SIME DARBY

Helping communities to thrive

The multinational conglomerate Sime Darby addresses children's rights in a number of different ways across sectors and geographies. They are working actively to improve the safety of the communities where they operate, by providing child protection, access to water, education and healthcare.

ADDRESSING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Creating a safe community

Sime Darby is a company with a wide range of industries, over 130,000 employees and operations in 26 different countries. They are keenly aware of how they impact children in their business and address children's rights in numerous ways.

For example, in 2010, Sime Darby developed the Child Protection Policy, to ensure a safe environment for children where they operate, going beyond issues of child labour. They have plantations in developing countries such as Papua New Guinea, Salomon Islands and Liberia. In these areas, the focus is not only on workplace issues, but the company works to provide basic services such as water access, sanitation facilities, waste removal, and access to education. Sime Darby provides awareness training to all employees on the importance of child protection.

The company works with both small, local NGOs and larger organisations such as Oxfam and the International Labour Organization (ILO) with a number of different key projects and programs. In Liberia they built 14 schools to increase the basic education level. They constructed clinics and water access in the same area as the schools. In Malaysia they conduct workshops for children in plantation areas to inform them of their rights and where they can go for help. To date, over 1200 children have completed this three-day workshop.

Understanding key material risks

The sustainability team conducts materiality assessments for each division in order to understand the key material risks the company is facing. In the process they receive input from both board members and external stakeholders

SIME DARBY AT A GLANCE

Industrial goods

COMPANY PROFILE:
Multinational conglomerate, founded in 1910

REVENUE '14:
$12,4 billion

COUNTRIES W. SALES:
Operations in 26 countries, with HQ in Malaysia. 5 core divisions, incl plantation, Industrial equipment, Motors, Property, Energy & Utilities

SELECTED SCORECARD INDICATORS WHERE THE COMPANY IS DOING VERY WELL

- Performance reporting
- Materiality assessment
- Strategic programs

For example, they conduct interviews with key customers, investors and NGOs to understand what the key material issues will be during the coming 5-10 years. This is fed into the materiality assessment and helps the company to prioritize what each division should focus on in terms of sustainability activities and social actions.

Governance

Sustainability is an important topic on the board's agenda. In Sime Darby there is one main board and 5 flagship boards for each division. There is a Sustainability committee that reports directly to the main board and each of the flagship boards also report on sustainability to the main board. The Group Chief Sustainability Officer reports directly to the President and the CEO. The role has the same level of authority as a Managing Director for a division - meaning that sustainability topics are high on the corporate agenda.

Going forward

What is important in a large organisation such as Sime Darby is to understand what is happening on the ground and how to measure it. "The companies that perform the best are those that ask the toughest questions and measure themselves against those questions. It is easy on a headquarter level to make too many assumptions on what is going on in the business." Third party verification on the plantations provides the company with a strong fact base for action. The combination of a true understanding of what is happening on the ground, together with a strong leadership support and prioritized agenda constitutes a strong base for the future children's rights work at Sime Darby.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

In Papua New Guinea the company addresses needs of the families that live in the communities surrounding the plantations. The company ensures that access to water, education, and healthcare is within one hour's walking distance. This holistic approach has proven to be successful.

"The companies that perform the best are those that dare to ask the toughest questions and measure themselves against those questions."