



# Peer Learning Groups

Connecting sustainability professionals to drive collective impact

## SME Peer Learning Group Session pre-read: Human Rights

### Topic background

The idea of human rights is as simple as it is powerful: that every person has a right to live a life of dignity and to be treated equally in every sphere of life — including in working life. Human rights are inherent to all human beings regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or any other status, simply as a result of being born. Small and medium sized companies (SMEs) can impact human rights both inside and outside their organization. This includes addressing any negative human rights impacts related to their business and making positive contributions to support human rights and to create diverse and inclusive workplaces.

In this session, participants will consider how their SMEs can effectively address human rights within and outside their business operations with open discussions on progress to date, ongoing hurdles and solutions and enablers to reach their human rights goals.

### Before the session

#### Questions to consider:

- Does your company have a public policy commitment or code of conduct making sure they are not complicit in Human Rights abuses? (Principle 1 & 2)
- What are your company's salient Human Rights issues? Have you ever assessed your business' actual and potential negative impacts on people? What did you learn from the assessments? What actions did it lead you to take?
- Does your company have grievance mechanisms established (e.g. a hotline or inbox)?
- Has your company set any goals on Human Rights (e.g., gender balance at all levels of management)? If yes, what are they?

### Recommended pre-session materials

- UN Global Compact Academy e-learning: Business and Human Rights: How companies can operationalize the UN Guiding Principles (Module 1: Introduction) (30 minutes)
  - [link](#) for UNGC participants
  - [link](#) for non-participants



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## SME Peer Learning Group Session pre-read: Labour Rights

### Topic background

To kick off, let's look at three facts:

- Almost one in ten children are subject to child labour, amounting to 160 million children globally.
- Almost one in five workers worldwide did not earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of extreme or moderate poverty.
- Each day, 7,500 people die from unsafe and unhealthy working conditions.

Despite the fact that companies are required to comply with national law and respect international human rights, which includes the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights of Work, Decent Work deficits remain alarmingly widespread. Advancing Decent Work and raising the living standards of all workers across operations and supply chains require small and medium sized companies (SMEs) everywhere to adopt sustainable, responsible and inclusive workplace practices. In this session, participants will discuss how SMEs can advance this commitment and explore common challenges, best practice and solutions and enablers to adopting sustainable procurement, providing living wages, establishing sound occupational safety and health practices, and eliminating child labour and forced labour.

### Before the session

#### Questions to consider:

- How does your company uphold the freedom of association and recognize the right to collective bargaining? (Principle 3)
- Does your company perform audits to ensure they have eliminated all forms of child and forced labour? (Principle 4 & 5) If yes, what have you learned from those audits? What actions did they lead you to take?
- Does your company have policies in place to eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation? (Principle 6)
- Has your company set any goals on Labour Rights (e.g. 100% of employees across the organization earn a living wage)? If yes, what are they?



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## Recommended pre-session materials

- UN Global Compact Academy e-learning: Basics of Business and Decent Work (30 minutes)
  - [link](#) for UNGC participants
  - [link](#) for non-participants (Module 1)