

Jul 27 2015

Valerie Michel – Reporting parameters and children's rights

Damiano de Felice

This post was contributed by Valerie Michel, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at Rosy Blue NV.

In line with our heritage as a responsible corporate citizen, the [Rosy Blue Business Alliance](#) is committed to respecting the economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights of individuals involved in and impacted by our operations. We support the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Core Conventions of the International Labour Organisation. We believe that this is good for business because these standards, attitudes and behaviour help create a business and societal culture in which our company can best thrive.

As a minimum, we comply with local human rights legislation as well as our own human resources and ethical sourcing standards, and implement industry standards that are focusing on business and social responsibilities, across our global operations and with our supply chain partners. Wherever local legislation is weak or absent, we apply relevant international standards.

As a company it is important to set goals, measure performance and manage change. We report annually on our progress to our external stakeholders. While doing so, we chose to use parameters and more specifically to use the [GRI G4 guidelines](#).

These parameters assure that we track and disclose our sustainability impacts and performance in the most transparent and measurable way. Another reason to use parameters when reporting, is that our report becomes more understandable for other readers familiar with the GRI standard.

The G4 guidelines also allow us to work proactively on our data collection platform. Not only do they determine what would make a good report, but also implicitly what would make a better sustainability strategy. With the comprehensive option and the specific standard disclosures, the guidelines suggests other areas to focus on and thus propose what could be the next step in our journey starting from the basic core. Progressing from the core to the comprehensive option, we can continuously grow in the standard.

However, despite the indicators on human rights being well represented in the GRI, reporting on children's right related issues is unfortunately significantly underdeveloped in this reporting standard.

We really regret this gap as children are major stakeholders to our company, but also to business in general. Children's rights parameters are very important to us as we interact with them on a daily basis, both directly and indirectly. They are family members of employees, can be young workers, future employees and business leaders. At the same time, they are key members of the communities and environments in which we operate.

Developed by UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children – the [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#) are the first comprehensive set of principles to guide companies on the full range of actions they can take in the workplace, marketplace and community to respect and support children's rights. More specifically, we enthusiastically welcomed the practical [tool on children's rights in sustainability reporting](#) that provides guidance to businesses on how to incorporate children's rights in their GRI-based reporting.

While writing our report and using the G4 guidelines this year, we could easily extend the guidelines to integrate children's rights into our sustainability measuring. We believe this tool is a first very good step to close the current gap and we hope it will be integrated in the GRI and other relevant standards.

There is clearly a high need and importance for measuring initiatives regarding specific vulnerable groups. Examples of measurable parameters can help companies integrate more specific measures into their policies and procedures.

But the lack of measurable parameters regarding this very specific group of children shows us there might be a bigger deficit. While we are very pleased using the GRI standard, it is not perfect yet. There is a high need for it to go broader and deeper, integrating specific tools and more specific indicators like these children rights parameters.

Valerie Michel

Valerie Michel is Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at Rosy Blue NV where she is responsible for the CSR strategy and the implementation of various CSR programs, corporate communication and stakeholder engagement. Valerie is also

participating in the local UN Global Compact Network Belgium and is actively involved in the Children's Rights and Business Principles working committee, as part of the Global Compact.



This entry was posted in [Management tools](#), [Reporting](#) and tagged [business](#), [children](#), [gri](#), [human rights](#), [reporting](#), [unicef](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).