

#NOLOST GENERATION

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#NoLostGeneration Private Sector Guide

A Short Guide for Private Sector Engagement in Supporting Children and Youth Affected by the Syria and Iraq Crises



THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

We are in the midst of the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. Over 65 million people around the world have been forced from their homes. Among them are 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are children. Add to that that the average number of years refugees are uprooted and in need of assistance before they can safely return home or find refuge in another country has increased to 20 years.

The magnitude of the Syrian and Iraqi crises has overwhelmed the humanitarian system. Over 5 million people have been forced to flee Syria, while 13.5 million people still inside the country require humanitarian assistance. Over 3 million Iraqis are currently displaced inside the country and as many as 1.1 million additional civilians may be forced from their homes by the end of the year as fighting persists.

The conflicts in Syria and Iraq have had a devastating effect on children. Millions of boys and girls are facing violence and deprivation and now live in extreme poverty, having been forced to flee multiple times. Families have become dispersed and their livelihoods and savings are decimated. As a result, children's access to education has been severely reduced, and exploitation in the form of child labor and child marriage is widespread and increasing. Children with disabilities have reduced access to assistance and support and are at greater risk of violence and neglect.

In the refugee hosting countries in the region, children also face a range of challenges. By the end of 2016, there were 2.3 million child refugees from Syria living in the surrounding countries, with over half a million being out of school. A high proportion of families rely solely or partly on income from child labor (46 percent in Jordan in 2016). Girls in particular are at increased risk of child marriage and this impacts their health and access to education.

Approximately one-third of the population affected by the Syria and Iraq crises is aged 10–24. It is of particular concern that these adolescents and young people, which represent the immediate future of the region, are suffering from a growing sense of hopelessness. Young people lack opportunities to learn, earn a livelihood and contribute in their communities.

U.N. agencies, international and national NGOs, and local-level groups are all responding as best they can, but the overall number of children out of school remains high. The need to safeguard children's well-being, eliminate child labor and other forms of exploitation, and to provide young people with opportunities to learn, work, and thrive remains urgent.

HOW THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN HELP

Reaching children and young people with the support they need is complex and long-term work. It requires a collaborative, cross-sector approach which builds on local capacity and expertise while at the same time achieving at-scale, long-term solutions.

The private sector¹ brings a unique combination of expertise and resources that are invaluable in the effort to meet the urgent and ongoing needs of children and youth affected by the refugee crisis. In order to maximize the impact of the private-sector engagement and contribution, it is important to build on the learnings from current and past examples and to work together to ensure that the engagement is relevant, coordinated, and sustainable.

This document aims to provide guidance to private sector organizations wishing to engage in meeting the needs of children and youth affected by the Syria and Iraq crises by working closely with the [No Lost Generation](#) (NLG) initiative and its [NLG Tech Task Force](#).

NLG PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

There are three key types of engagement that businesses can activate in support of refugee children and youth. They are listed here along with some examples of the private sector engagement in this and other humanitarian situations. Additional information can be found in the [Appendix](#) of this document.

1. Corporate Social Responsibility and Philanthropy

Private sector companies have a long history of providing grants and other financial support to humanitarian organizations and communities in support of programs that are providing urgent goods and services to the most vulnerable. In fact, contributing unrestricted funding is the most effective way to support the work of humanitarian organizations and NGOs. In addition to financial contributions, businesses can support humanitarian efforts through employee expertise and volunteering, as well as through in-kind donations of company products and resources.

Examples of engagement in the category of CSR and philanthropy include the following:

- Providing physical assets, such as means of transport, logistics support, distribution and warehousing, to government or humanitarian organizations who are delivering assistance.
- Providing services to humanitarian organizations or governments. For example, telecommunications businesses can provide networks that enable communities and humanitarian to access and share critical information, and media-related businesses can provide platforms, such as radio and print. Businesses can provide connectivity to support:
 - Access to information and life-saving messages, such as information on how to access civil documentation or child protection services;
 - Improved communication to and between critical service points like schools and distribution centers;

¹ For the purposes of this document, private sector actors includes businesses of all sizes, from those present only at local level to those with a global reach.

- Family reunification; and
 - Collection of data to inform humanitarian response.
- Providing functional expertise in support of any aspect of the humanitarian response. For example, in the establishment of Wi-Fi connectivity, the restoration of power supplies or the efficient (re)construction of homes, schools and health care services.
- Making financial donations to humanitarian organizations (local, national or international). Financial contributions can be used to procure urgently needed goods and services, enable cash transfers to affected families; pay stipends or wages for community workers and humanitarians; and advocate or fundraise for greater support to the response. Cash can be used immediately, invested, or carried over and can therefore also help achieve sustained resourcing in protracted crises.
- Contributing to pooled funding through platforms/global funds such the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund.
- Offering in-kind product donations as long as the contribution and implementation is closely aligned with the needs of the refugee children and youth, and coordinated with the humanitarian organizations.
- Supporting local community recovery and response efforts, for example, by investing funds and/or staff time to support community-level work led by local actors to restore services, markets, homes, or infrastructure.
- Contributing to government-led or U.N.-led post-disaster or post-conflict needs assessment and recovery planning.
- Contributing to the national reconstruction plan.

2. Business Operations and Product Development

In countries and communities where they are either already based or could set up operations, private sector actors can address refugee needs through core business operations, including human resources and sourcing processes as well as the development of products and services. This can be done through a solutions development approach, whereby businesses work with government and / or humanitarian organizations to identify key challenges faced by the affected population or those assisting them, and develop innovative solutions.

Examples of engagement in the category of Business Operations and Product Development include the following:

- Use and adaptation of corporate training curricula to develop skill-certification opportunities in cooperation with existing providers and government. Adaptation might include making the content available offline, in local languages, and on mobile devices.
- Creation of or access to job-seeking platforms that match youth with jobs available in their communities or to remote work.
- Provision of apprenticeships or jobs to youth. This builds a skilled workforce and provides learning and economic engagement opportunities to this critical cohort.
- Setting up business operations, such as retail stores and factories, in the areas where refugees are located, and providing employment.

3. Advocacy and Public Policy Engagement

Private sector actors, both multinational and local, can be well-placed to call attention to the challenges faced by refugee children and youth. They can amplify the voices of those affected by humanitarian situations, including those whose perspectives, experiences, and priorities may not otherwise be heard (e.g., children, adolescent girls and those with disabilities). Even when they are not physically present in a country, private sector actors may have influence over customers, suppliers, and even authorities in that context.

This kind of engagement can include:

- Leveraging existing networks (including industry groups or business associations, customers, points of sale/retailers and suppliers) and influence to raise awareness on key issues and to promote good practices.
- Advocating to decision-makers in government or at local level, in order to achieve specific policy changes which will increase refugees' access to protection, assistance, services and long-term livelihoods options.
- Disseminating life-saving messages on issues such as safety, health, nutrition, hygiene and child protection.
- Using business-related communication/ promotion channels, including social media for thematic campaigns in support of the response, or to build a positive perception of refugees.
- Promoting recovery efforts and risk reduction legislation and practice, such as land use planning, building codes and retrofitting to avoid 'risk creation.' An example is providing school infrastructure that is inclusive for children with disabilities and ensuring schools are in safe and well-lit areas for girls.

GET STARTED TODAY

Based on the learnings from the current and past private sector engagements, the following key steps are recommended to private sector actors wishing to engage in supporting children and youth affected by the Syria and Iraq crises.

1. Determine Goals and Focus Areas

If you are new to supporting humanitarian action and are looking to launch new programs within your organization, No Lost Generation representatives can work with you to define goals for engaging in supporting children and youth. Engagement goals should align with your long-term growth and business strategy, and your company's core focus areas for social investment. For example:

- Fostering innovation in education and skills development;
- Improving brand leadership and enhancing corporate reputation;
- Boosting employee morale and retention;
- Developing capacity of future employees and customers.

At this point, you should also consider setting up measurement and evaluation for the program to guide programmatic improvements and facilitate sharing and scale, either in the current situation in other / future humanitarian situations.

2. Coordinate and Collaborate on Program Development

While designing programs and determining resources, it is highly recommended to engage with the experts in the humanitarian response — humanitarian agencies — in order to ensure responsible social engagement and increase the chances that the engagement will be relevant, respectful of humanitarian principles, and impactful. Programs and contributions should be sustainable, scalable, and aligned with host government priorities and the agreed humanitarian response plan in the given context. Coordination via the existing coordination mechanisms is essential. Recent research shows that fragmented approaches and uncoordinated or overlapping interventions can limit positive outcomes for children and youth or even cause harm. Activities should be routinely monitored by those implementing them and independently evaluated to ensure they are effective and have the desired impact.

The No Lost Generation initiative and our network of partners can provide support and guidance along the way. Here are some examples:

- Work with the NLG Tech Task Force to define your engagement plan. The Task Force can help you identify one or more humanitarian organizations working in an area that aligns with your goals and support you in working with them to find the optimal form of engagement given your capacities and priorities, their strengths and challenges, and the humanitarian priorities.
- Contact NLG representatives to ensure that your programs are coordinated with national and local plans.
- Work with the [NLG Tech Task Force](#) and [Tent Partnership](#) to connect and engage with other businesses. You will learn how the private sector has supported the humanitarian response so far and whether there are opportunities to partner with or build on successful private sector engagement already in place.

3. Secure and Activate Resources

As part of program planning, you will be working with your humanitarian partners to assess resources, assets, and expertise needs and secure them for the program. For example, in order to facilitate your program, you may need to allocate internal resources to manage this new area of work, partnership, and learnings. Besides program management, you may want to consider the following:

- Use in-house or sponsored hackathons or competitions to generate innovations and ideas which will address identified gaps or challenges;
- Activate your networks for contributions or support from other businesses or social entrepreneurs;
- Engage your employees as volunteers to support setup and implementation of the program;
- Design a communications strategy to tell the story of your engagement, while at the same time advocating on key issues affecting children and, if appropriate, calling for action.

CONTACT US

This is a living document and we intend to update it on a regular basis. We welcome your questions and suggestions for future updates.

No Lost Generation Tech Task Force coordinator: Leila Toplic (leila.toplic@nethope.org)

No Lost Generation initiative coordinators: Katy Barnett (cbarnett@unicef.org), Mark Chapple (mark_chapple@wvi.org), Amie Wells (awells@mercycorps.org), Yousra Semmache (Yousra.Semmache@savethechildren.org)

Tent Partnership: Scarlet Cronin (scarlet@tent.org)

APPENDIX I

No Lost Generation Overview

No Lost Generation (NLG) is an interagency initiative of 28 agencies co-led by UNICEF, Mercy Corps, Save the Children, and World Vision, focused on supporting children and youth affected by the Syria and Iraq crises. The initiative comprises programming and advocacy under three pillars — education, child protection and adolescents and youth — across Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt. It is steered by an interagency group working at the regional level, comprised of U.N. agencies and International NGOs based predominantly out of Amman, Jordan.

The NLG Tech Task Force

The **NLG Tech Task Force**, one of the coordinating bodies of the initiative, was established by NetHope and NLG to facilitate collaboration between humanitarian actors and the private sector. The Task Force brings together experts in refugee response with the private sector, and puts special emphasis on technologies that can improve the lives of the refugee and IDP children and youth.

About Tent Partnership

Tent Partnership is a platform that brings together private sector organizations committed to supporting refugee-related needs through direct giving, employment opportunities, and by shaping the supply chain.

APPENDIX II

Key Principles for Responding to Humanitarian Crises

- **Neutrality:** Never take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.
- **Impartiality:** Respond on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.
- **Independence:** Keep your action autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives outside of the humanitarian sphere.
- **Do no harm:** Take steps to avoid or minimize any adverse effects of their intervention, in particular the risk of exposing people to increased danger or abuse of their rights.
- **The best interests of the child:** In all actions concerning children give primary consideration to the best interests of the child or group of children affected by the action.

[*The Sphere Handbook, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*](#), is one of the most widely known and internationally recognized sets of common principles and universal minimum standards in life-saving areas of humanitarian response.

Examples of Previous Private Sector Engagement

The following are a few real-world examples of how private sector companies have worked with the humanitarian sector to support the needs of children and youth in the wake of emergency situations.

- A UK-based personal care and home products group committed predictable annual donations to an international humanitarian pooled fund.
- A tech company wishing to support the Syria crisis response has set up a 'boot camp' for young Syrian refugees wishing to acquire IT skills, providing employment matching services to those who successfully complete the camp.
- A Swedish homeware retailer launched a program to donate €1 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for every LED light bulb that is purchased in its store over the program period. This results in support for child refugee; for example, solar lanterns will be provided to enable children to study after dark, and for refugees to continue working after dark, thereby generating increased income for their families.
- A group of tech companies are supporting Wi-Fi connectivity in Greece through funding, resources (technology), and expertise (employee volunteers).
- Companies like Microsoft, HP, and Coursera are providing online courses that are intended to help refugee gain digital literacy, as well as computer science, entrepreneurship, and marketing skills.

This document is based on the insights from a number of reports which provide valuable further reading on the topic of business engagement with children at risk, including: [*Children's Rights and Business Principles*](#) (2012), [*The Smartest Investment: A framework for business engagement in education*](#) (2013), and [*Children in Humanitarian Crises: What Business Can Do*](#) (2016).