



**UN Global Compact
Communication on Engagement**

October 2023

**CEO statement of continued support and ongoing commitment to the UN
Global Compact initiatives and principles:**

I am pleased to confirm that the Consortium for Street Children (CSC) remains fully committed to the UN Global Compact and its ten principles. As we develop our next five-year strategy (2024-2029), collaboration across sectors is at the forefront of our ambition to ensure street-connected children can enjoy the same rights as every other child. In particular, we focus on Principles 1, 2 and 5; ensuring businesses support and protect internationally proclaimed human rights, and are not complicit in human rights abuses, and the effective abolition of child labour. We are proud to share below our actions in supporting the UN Global Compact and its principles and reaffirm our commitment to advance these principles through our work and those who support it.



Pia MacRae
Chief Executive Officer
10 October 2023

Practical actions to support the Global Compact Principles and engage with the initiative:

Since October 2021, CSC has contributed to the UN Global Compact principles in the following ways:

CLARISSA: supporting child-led advocacy

CSC has been part of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO)-funded “Child Labour Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-East Asia” (CLARISSA) programme since 2019. This is a participatory research programme, that is co-developing, with stakeholders, innovative and context-appropriate ways to increase options for children to avoid engagement in hazardous, exploitative labour in Bangladesh and Nepal. The programme has gathered 400 life stories from each country, which form the evidence base for revealing macro-level system dynamics that drive child labour, to help ensure that solutions generated by the programme create sustainable positive change for the children and their families. Based on the key themes identified in the life story interviews, 13 Action Research Groups have been meeting every 2-4 weeks over the past year. Action Research Groups are made up of employers or children working or living in the neighbourhoods of the adult entertainment sector (Nepal) and the leather sector (Bangladesh) which undertake research and action on potential solutions. In addition, CSC has supported child-led advocacy through development and capacity building of two Children’s Advocacy Groups (one in Nepal and one in Bangladesh) made up of working children or children living in the neighbourhoods who support and scale-up the advocacy efforts of children’s Action Research Groups in both countries.

Through our members, CSC have supported working children to present findings from the 400 life story interviews to key stakeholders (such as policymakers and media professionals) through panel discussions (aired online), cross-ministerial meetings and media conferences. Key examples of national level advocacy led by children include the following. In Nepal, working children have contributed to the development of recommendations from civil society organisations for the governmental review of the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act. In terms of hazardous work, working children recommend listing harmful working conditions for children in the adult entertainment sector rather than listing the sector as a whole, so that children over a certain age (above 14) can engage in safe working conditions and provide for themselves and their families. In Bangladesh, a community dialogue was held between working children, employers and parents to discuss the improvement of working conditions in the leather sector – employers and working children committed to improve working conditions and to continued dialogue.

APPG: All-Party Inquiry into Child Labour

In tandem with the CLARISSA programme, in 2021 CSC reconvened the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Street Children with a year-long inquiry into child labour. This involved hearing of businesses’ efforts to comply with international

human rights standards in their supply chains through modern slavery reporting, including businesses working within the production and retail of garments. The inquiry found that British fashion retailers need clearer regulations on child labour. They recommend amending the Modern Slavery Act to require businesses to address child labour explicitly in their modern slavery statements. They also recommend making it mandatory for businesses to upload their annual modern slavery statements to a registry and provide evidence for all assertions made, especially those regarding child labour. Finally, they recommend requiring businesses to provide comprehensive lists of suppliers and subcontractors to enable audits of supply chains.

Universal Periodic Review: highlighting child labour in Bangladesh

In 2023, CSC engaged with the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of the government of Bangladesh's international human rights obligations. CSC submitted an alternative report focused on child labour, highlighting the major steps that Bangladesh has taken towards eliminating the worst forms of child labour since its 2018 review, such as ratifying ILO Convention 138 on minimum age, while calling for more to be done to address child labour by engaging with children and employers in Bangladesh's large informal economy, including the leather sector. CSC also met with several representatives from states' permanent missions in Geneva with a view to them taking forward recommendations from the alternative report to the government of Bangladesh in line with emerging evidence from the CLARISSA programme, namely to progressively implement ILO Convention 138 by working with employers and children in the design, implementation and monitoring of interventions on child labour.

Engagement with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

In 2022, CSC convened two consultations with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, CLARISSA partners and network members to inform a report on homelessness as a cause and consequence of slavery, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour. In January 2023, CSC also co-authored an official submission in response to the Special Rapporteur's call for input. The evidence submitted by CSC and partners informed a report, to be issued by the Human Rights Council in September 2023, with recommendations to governments and civil society on how best to sever the links between street-connectedness, homelessness and contemporary forms of slavery. CSC will be co-hosting, with OHCHR, a side event at the UN further to the issue of the report, with speakers from states, CLARISSA Nepal, members of the UN CRC and the UK Modern Slavery envoy, among others.

Legal Atlas: providing clear information on laws and policies affecting street children

Our online "Legal Atlas", developed with support from Baker McKenzie and their clients, has continued to be updated with new country reports. The Atlas is designed to highlight the laws in each country which have the greatest discriminatory impact on street-connected children; namely status offences, police round-ups, and legal identity.

UNGC21 review

In 2023, we embarked on a review of the UN CRC's General Comment 21 on Children in Street Situations. This review is designed to take stock of if and how the guidance in UNGC21 has been implemented by frontline practitioners, government officials, and more, in the five years since UNGC21 was adopted. We have conducted an open survey and are now holding insight harvesting sessions. The results of this work will guide our future advocacy and action and help to decrease the distance between the UN CRC policy commitments and the realities of life for children in street situations.

West Africa review/ECOWAS

In 2023, we submitted an amicus brief to the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the case of Advocaid Limited (Applicants) v The Republic of Sierra Leone (Respondent) involving alleged widespread human rights violations stemming from the criminal proscription of 'loitering' in Sierra Leone. This law disproportionately affects street-connected children and goes against international and regional human rights mechanisms, who have recommended States decriminalise petty offences, including loitering.

Advocacy e-learning

Our advocacy e-learning course has entered its third year and has had close to 200 participants learn how to develop an advocacy strategy and action plans aligned to their organisation's capacity and strengths.

IDSC

The International Day for Street Children (IDSC) continues to be a strong focal point of advocacy and awareness-raising of the issues facing street-connected children. In 2022, we held the final in our five-year "4 Steps to Equality" campaign, focusing on the need for specialised solutions to create positive change for street children, and in 2023 we adopted the theme, "Keeping Street-Connected Children Safe". CSC supported the engagement of a variety of stakeholders, including government officials, media, and business owners to raise awareness of these issues.

Measurement of outcomes (qualitative or quantitative measurements of results):

- Since CLARISSA's launch in July 2019, we have worked with four in-country partners in Nepal and Bangladesh, helped to develop an international advocacy strategy and supported research and life story gathering activities. CSC recently made a submission to the UN Human Rights Council ahead of Bangladesh's Universal Periodic Review in November 2023, showcasing CLARISSA's emerging evidence on child labour. Briefings have also been prepared for States' permanent missions to Geneva.

- In 2022, the Atlas had 62,954 visitors, from a range of backgrounds, from universities, hospitals, police stations, government offices, and more, around the

world. The Legal Atlas now features research from 166 countries which has been provided with support from 25 corporate partners (to date) who have given pro bono legal research.

- CSC's advocacy e-learning course has now welcomed 171 participants over three years, from 29 countries.

- The Keeping Street Children Safe project in partnership with Red Nose Day USA, has supported 8167 children in 9 countries between 2021 and 2023.

- CSC is partnering in two education projects with British and Foreign Schools Society, one in Kenya and one in Sierra Leone. Collectively, they have reached 498 children in 2023 to date.

- During the latest International Day for Street Children in April 2023, we reached 186 million people on social media and had 1,954 views on the website. We engaged with a number of top influencers to help raise awareness, from media correspondents, to government officials and INGOs.

- Throughout 2023, we have worked to develop our engagement with corporate partners and introduce them to the issues facing street-connected children, with five new corporate partners supporting our work so far in 2023.