

THEMATIC NOTE

ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN CHILD PROTECTION IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM



CSOs and the private sector need to communicate more about child protection initiatives, as positive communication will spur more positive actions. Child protection needs to be ensured through the supply chains of the private sector. We need to create tourism destinations that are free from sexual exploitation of children.

Recommendations from the first International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism, Bogota, 2018.

WHY ENGAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR?

Partnerships between civil society organizations and business bring attention to children's rights and have the potential to end the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT). Travel and tourism, whilst creating many opportunities both for tourists and local communities, can put children at risk if not developed in a sustainable way. Offenders take advantage of hotel and private accommodation facilities, increasingly accessible transport options and online platforms to commit such crimes. The tourism industry is thus in a unique position to address SECTT.

Travel and tourism companies work with various stakeholders such as local transport services, tour operators, restaurant or bar owners, as well as local law enforcement agents. Engaging the private sector is therefore a multi-stakeholder commitment. This multi-stakeholder commitment can translate into a multifaceted strategic intervention to end the impunity of offenders and ensure the safety of children in travel and tourism.

WHAT ARE THE RELEVANT FRAMEWORKS FOR ACTION?

At national level, chambers of tourism and regional tourism associations can be involved in mobilizing individual companies to raise awareness on SECTT or adopting national codes of conduct. In some countries, businesses are required to abide by specific laws and regulations in order to operate in the tourism sector.

At the international level, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and The Children's Rights and Business Principles (CRBP) all outline the obligation of the private sector to take responsibility for their impact on children's lives.

The Global Study – the research initiative of 67 partners solely focusing on SECTT - emphasize the need for developing child protection policies that are integrated into company business models and are fully understood by all employees, as well as a commitment to transparency and annual reporting. Examples of socially responsible policies include subscriptions to ethical codes of conduct, specifically The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (The Code).

HOW DOES THE CODE ENGAGE AND SUSTAIN PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITMENT?

“The over-300 members of The Code, range from some of the largest tourism companies in the world through to individual small businesses - the common factor is the desire to make a positive contribution to protecting children”.

Damien Brosnan, Programme Manager, The Code.

The Code creates an increasingly knowledgeable and well-trained tourism industry that can recognize and prevent the potential abuse and exploitation of children. Its tools and training help to build zero tolerance environments where tourists and travelers understand that SECTT is a crime. There are now over 960,000 industry professionals trained to detect and report signs of sexual exploitation. To see full details about the six criteria and benefits for companies becoming a member of The Code, consult [here](#).

HOW DO PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN CSOS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR WORK?

Businesses may not initially be aware of the role they can play in ending the sexual exploitation of children. In addition, many companies lack the confidence or expertise to implement sound policies to tackle SECTT. CSOs know how to harness the potential of the private sector to create positive impact and have both the tools and expertise to help drive this impact. The Down to Zero Alliance produced guidelines specifically outlining how CSOs can engage the private sector.

Civil society organizations around the world, including the Down to Zero Alliance, have formed partnerships with airlines, hotel corporations, restaurant staff, taxi drivers, maintenance support staff, tourism operators and others to ensure that all who may encounter SECTT are trained to recognize exploitative situations and take appropriate prevention action.

Once partnerships have been engaged and commitments established, the scope can be broadened. For example, the public-private partnerships in the US led to the creation of the ‘Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking’ coalition and ‘Truckers against Trafficking’. This all begins with CSOs working alongside the private sector to protect children against sexual exploitation, aiding the design and implementation of child protection policies and continuing support. You can learn quickly about the principles of engaging with the private sector in this 4 minute [video](#).

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE?

To prepare and engage with the private sector, find out more about [The Code](#), [Local Code Representatives](#), [The Global Study](#) and the [Guidance](#) for Civil Society Organisations Working on Child Protection.

For further reading on private sector initiatives, refer to the reports from some top members of The Code: [Kuoni](#), [Carlson](#) and [AccorHotels](#).

VISIT THE CHILD PROTECTION IN
TRAVEL AND TOURISM
WEBSITE

READ THE GUIDANCE FOR CIVIL
SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS WORKING
ON CHILD PROTECTION

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