to share this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.
A comprehensive account of the projects conducted so far can be found at <http://www.aspirations.edu.lk/foundation/>

We are happy that our University partners world over has endorsed and encouraged our "Social Duty Movement". The blog "Ampara Project" was one such initiative pioneered by Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia, in support of the Aspirations Foundation. The content of the blog is a report written by the Deakin University's Global Citizenship Program after a field visit they undertook with Aspirations Foundation. This third party account of our work can be found at <http://amparaproject.blogspot.com.au/>

We support public accountability and transparency, and therefore commit to report on progress annually according to the Global Compact COP policy.

Sincerely yours,


AlthAboyssekera
Chairman

Human Rights

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Aspirations Education Foundation (AEF) has embraced the principles of Global Compact Initiative and has incorporated them within our work spheres. AEF operates focusing its attention on right to education and need based community mobilization for development. Within the past year our work has focused on ensuring and promoting children's rights in rural communities and uplifting the standard of living in a holistic approach.

Ensuring children's right to education has been a primary concern of AEF. 'Apeksha' Scholarship scheme which was launched in 2007 to assist talented students with financial difficulties was expanded during the last year and currently more than 460 students representing 32 schools representing 21 districts are benefiting through this intervention project.

AEF's scholarship scheme has reached out to assist student from North and Eastern provinces which were severely affected during the recently concluded civil war. Some students who had been in internally displaced (IDP) camps are now beneficiaries of our scholarship scheme and are continuing their compulsory education, working towards a brighter future.

In order to create a stimulating learning environment within schools, AEF has been funding and coordinating various infrastructural and education development programmes within our partner schools. Infrastructure development, Water and Sanitation, IT education, Language education, First aid, Sports and leadership development, Library development and agriculture and home gardening were the main focus areas of our school based development projects.

The assistance lent to these deserving rural schools and surrounding less income group communities in this manner has helped to secure the children's rights to education and has ensured that they have access to basic facilities a student requires thus providing them a stimulating educational platform to achieve their aspirations.

AEF has reached out to develop the nursery education system in outskirts of Sri Lanka. Projects that were launched under this sphere mainly focused on creating a child friendly learning environment in these institutes. Such projects included uplifting basic facilities like water and sanitation facilities and also providing materialistic aid such as desks, chairs, play equipment etc. Developing nursery education lays the platform for these students to merge with formal education system which begins in primary classes with ease.

- "Apeksha" scholarship scheme has reached out to provide scholarships to more than 460 students from 32 different schools representing 21 districts of the island including Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Colombo, Gampaha, Hambanthota, Jaffna, Kandy, Kegalle, Kilinochchi, Kurunegala, Mannar, Matale, Monaragala, Mulativu, Nuwara Eliya, Polonnaruwa and Tricomalee.
- Financial assistance was lent to Sirisanda Primary school, in Ampara District, to construct play equipment including a see-saw, swing unit, merry-go-round, for children's use. In order to fulfill the inadequate number of chairs and desks available for use at the school, AEF granted financial and technical assistance to construct new desks and chairs for the utilization of students.

- In January 2013, text books and other education related books were donated to Okkampitiya Wijayabahu Maha Vidyalaya and Okkampiyitya Wijayabahu primary school to enrich their library collections as a part of our library and literacy development programme.
- As a part of the effort to develop language education and science education in rural schools, AEF provides monthly financial grant to few of our partner schools to cover the remunerations provided to qualified teachers who were hired by the schools, under our encouragement and guidance, to address the deficiency of qualified teachers. Under this project ;
 - Wijayabahu Maha Vidyalaya in Monaragala district hired teachers for Tamil language, English language and Mathematics.
 - Lihiniwehera Kanishta Vidyalaya in Kurunegala district hired teachers for English Language and Tamil Language.
 - Veppamkulam School in Mannar district hired Mathematics teacher to develop their Mathematic educations
 - Polwatta Maha Vidyalaya in Inginyagala hired a library assistant to develop the library management project at the school
 - Sirisanda KV, Polwatta hired a primary teacher to assist in Primary Education.
 - Polwatta MV hired a sports trainer for Sports development
- Financial grant was provided to Ridimaliyadda Kandegama Kanishta Vidyalaya to buy the necessary sports equipment required by the Girl's cricket team, who were the champions of their education zone in 2012. AEF pours their efforts to empower school sports sector as this is the platform from which future stars of world sport emerge.
- Communication systems were donated to Kobbawala Keerthirathna Maha Vidyalaya and Dhammajothi Kanishata Vidyalaya in Kegalle district as it was a pressing necessity for both these schools. Both these schools are located in slope terrains and these geographical factors make communication between different sections of the school rather difficult. Addressing this issue allowed these schools to strengthen their intra-school communication.
- Visaka Pre-School in Ampara district and Seedeve preschool in Kegalle District has been beneficiaries of oue preschool development projects. Water and sanitation facilities of Visaka preschool was developed by AEF to provide the young children a far more safer and hygienic preschool environment. Seedeve preschool was donated child friendly desks and chairs to address the inadequacy of these resources.
- Financial assistance was given to Arunalu Pre-school-Polwatha to reconstruct the building to accommodate 60 children.
- Financial Assistance to buy Sports Kits for the Women cricket team at Kandegama KV.
- Financial Assistance to buy necessary costumes for the dancing troupe at the Polwatta School-16 students in the dancing troupe.
- AEF conducted a day workshop on drama, aesthetic education for the benefit of 1000 children and 25 teachers in the Ampara District.
- Financial assistance provided to 6 children at the Kobbewala Keerthirathne MV to follow the basic IT training course.

Labour

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

AEF operates with respect to rights of all employees and does not tolerate any form of discrimination and all are treated equally irrespective of the race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, family circumstances, political opinion, trade union membership, age, nationality or disability.

AEF believes in community participation and active involvement in the process of development and we incorporate and mobilize individuals from rural communities as in group approach in our development projects. This creates employment opportunities for individuals and helps to empower the communities around schools in which we carry our projects.

As a result we have formed community based organizations at

“Abilasha Arunaloka CBO”

- Polwatta, Ampara
- Kobbewala District
- Kegalle District
- Lihiniwehera-Kurunegala
- Kurulubedda-Polonnaruwa District

We also support the emergence of Community Based Organizations (CBO) to encourage the group approach in rural development initiatives. The active involvement of the rural community to identify the burning issues and needs in a holistic manner will contribute to the sustainable development in rural community.

Under the above scheme, we have done the following activities

- 4500 pineapple cultivation at Dhammajothi KV, Kegalle district.
- 2100 special mango variety in 35 schools.
- 100 Banana trees at Lihiniwehera KV, Kurunegala District

As a part of agriculture based projects, AEF encouraged unemployed individuals from the schools immediate surroundings to get involved with the project in turn for which they receive a sufficient remuneration. These individuals are the stakeholders of the project and we believe that this provides them an opportunity to explore the world of entrepreneurship which in turn would empower them to launch their own ventures. This strengthens them economically while their efforts would assist indirectly to develop the school in their own community.

Development of education sector and the financial support lent to students from low economic backgrounds to continue their education without disruption assists to eradicate child labour. Education lays a strong platform for their personal development and this reduces the chance of them being exploited. Formal education they receive through schools opens doors to different career opportunities which will secure their future.

Most of the rural communities in Sri Lanka are agricultural communities and children sometimes drop out of schools with the consent of their parents to assist their families with agriculture related activities. AEF has also focused on educating the parents of students in general, to stress upon the importance of education with the intention of reducing the number of such dropouts. Raising awareness is a fruitful campaign in these rural communities as parents are willing to support what is best for their child.

- Number of our partner schools joined hands with AEF to launch the agriculture related project scheme. Padavi Jayanthi MV, Yaya 10 - Thissapura KV, Yaya 11/12 - Parakramabahu MV, Yaya 13 - Padavisinhapura KV from Trincomalee district, Dhammajothi KV from Kegalle district, Polwatta MV, Kandegama KV from Badulla district, Paragahakele MV, Senagama KV, Namalthalawa MV, Namaloya KV, Koknahara KV, Devalahinda KV, Kiyulegama KV, Kotawehera MV, Wavinna MV, Weheragoda KV, Thotama KV, Aluthpella KV, Welusumana KV, Sadhathissa MV, Ruhunagama KV, Ambagahawella KV, Sirisanda KV, Koknahara Temple, Namaloya Temple, Polwatha Temple, Kadurugoda Temple from Ampara district, Kurulubedda PV, Kurulubedda Temple, Kadawathmaduwa Temple from Polonnaruwa district are the current partner schools who have joined this venture. Parents, students, school development society and the school administration are stakeholders of these projects and this eventually allows schools to become self-sustainable.
- IT training centre was established with in Inginiyagala, Ampara District to develop the IT literacy of youth in the surrounding community. School leavers, government and private sector employees and youth groups in this village now have an opportunity to enhance their IT knowledge thus benefit from this project. Main aim of this project was to create better career opportunities for the rural youth by equipping them with a proper IT education which is a necessity in highly globalized modern world.
- AEF also supports development of small scale cottage industries with the intention of promoting entrepreneurship among rural communities. Sewing machine and technical knowledge was provided to a young woman to start her small scale garment industry which marked the launch of our women empowerment programme which will be developed within this year to make a broader impact. Women empowerment will also assist to diminish gender inequality which is a global concern.
- AEF has assisted to launch farmer-societies in rural communities. Idea behind this is to develop the communication among the farmers which will assist them greatly to address the common pressing issues. These associations will be empowered to launch their own community development projects which will be based upon their common necessities.
- Financial Assistance to buy a Sewing Machine for poor woman in Polwatha to be independent in generating income for the family from her own ability.
- Financial assistance to improve the infrastructure of a house which didn't have a roof due to the poverty & financial difficulties.

Environment

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

AEF has concentrated on making all our development projects environmental friendly as we place high value upon sustainability. As a part of diversifying our focus areas, AEF has launched few agriculture based income generation projects in our partner schools. Crops with a commercial value such as mangos, pineapple etc are grown within the school premises and the harvest is utilized to generate income which is then used to support the school development work.

Special attention is paid to maintain these agriculture projects environmentally friendly and to make sure that natural ecosystems in these rural communities are not disturbed by the introduced commercial crops. Fertilizers

and other technical equipment used are ensured to be environmentally friendly. AEF has also been promoting home gardening, where necessary guidance is provided to initiate and maintain small home gardens using day-to-day organic waste materials as fertilizers.

These projects raise awareness about benefits of recycling organic waste and other environmental friendly techniques utilized in eco friendly agriculture schemes.

- As a part of the agriculture project scheme following cultivations were initiated in our partner schools;

Padavi Jayanthi Maha Vidyalaya in Trincomalee district – Mango cultivation
Dhammajothi KV from Kegalle district – Rambutan, Pineapple and areca nut cultivations
Polwatta MV from Ampara district – Mango cultivation
Kandegama KV from Badulla district – Mango cultivation
Paragahakele MV from Ampara district – Water melon and mango cultivation
Kurulubedda PV from Polonnaura district – Guava and mango cultivation
Kandegama KV from Badulla district— Mango cultivation
Paragahakele MV— Mango cultivation
Senagama KV— Mango cultivation
Namalthalawa MV— Mango cultivation
Namaloya KV— Mango cultivation
Koknahara KV— Mango cultivation
Devalahinda KV— Mango cultivation
Kiyulegama KV— Mango cultivation
Kotawehera MV— Mango cultivation
Wavinna MV— Mango cultivation
Weheragoda KV— Mango cultivation
Thotama KV— Mango cultivation
Welusumana KV— Mango cultivation
Sadhathissa MV— Mango cultivation
Ruhunagama KV— Mango cultivation
Ambagahawella KV— Mango cultivation
Sirisanda KV— Mango cultivation
Koknahara Temple— Mango cultivation
Namaloya Temple— Mango cultivation
Polwatha Temple— Mango cultivation
Kadurugoda Temple— Mango cultivation
Padagoda MV— Mango cultivation
Weheragala Vidyalaya— Mango cultivation
Aluthela — Mango cultivation
Owagiri Temple— Mango cultivation
Kurulubadda Temple— Mango cultivation
Padaviya Jayanthi MV— Mango cultivation
Yaya 12 Vidyalaya— Mango cultivation
Yaya 13 Vidyalaya— Mango cultivation
Madukanda MV— Mango cultivation

- These crops will be cultivated in environmentally friendly manner and organic fertilizer use is being promoted in every school to maintain their cultivations and other home gardens.
- All these agricultural projects are being supervised by a well experienced and qualified agricultural consultant to ensure that these introduced crops do not disturb the natural ecosystems. Cultivating crops are selected depending upon the geographical and weather conditions of the location to ensure sustainability and high productivity.

- These school based agricultural projects will empower the agricultural sector of Sri Lanka in future and awareness would be raised regarding sustainable, eco-friendly agricultural techniques as many schools children, their parents and surrounding communities are educated through this project scheme.

Anti corruption

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

AEF operates with respect to transparency, integrity and places high value on anti corruption. We stress upon maximum community participation with regard to our development projects based in rural communities to ensure these aspects are carried forth in them.

- AEF encourages bilateral agreements between us and partner schools to promote good governance, systematic, sustainable progression and transparency.