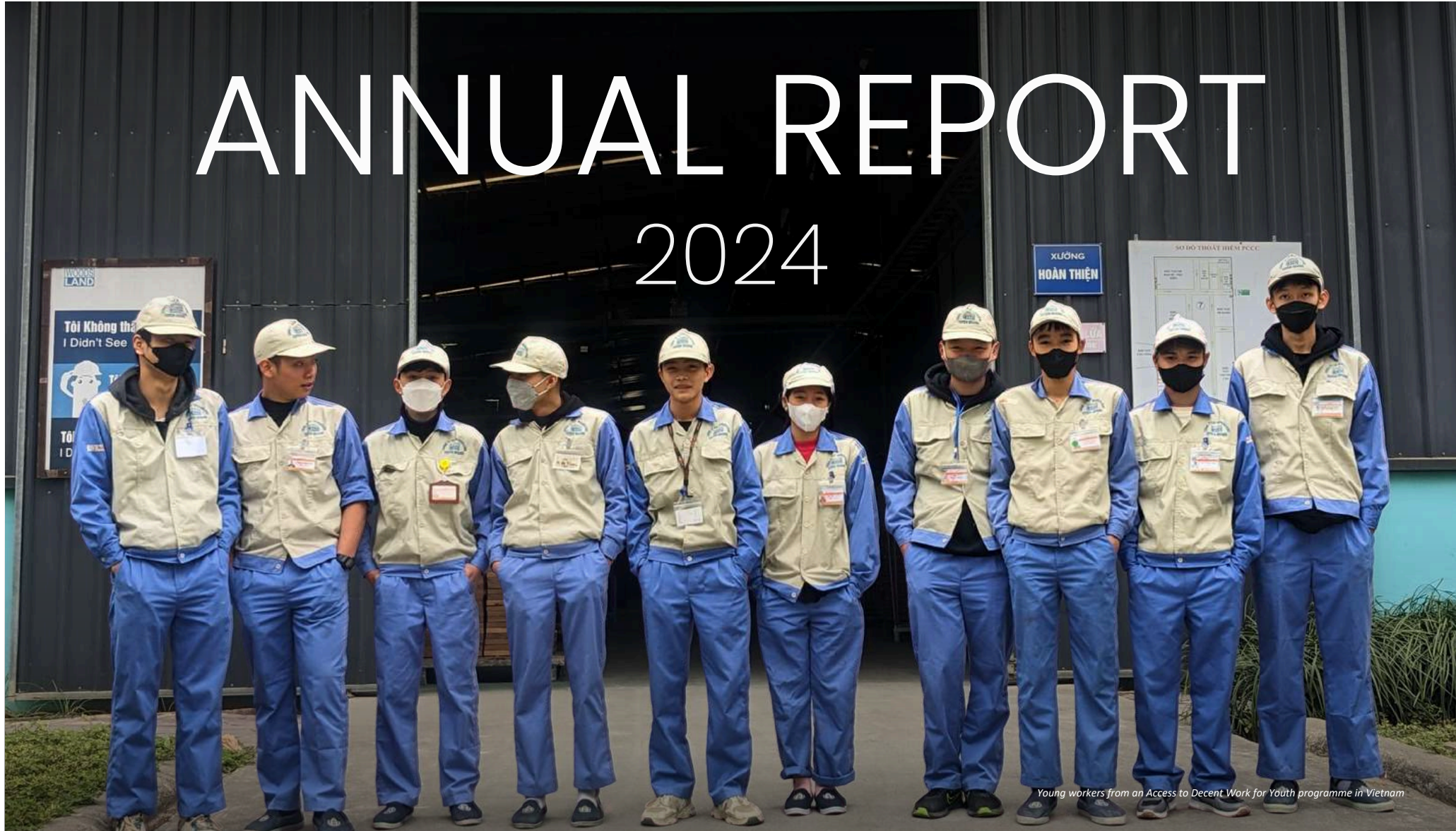


ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Young workers from an Access to Decent Work for Youth programme in Vietnam

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The Centre's team in Sri Lanka speaking to a team of female supervisors at a tea estate

The Centre's Sri Lanka Country Director during a training of Sri Lanka's first female field supervisors at Talawakelle Tea Estate, a member of the Seal initiative

Foreword

The Centre for Child Rights and Business has come a long way since we began operations 15 years ago, and for the first time, we are excited to publish a public annual report!

As we expand our reach globally, diversify our services, and collaborate with various industries, we felt it crucial to document key elements of our work. We are proud of our impact and the numbers we've achieved—those small steps that help make the world a fairer place. We are deeply grateful for every small step that has made a world of difference to a child, offering them a second chance at life.

This report also serves as an urgent invitation to act. Any critical reader will recognise that, despite our immense efforts in collaborating with hundreds of companies across diverse industries and countries, our impact pales in comparison to the significant challenges faced by supply chain workers, their families, and their communities. In a time when governments around the globe seem to prioritise their interests, often overlooking our interconnected world, it is more important than ever for the private sector to understand and invest in its supply chains. We hope readers will view this report as a hopeful call to action—a testament that while we've made progress, we can and must do better.



Ines Kaempfer

CEO, The Centre for Child Rights and Business

Message from the CEO

A Brief History of The Centre

Our Origins

The origins of The Centre for Child Rights and Business trace back to 2007 when Sweden and China signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding to promote responsible business practices. In response, Save the Children Sweden decided to set up an independent social enterprise, the Centre for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR), to fulfil the terms of the memorandum. By 2010, CCR CSR officially registered its first operation in Beijing, China, with three full-time staff, supported by seed funding from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Although our early organisation was small, we set ourselves an ambitious mission that has not changed to this day: to collaborate with brands, retailers, and their supply chain partners in all regions and sectors where there is a need to protect and strengthen child rights. Our initial work focused on preventing and remediating child labour, supporting migrant parents and young workers in China's manufacturing and textiles supply chains, and aligning our efforts with the Child Rights and Business Principles, which served as our guiding framework.

From these humble beginnings, we quickly evolved into a self-sustaining social enterprise and expanded globally to meet the growing demand for child rights expertise in supply chains across industries and regions. By 2015, institutional funding stopped, and we transitioned entirely to a pay-for-service model, relying on income generated from partnerships with global companies, supply chain partners, and, to a lesser extent, UN agencies and government bodies. By this time, our work had also expanded into other sectors, including agriculture.

Over time, we strengthened our team, expanded our network of consultants and partners, broadened our work with companies to cover new sectors and deepened our knowledge and expertise. This allowed us to address child rights issues through a holistic lens, focusing not only on children but also on the well-being of parents, female workers and young workers, industry needs, and regulatory requirements around human rights due diligence. In 2021, following a corporate restructuring, we rebranded as The Centre for Child Rights and Business, or simply, 'The Centre.' By the end of 2024, we had 59 staff based in 19 countries, with programmes implemented in 31 countries worldwide.

Throughout our history, we've developed, refined, and piloted innovative programmes and tools that remain central to our work today. These include our Child Rights and Human Rights Risk and Impact Assessments, a standardised child labour remediation programme, WeCare Family-Friendly Workplaces, the Access to Decent Work for Youth Programme, Child Rights Action Hubs, and more.

Tracing impact has been a strategic priority for us, and we are proud that our efforts have positively (directly and indirectly) impacted:

137,676 workers

182,551 children

671 companies



Key Milestones in The Centre's History



2009

Work began to register CCR CSR in mainland China as a wholly foreign-owned enterprise

2014

Shenzhen office becomes operational as a subsidiary of the Beijing branch. The first CRIB Working Group meeting takes place with seven member companies, and The Centre launches its first agriculture project

2010

Our first office became operational in Beijing, and we began rolling out child labour remediation services

2016

15 full-time staff and seven part-time staff members work for us. The Child-Friendly Spaces programme is piloted in six factories in China

2015

Second office registered in Hong Kong, becoming The Centre's headquarters. We began working in Malaysia and Vietnam

2020

32 staff work in 11 countries for The Centre and we have a long-term local partner in Bangladesh for financial and administrative tasks

2017

The Centre's office in Myanmar is registered, and our work now includes China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Myanmar. The WeCare Family-Friendly Workplaces programme is launched

2022

The 100th factory opens a Child Friendly Space. An official office in Vietnam registered, with four local staff members

2021

CCR CSR changes to The Centre for Child Rights and Business and becomes three legal entities: Radda Barnen AB (dormant), CCR CSR (Beijing) Limited, and CCR CSR (HK) Ltd. An office in Sri Lanka becomes operational

2024

The Centre deals with its 1000th child labour notification. We have 59 staff members located in 19 countries and have implemented projects in 31 countries to date. The Action Hub in Bangladesh was launched. 40 companies have joined the CRIB Working Group

2023

The Hub in the DRC was established as a non-profit organisation consisting of six local organisations and The Centre

Where We Worked in 2024



105
programmes



23
countries



59
staff members

How We Create Positive Change

Building on our work to support worker well-being and promote children’s rights in supply chains, our approach is anchored in a clear theory of change. We equip businesses and their supply chain actors with the knowledge and tools to identify, address, and mitigate human and child rights risks, including child labour, while ensuring that both businesses and children benefit from our work. By proactively supporting working parents and young workers, companies can foster a more stable, engaged, and productive workforce while strengthening resilience across their supply chains. These efforts also help businesses stay ahead of evolving regulatory expectations and meet growing stakeholder demands for adequate human rights standards in supply chains. At the core of this approach is a focus on collaboration, capacity-building, and practical solutions—from risk assessments and training to practical parent support programmes, gender- and child rights-responsive policies, and community-based initiatives that drive change from the ground up.

Our Theory of Change

Ultimate Impact

Ethical, sustainable, and child rights-respecting supply chains where workers, children, and businesses benefit

Key Goals



Supply chain actors have a better understanding of their human and child rights risk in supply chains



More workers and children benefit directly from child and forced labour prevention and remediation



More working parents in supply chains are proactively supported in their roles as parents



Supply chains provide increased opportunities for young workers to access decent and safe work



Improved gender equality in supply chains

Key Services

- CRIB Working Group
- Site rapid assessment
- Human rights risks and impact assessments
- Research

- Global child labour remediation services
- Child Rights Action Hubs
- Child labour prevention and remediation

- Child Friendly Spaces
- Parent training
- Family-Friendly Workplaces

- Access to decent work for youth programme
- Young worker management
- Young worker rights and protection

- Women empowerment programmes
- Gender responsive policies
- Gender-transformative workshops



Children at the Child Rights Action Hub partner's alternative learning centre on a palm oil plantation

C

Child Rights Action Hubs

Following the successful pilot of a Hub for Child Labour Prevention and Remediation in the DRC in 2023, we replicated elements of the model to launch two Child Rights Action Hubs in Malaysia (as part of the USDOL-funded MY Voice project with Social Accountability International) and Bangladesh, the former in the palm oil sector and the latter in the lower tiers of the ready-made garments sector. Collaboration and long-term system building are central to these hubs, as they bring together local civil society organisations, supply chain actors, government agencies, and the private sector to establish systems that identify and address child labour from the ground up. In Bangladesh, it's been particularly encouraging to see an increasing number of sub-contractors getting much-needed capacity building in child labour prevention and remediation. In the DRC, we trained local child protection staff from the local government and cooperatives of artisanal mines, while in Malaysia, lower-tier plantations have similarly benefited from targeted capacity building, including plantation school teachers, local CSOs, and plantation companies.

The Child Rights Action Hubs are rooted in a bottom-up approach that empowers local actors on the ground to serve as the eyes and ears to identify and report child labour to break its cycle permanently. The hubs provide training for case managers and child rights focal points, equipping them with the skills to assess risks, report cases, and coordinate remediation efforts. This approach ensures that interventions are both context-specific and sustainable.

C

Child Rights and Human Rights Risk Assessments

Demand for child rights and human rights risk assessments has been growing year by year, but 2024 was by far our busiest. This uptick in demand goes hand in hand with the passing of key human rights due diligence legislation such as the EU CSDDD, prompting a need for companies to thoroughly understand the risks in their supply chains. We're hopeful that these assessments are just the first step in a journey to running supply chains in a more people-centric way, and looking into the deeper tiers is a necessary step towards that end.

Key Highlights in 2024

C

Child Labour Remediation

In 2024, we responded to our 1000th child labour remediation case. While not all of these notifications led to full remediation programmes, we were proud to see that among those 1000 cases, 70% of children could be enrolled in the child labour remediation programme and given a second chance at a brighter future. All the children who completed our remediation programme have been given learning opportunities, including reintegration into formal education, vocational training, private tutoring, and skills training. These outcomes have the potential to impact entire families and even future generations. Of those 1000 cases, 129 were newly integrated into our programme in 2024.

C

Family-Friendly Workplaces

136 factories and production sites implemented family-friendly workplace initiatives with us in 2024, directly benefiting close to 8,126 parent workers. These initiatives included a diverse range of modules designed to address the unique needs of workers and their families. Key interventions focused on empowering female workers through gender awareness training, providing maternity protection support, and setting up lactation rooms to support breastfeeding mothers. Family days were organised to strengthen family bonds, while enhanced family-friendly workplace (FFW) policies ensured more inclusive and supportive environments. Young people were also given access to soft skills training to help them on their career journeys and to become more resilient workers. A comprehensive Training-of-Trainers programme complemented these efforts to ensure that these supply chain actors have the capacity and systems to continue offering this support over the long-term. These efforts represent a holistic approach to improving worker well-being, fostering greater relationships between management and workers, increased workplace satisfaction, enhanced gender equity, and ensuring a supportive, people-centred work environment.



Our Work in 2024 in Numbers



105 programmes were carried out in **23** countries



137,676 workers and **34,348** children were reached in total



136 suppliers implemented FFW programmes. **144** trainings aimed at advancing FFW policies and promoting responsible recruitment were conducted. As a result, **4,561** individuals were engaged, and **8,126** parent workers benefited from the FFW programmes



2 Child Friendly Spaces were newly opened, in addition to the **102** we have opened to date

251 production sites evaluated and **72** in-field assessments were carried out



129 children in child labour were reintegrated into education or training, bringing the total cases handled by The Centre to **1,090**, while **40** young workers improved their working conditions



175 policies and documents were reviewed, while **16** policies, guidelines and checklists were developed



9 new companies joined the CRIB working group, which led us to **40** members companies at the end of 2024



Programme Highlights and Impact

- C** Access to Decent Work for Youth
- C** Our Global Child Rights Action Hubs
- C** The Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business
- C** Our Work in the United States
- C** Family-Friendly Workplaces
- C** Gender

Access to Decent Work for Youth



40

young workers

in improved working conditions



16

young workers

pulled from hazardous work and placed into decent, formal work



19

training sessions

held for factory management on how to recruit and manage young workers



414

factory staff management

trained to responsibly recruit and manage young workers

Across Asia, young people of working age are eager to exercise their right to work and earn money. But for most, finding decent jobs that comply with labour regulations for minors in formal supply chains, like Tier-1 suppliers of global brands, is extremely difficult, if not impossible. As a result, young people of working age but under 18 often end up working in informal settings without proper protections. Despite labour shortages in the manufacturing sector, particularly in China^[1], Vietnam^[2] and Bangladesh, where there is a growing need for skilled workers^[3], many suppliers believe that hiring under 18s poses risks and that this demographic is more cumbersome to manage. The Centre works with businesses and suppliers to establish systems that build the employer's capacity to manage decent working conditions lawfully, create pathways for the vulnerable, and allow marginalised youth to access jobs with decent working conditions. By steering young individuals away from hazardous or informal work, these efforts directly contribute to child labour prevention, while simultaneously helping suppliers build a motivated, younger workforce.

In 2024, we collaborated with three global brands and suppliers in our Access to Decent Work for Youth (AD-Y) programme to make jobs more accessible to young workers. Through AD-Y, three suppliers strengthened their capacity to recruit and manage young workers responsibly. As a result, 40 young individuals secured improved, age-appropriate jobs, earning fair wages in compliant, safe working conditions. The young workers received training to understand their rights at work and acquire essential life skills to enhance their capacity at work and in their personal lives. Alongside this,

participating factories implemented systems to sustainably and independently manage young workers, supported by HR and management training tailored to ensure legal compliance and best practices.

This year, our AD-Y programme was delivered in various formats: as a standalone programme for a global brand committed to supporting youth in their supply chain; as a workstream of the Child Rights Action Hub in Bangladesh, which connects youth who have reached the legal working age to decent, age-appropriate jobs; and as part of a child labour remediation programme to remove young workers from hazardous working conditions into safe jobs.

By embedding respect for young people's right to work into supply chain systems, the AD-Y programme addresses labour shortages, strengthens human rights due diligence, and establishes a future where businesses and young workers benefit from inclusive, rights-based supply chains.

- [1] Ng, E. (2023, April 6). China's factories try to manufacture their way out of a shortage of both jobs and hi-tech. South China Morning Post. *China's factories try to manufacture their way out of a shortage of both jobs and hi-tech*. <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3215980/chinas-factories-try-manufacture-their-way-out-shortage-both-jobs-and-hi-tech>
- [2] Vietnam News. (2024, January 5). Factories struggle to find workers to fulfill year-end orders. Vietnam News. <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1663229/factories-struggle-to-find-workers-to-fulfill-year-end-orders.html>
- [3] The Business Standard. (2022, September 8). Industries face 30% skill gaps: BIDS. The Business Standard. <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/industries-face-30-skill-gaps-bids-485662>

Case Story: Opportunities for Young Workers Through a Factory's AD-Y Programme

When R.M.N. applied for a job at a factory in Vietnam that was implementing The Centre's Access to Decent Work for Youth (AD-Y) programme, he was three months shy of turning 18. He completed Grade 3 of primary school but, because his home was far from the school, could not continue his education, and his family's circumstances did not allow it. After dropping out, he stayed home to work in a small garden where the family grew rice and cassava. As part of the work, R.M.N. would use sharp tools for tasks such as digging holes and cutting trees, which would sometimes lead to injury if he was not careful. The income from the garden was inconsistent and was not enough to cover their living expenses.

The job at the factory was his first formal job outside of home. Since joining, R.M.N. has been working as a wooden bar selection or as a picking (QC support) staff member in the production workshop. This area is less hazardous, with no heavy machinery, dust or chemical processes, and all young workers start here.

At the factory, R.M.N. is provided with a labour contract and social and health insurance and works regular hours, with a maximum of 8 hours per day and no more than 40 hours per week. He also receives health and safety protections and regular training. Along with six other young workers, R.M.N. has actively participated in soft-skill and life-skill training. His section supervisors provide close support to help him and the other young workers adjust to the new environment.

R.M.N.'s story was made possible by the factory's openness and ongoing commitment to hire young workers, as well as its efforts to develop employment skills for them. The factory has also expanded the AD-Y programme beyond its home province to include other ethnic minority groups, enrolling a total of 14 youths since 2022.

Our Global Child Rights Action Hubs

2024 was the year we significantly scaled up our Child Rights Action Hubs (Action Hubs) to collaboratively address child labour in challenging contexts. These Action Hubs are multi-stakeholder projects designed to address systemic risks affecting multiple companies within a specific region, particularly focusing on child labour and related issues. Although there is still a lot of work to be done for children in child labour, particularly in remote areas and lower tiers of the supply chain, we are encouraged by the progress made through our global Child Rights Action Hubs and see it as a viable model that fosters strong, multistakeholder collaboration – a vital ingredient in the fight against child labour. In 2025, building on the success of the existing Hubs, we are establishing at least three additional Action Hubs in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.



3

Action Hubs

established globally that focuses on child labour and remediation



110

children

integrated into child labour remediation programmes



33

young workers

pulled from hazardous work now have decent work conditions



27

junior case managers

passed their test and are approved to manage cases

When are Action Hubs Needed?

Action Hubs are established when certain criteria are met. This includes situations where there is a significant risk of child labour in the area, a high concentration of specific commodities, a large number of international brands connected to the region, and the identification of a seed funder to initiate the project.

Key Characteristics

Action Hubs have several key characteristics that define their approach. Firstly, they are committed to long-term projects, each designed to last a minimum of three years. Rather than focusing solely on individual supply chains, the Action Hubs take a broader regional perspective, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the region. Funding for these Action Hubs is collaborative, enabling multiple companies to contribute financially and share the responsibility of driving progress.

Objectives of the Action Hubs

Action Hubs are focused on achieving several important objectives aimed at enhancing their impact and sustainability. These objectives include securing long-term funding to provide ongoing financial support for initiatives, establishing strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders, and clarifying connections with local government structures to facilitate effective collaboration.

The Action Hubs also place an emphasis on capacity building to enhance the skills and capabilities of its actors,

and aim to ensure the effective rollout and ongoing maintenance of services related to all four core pillars (see below), thereby ensuring sustained and impactful service delivery.

By focusing on these areas, Action Hubs create an effective and impactful on-the-ground multi-stakeholder initiative to tackle child labour and related challenges, bringing together international buyers, local businesses, communities, and, whenever possible, government entities.

Core Pillars of the Action Hubs

The Action Hubs develop their activities around four main pillars, which are adapted to the local context and needs.

Mapping and Research

Identifying risks and available resources

Business Role

Strengthening businesses' role in preventing child labour

Youth Employment

Increasing access to decent work opportunities for youth

Child Labour Remediation

Implementing case management for remediation, including establishing community focal points

What Our Action Hubs Have Achieved in 2024

Bangladesh

Launched in May 2024, the Child Rights Action Hub in Bangladesh focuses on the ready-made garment (RMG) sector—the country's single biggest export earner. It empowers fashion brands and retailers to engage lower-tier suppliers and subcontractors systematically to prevent and address child labour. The Action Hub facilitates collaborative action, enabling brands to participate in joint activities to address child labour risks in their supply chains.

In just seven short months since the Action Hub's launch, we've made significant strides: training subcontractors on child labour prevention and remediation, enrolling children in our child labour remediation programme, equipping child rights focal points with essential skills and knowledge, ongoing research on risks in the RMG sector in both the upstream and downstream supply chain, and kicking off an [Access to Decent Work for Youth \(AD-Y\) programme](#) in a factory that is now legally hiring and responsibly managing young workers within their premises.

In 2024, eight brands came on board to support this initiative. Below is a summary of the Action Hub's progress in 2024:

- **87** child labour cases integrated into the remediation programme
- **33** young workers now have access to decent work
- **112** staff from **67** subcontractors trained on CLPR
- **21** staff from **14** Tier-1 factories trained on CSDDD
- **31** focal points trained to identify and address child labour in the lower-tiers

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Hub for Child Labour Prevention and Remediation (The Hub), established with support from the Fair Cobalt Alliance (FCA) and initial funding from Save the Children Germany, works to build a strong, local network of child rights practitioners in the Kolwezi area to prevent and remediate child labour in copper and cobalt artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM). Currently, six local CSOs work with The Hub: Alternatives for Action, Action pour le Développement Régional Intégré, Association des Femmes Pour Le Développement Communautaire, Humanitarian Emergency Rescue Action for People in Need, Institut Congalaise des Droits Humains, and the National Peasant League for Human Rights.

Since its inception, The Hub has achieved significant milestones. These accomplishments are the result of the collaborative efforts of stakeholders who recognise the importance of investing in children's futures and supporting vulnerable families in ASM communities. Through this support, which includes financial backing from two global companies connected to cobalt and copper, one government-supported grant, and continued financial support from the FCA, we have been able to integrate more children into our programme, offer long-term financial assistance, and ensure that children have the necessary resources to return to school or pursue vocational training. Highlights of The Hub's achievements in 2024 include:

- **23** children were introduced to the remediation programme
- **14** siblings were provided with educational support
- **4** mining hubs where The Hub's programme is prioritised
- **12** new junior case managers
- **4** accredited case managers
- **3** new clients funding The Hub

Malaysia

In Malaysia, the Child Rights Action Hub, implemented as part of the MY Voice project, was inaugurated on June 12, 2024, coinciding with World Day Against Child Labour. The Action Hub is working to address child labour in palm oil plantations. The Hub collaborates with local solution providers to build a network of remediation service providers and case managers, aiming to implement private sector-driven child labour remediation. Funded by USDOL, Social Accountability International is the lead grantee, and The Centre, Our Journey, and Proforest are the implementing partners.

In 2024, the Action Hub concentrated on developing the necessary systems to create a functional community-based approach for identifying, preventing and addressing child labour. Efforts were made to gain support from the private sector and key actors within the palm oil industry to ensure the long-term viability of these initiatives. A total of 14 local organisations were engaged to advocate for child labour prevention, remediation and child rights. The results of these efforts include:

- **18** plantation companies and suppliers participated in **4** child labour prevention training sessions, reaching a total of **200** participants
- **42** case managers were trained, with **15** junior case managers approved for their roles
- **36** community focal points from plantation communities received training
- **1** child labour prevention and remediation guideline, along with **11** child labour remediation toolkits and **10** training modules, were developed in **2** languages specifically tailored for the Action Hub
- **36** key stakeholders from the palm oil supply chain were engaged

Case Story: The Action Hub's Role in Combatting Child Labour in Bangladesh's RMG Sector

Many brands often lack the transparency needed to understand their supply chains' lower tiers, despite increasing demand for better monitoring in light of human rights due diligence laws. As a result, child labour can slip through the cracks, as was the case for M.M., a child left behind in Bangladesh when her mother moved to Dhaka when M.M. was just 7 years old. In April 2024, a survey conducted by The Centre revealed that by age 12, M.M. had dropped out of school and was working in a garment factory for less than the minimum wage, often enduring 12-hour shifts. A 30-month remediation programme was then launched to support her transition from child labour to formal education, addressing her immediate needs and interest in schooling. The programme included educational support, financial stipends, vocational training, and ongoing monitoring.

This initiative was made possible by funding from brands to the Action Hub, highlighting the importance of brands willing to look deeper into their lower tiers beyond standard audits. By investing in the Action Hub, brands can play an important role in monitoring and addressing issues such as child labour within their supply chains, particularly at lower tiers where oversight is often lacking. Having on-the-ground staff from The Centre enables thorough investigations and support for vulnerable individuals like M.M. who, without intervention, may remain trapped in exploitative situations. These staff members can conduct assessments, engage with local communities, and provide real-time insights into the conditions workers face. This direct involvement helps businesses not only to comply with ethical standards but also to build sustainable practices that foster long-term social change.

In 2025, The Centre plans to identify child labour risks among lower-tier Ready-Made Garment suppliers in five new communities in the Dhaka division and enrol any identified cases of child labour in the remediation programme.



The Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business

The Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business was introduced in Sri Lanka in 2022 for the tea sector and in 2024 for tourism. This initiative aims to establish a family-friendly supply chain and enhance investments for parent workers, women, and children.



7

types of programmes
conducted, aimed at empowerment and sustainability



2,559

individuals
directly impacted through the Seal Initiatives



127

tea industry participants
reached through the annual family-friendly tea industry conference



1

new Seal Initiative
launched for the tourism sector

Seal Initiative for the Tea Sector

In 2024, we conducted impact assessments that evaluated five pioneering members of the Seal Initiative who joined in 2022 and completed a two-year cycle. Those who passed the assessment were allowed to use the Seal logo in their marketing for the upcoming year. The results highlighted the benefits of a participatory approach, showing that members who shared their impact attracted increased interest from buyers. The actions taken by the five assessed members included:

- **English Tea Shop Organic:** Implemented a parent-child benefit policy, providing monthly support for 172 employees' children under 16, as well as 25 additional children of smallholder farmers
- **Talawakelle Tea Estates:** Launched a female field supervisor programme, training 24 young women to enhance career opportunities and social mobility
- **Horana Plantations:** Established a production unit for affordable reusable sanitary napkins, creating local jobs and promoting menstrual hygiene at its pilot estate
- **Bogawantalawa Tea Estates:** Expanded the child protection policy coverage to all 11 of its up-country estates, and another three estates in low-country estates
- **Jafferjee Brothers:** Updated policy frameworks in key areas including workplace health and safety, grievance handling, supply chain management, anti-harassment, and child and forced labour.

To date, five tea plantations, two tea exporters, and one tea brand have joined the Seal Initiative, covering 51,825 hectares and representing 25% of Sri Lanka's tea exports.

Seal Initiative for Travel and Tourism

Launched on September 27, 2024 (World Tourism Day), this Seal Initiative aims to address child rights risks in the tourism sector. The initiative was prompted by a [report](#) from The Centre and Save the Children that highlighted issues like child sexual abuse, exploitation and child labour. An advisory committee consisting of six members has been set up to provide strategic guidance for the rolling out of the initiative and will guide its implementation.

Outreach and Communication

In 2024, we launched initiatives aimed at improving the tea industry. We hosted our third annual conference on International Tea Day, which brought together 127 participants from the tea industry, government, and NGOs. The focus was on the critical role of smallholder estates, which produce 70% of Sri Lanka's tea.

Our Seal Challenges encouraged businesses to innovate solutions for identified human rights challenges. In 2024, four winners received seed funding to address important issues such as occupational safety for female workers and child protection on estates.

Our [CRIB podcast](#) engaged global tea stakeholders on human rights challenges in the industry, reaching about 360 listeners who shared suggestions about how the industry can address key challenges, including improving human rights due diligence and working conditions.

 [Watch our Seal Initiative videos](#)

Case Story: Empowering Women and Breaking the Cycle of Period Poverty

Every day, female tea estate workers have to juggle demanding physical labour with a host of domestic chores. Women often begin their day before sunrise to prepare meals and head to the fields. Compounding these struggles is period poverty, which leaves many without access to affordable sanitary products. However, Horana Plantations PLC, a member of the Seal initiative, has stepped up to address this critical issue of menstrual hygiene for women and girls.

P.D., a worker at the Sanitary Pad Production Unit on Alton Estate, has witnessed firsthand the transformative effects of tackling period poverty in Sri Lanka's rural plantation communities. "Before, we couldn't afford sanitary pads, which took a toll on our health and confidence," she recalls.

In collaboration with the Women's Development Centre (WDC), Horana Plantations launched a Menstrual Hygiene Initiative that focuses on training women to sew reusable sanitary pads. P.D. explains, "This project has given us a way out of period poverty." The reusable pads are issued free of charge as an alternative to disposable ones, which cost Rs. 425. This shift not only empowers women financially but also creates job opportunities, with six youths receiving training and employment at the pad production unit. To date, the initiative has successfully produced and distributed over 1,800 reusable sanitary pads, generating significant sales and illustrating its positive impact on menstrual hygiene, economic empowerment, and health education. Community feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing how the pads have enhanced their dignity and hygiene practices.

P.D. is hopeful that this model can be replicated in other areas, stating, "If this programme expands, it will change even more lives." Looking ahead, the initiative aims to improve product quality and increase leadership roles for female workers.

Our Work in the United States

Working conditions in US supply chains have fallen under increased scrutiny in recent years due to a rise in the detection and reporting of child labour cases. Companies sourcing from the US are under increasing pressure to adhere to human rights due diligence laws and frameworks, all while dealing with a fragmented legal landscape where child labour laws can differ wildly between states.

Since we began working in the US in 2022, demand for our services has increased yearly, particularly expertise related to child labour policies and risk assessments. We have collaborated with seven US brands and their supply chains, reviewing over 60 child labour policies and procedures and conducting 24 child labour risk assessments.

In 2024, we shared what we had learned from this work in a joint publication with the human rights advisory firm CORE. We called on companies with operations in the US to strengthen efforts to prevent and remediate child labour, starting with robust policies and processes, followed by risk mapping and practical measures to remediate child labour through a child rights lens. The full report can be accessed [here](#).

Our on-the-ground work in the US intensified in 2024. We conducted 20 child labour risk assessments in 13 states, covering 26 facilities and vendors. As part of these efforts, we also conducted community outreach and met with local migrant organisations, schools, family support organisations, and churches to understand the contextual drivers of child labour during assessments, such as poverty, working conditions, high school dropout rates, and unaccompanied minors in the communities.

A highlight in 2024 was the establishment of a Working Group for Child Rights in Kansas with the global food company Cargill. The working group aims to provide a platform for responsible, youth-centred practices in the

local community by uniting local businesses, civil society organisations, and other key stakeholders. The group will meet in person twice a year, gathering members to discuss challenges, share ideas, and develop practical solutions that address child rights risks in the local community and supply chain. We envision these working groups to become a springboard for collaborative action on access to decent work for youth, linkages to other Cargill-funded programmes, and other multi-stakeholder initiatives.



20

child labour risk assessments
conducted in 13 states



1

Working Group for Child Rights
launched



85

policy reviews
conducted for brands, suppliers, and vendors



700

individuals
trained via digital learning for US-based suppliers



Case Story: A Working Group for Child Rights and Youth Empowerment

In late 2024, The Centre, along with Cargill and the Rural Education & Workforce Alliance (REWA), launched the first Working Group for Child Rights in Dodge City, Kansas, USA. We are currently planning a second working group in Virginia for April 2025. These working groups aim to create a platform focusing on responsible, youth-centred practices within the local community. This includes connecting young people in need of work with decent job opportunities. We achieve this by bringing together local businesses, civil society organisations, and other key stakeholders. The group will meet twice yearly for in-person meetings to discuss challenges, exchange ideas, and formulate practical solutions to address child rights risks within Cargill's community and supply chain.

In the coming years, the working group will help ensure Dodge City continues to be a supportive and protective community where businesses set a positive example for responsible, youth centred practices. For example, recognising the needs in the agriculture sector, Cargill's protein business has taken proactive steps to further strengthen its policies, implement enhanced identification checks, and train employees to enhance monitoring and identification practices. The working group will serve as a foundation for collaboration, pooling resources and expanding similar programmes throughout Dodge City while sharing expertise to actively reduce child labour risks and support youth.

Family-Friendly Workplaces

Parent workers, young and old, are the backbone of supply chains. Ensuring their needs are met is a crucial strategy for retaining a loyal, productive workforce. A supportive, family-friendly workplace also reduces compliance risks, such as children entering production areas due to a lack of childcare. In 2024, we worked with 16 global brands and 136 of their suppliers to implement a range of Family-Friendly Workplace (FFW) activities. Activities were implemented in the manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industries.



136

suppliers

worked with The Centre to implement FFW programmes



16

international brands

implemented FFW programmes in their lower-tiers



59

suppliers

reported positive business benefits after implementing FFW programmes



91%

of workers

are planning to keep working in the factory for two years or more

Results from a survey conducted with 994 workers who participated in training under FFW programmes

Parent Worker Support

Parent workers, including migrant parents, are a key focus of our family-friendly workplace initiatives. In 2024, we were proud to achieve the following:

- **5,768** parent workers bonded with their children at a series of factory-organised Family Days at **20** factories
- **2,148** parent workers attended parenting training to enhance parent-child communication and parenting skills
- **156** children have benefitted from a monthly child-benefit allowance initiated by a Sri Lankan tea company for its employees
- **90** parent workers participated in Photovoice, where they learned to enhance communication and engagement with their children through photography and storytelling
- **50** parent workers were given Smartwatches to facilitate more frequent communication with their children
- **2** new child-friendly spaces were opened in China as part of a child labour remediation plan, benefitting **34** children
- **2** existing child-friendly spaces were improved and expanded to give workers a free childcare solution and peace of mind at work

Female Worker Support

In 2024, we saw an increased uptake in gender-related activities as part of FFW programmes, including support for maternity protection, the creation of robust maternity policies and related management training, and training

on sexual harassment prevention and gender equality for both mothers and fathers.

- **5** factories have strengthened or adopted maternity policies
- **849** workers benefitted from **27** maternity-related training sessions
- **3,664** female workers have benefitted from new or improved maternity policies at their factories
- **6** lactation rooms were set up, benefitting **2,748** female workers
- **17** training sessions on gender equality, sexual harassment, and workplace harassment were delivered to **360** workers

Mental Health Support

The mental well-being of workers has a direct impact on their performance, as well as on the factory's production and revenue. Our Family-Friendly Workplaces offerings have evolved to recognise the importance of mental health support – an issue that is often not prioritised in supply chains. Public health services are also often very limited in sourcing countries like China and Bangladesh, meaning that workers face stigma and limited options to seek medical attention.

- **4** brands collaborated with The Centre to roll out a total of **16** Training-of-Trainer sessions for internal staff to help workers better deal with stress and negative emotions
- **365** factory staff completed a Training-of-Trainers programme and are qualified to independently continue delivering the training



Case Story: The Impact of a Family-Friendly Workplace Policy

When factories create environments that support workers with families, everyone benefits: employees feel valued and businesses see stronger engagement and productivity. That was exactly what happened when a brand rolled out Family-Friendly Policy (FFP) trainings for working parents across supplier factories in China, Cambodia, and Vietnam in 2024. These trainings helped factory staff understand why family-friendly policies matter and the results speak for themselves:

- 47% more staff recognised that a good FFP includes flexible work and protection for young workers (85% post-training vs. 38% before)
- 34% more staff saw the value in tracking breastfeeding status to improve support for working mothers (71% vs. 47% before)
- Nearly everyone (99%) agreed that businesses should play a role in protecting workers' children – an 8% increase
- 93% of factory management felt they could apply what they learned to their work

This initiative was not just about policies on paper, it was about changing mindsets and workplace culture to drive long-term positive change for parents and families.

“

Since 2021, Under Armour has proudly partnered with The Centre to enhance the well-being of suppliers' workers through the WeCare programme. The Centre has offered invaluable guidance over the years, overseeing the successful implementation of the programme to address the practical needs of all parties. We are grateful for The Centre's collaboration in reaching more beneficiaries, introducing new well-being activities, and expanding to new countries. We look forward to our continued collaboration.

Since launching our global family-friendly programmes, we have collaborated with 39 clients to introduce family-friendly initiatives in 8 countries worldwide, offering 19 distinct activity modules. With support and commitment from brands, retailers, and their suppliers, we have provided benefits for nearly 40,000 parent workers and 25,000 children and established 104 Child-Friendly Spaces in factories and agricultural settings.

The outcomes from these family-friendly initiatives directly contribute to human rights due diligence – not by ticking boxes, but by creating meaningful change for workers in supply chains.

Gender

It is crucial to recognise that no efforts related to human rights due diligence in supply chains can be deemed complete without tackling gender issues. If we do not specifically address gender inequality, the existing gaps in well-being between men and women will persist and continue to affect both individuals and businesses. Therefore, over the years, we have increasingly integrated a gender lens into all our processes and approaches—whether in human rights risk assessments, supplier policies, or maternity protection procedures, as well as in our Family-Friendly Workplace programs that incorporate gender components.

This year, we were encouraged by an uptick in gender-related programme implementation. As detailed earlier, our WeCare and Family-Friendly Workplaces programmes included modules on maternity protection and support and sexual harassment prevention, including training, policy development, and capacity building. But even activities like our various parenting training programmes for both mothers and fathers advance the gender-equality agenda by highlighting the important role that both parents play and challenging long-standing norms around gender roles and childcare. Time and time again, we see how on-site childcare facilities in factories and production areas empower women to stay in the workforce.

In 2024, we embarked on several monitoring trips to a remote rattan-producing village in Indonesia to check on the progress of a Child Friendly Space that has been operational since 2023. We heard how the facility is allowing more mothers to focus on work and play a key role in contributing to their family's income. Initiatives like this, while not packaged as gender equality programmes, are very much advancing gender equality by playing a small role in removing the barriers that prevent women from entering or staying in the workforce.

Our Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business initiative also included a range of actions to advance gender equality and support women, including a groundbreaking female supervisor training programme, a sanitary hygiene programme tackling period poverty and empowering women with an additional income source,

and a Child Benefit Allowance that supports parents with child-related costs.

We also pioneered a successful [Gender Champions in the Workplace](#) programme with the Rainforest Alliance and its funding partner, Unilever, that was rolled out in 19 tea estates owned by Agarapatana Plantations in Sri Lanka. The focus of the programme was to create gender champions within each tea estate. These champions were equipped to identify, address and prevent gender-specific risks, while fostering a workplace culture where open communication, equality and safety are prioritised.

At the end of the programme, 76 gender equity champions were trained on gender-based violence in plantation settings and the role of grievance mechanisms in supporting workers. Most importantly, these “gender champions” began to actively initiate discussions with workers, raising awareness of gender issues, the role of gender committees, and the available grievance mechanisms. The programme's outcomes were so positive that plans are underway to scale the programme to another major plantation company in 2025.



30

gender-related training
conducted in 2024



862

individuals
trained in total



5

international brands
implemented gender-related
activities in their lower tiers



3

factories & productions sites
have improved or adopted
maternity policy

Case Story: How a Brand and its Suppliers Champion Maternity Protection in Supply Chains

Gender equality in the workplace is not just about closing wage gaps – it is about ensuring that women can work, grow, and thrive without being forced to choose between their jobs and motherhood. In 2024, a leading brand took a significant step toward bridging the gender gap in global supply chains by supporting the WeCare Family-Friendly Workplaces programme and implementing gender-focused initiatives across eight of its supplier factories in Asia.

Through this initiative, the brand, with support from The Centre, helped its suppliers deliver 25 training sessions on maternity protection support and sexual harassment prevention. These sessions directly equipped 624 workers with essential knowledge about their maternity rights, workplace protections, access to parental leave and sexual harassment prevention. Moreover, seven factories established or improved existing lactation rooms, training 70 factory staff to manage these spaces. As a result, 49 female workers directly benefitted from these new or upgraded facilities. To ensure long-term impact, 251 factory staff were trained to continue delivering internal sessions on maternity protection support and sexual harassment prevention, reinforcing a culture of gender inclusion at the factory level. These trainers, in turn, reached an additional 2,820 workers through 56 training sessions.

The programme resulted in:

- Stronger protections for working mothers, reducing the risk of women leaving the workforce due to pregnancy
- More informed and confident management, implementing policies that support gender equality in the workplace
- A shift in workplace culture, where maternity rights are seen as essential, not optional

By embedding maternity protection into supply chain practices, the brand and its suppliers are helping drive systemic change so that women have the support they need to balance work and family without sacrificing career growth.

“

Working with The Centre significantly exceeded our expectations. Their professional approach and commitment played a pivotal role in addressing deep-rooted stigmas and bridging key knowledge gaps in the plantation sector, including among Sri Lanka's tea-growing communities and estate management tiers."

Jehan CanagaRetna, Rainforest Alliance, Sri Lanka



A Diverse, International Team

In 2024, we proudly expanded our workforce to 59 employees, reflecting our organisation's growth driven by the increasing demand for our child rights and human rights due diligence expertise. With team members representing 22 nationalities across 19 countries, we weave together a rich tapestry of cultures, perspectives, and expertise to tackle complex global challenges.

What unites us is our shared goal of creating tangible positive impact for some of the most vulnerable people in the world. Whether traveling solo to remote locations, writing detailed reports, tirelessly raising awareness about the need to protect children in our supply chains, or navigating meetings, conferences, and negotiations, our success is rooted in the unwavering engagement and commitment of our team. We sincerely appreciate the incredible hard work and dedication our staff consistently demonstrates.



Average Years of Work Experience

Our team averages 14 years of experience in humanitarian and sustainability sectors, with some members bringing over 32 years of expertise



Languages Spoken by Our Staff Members

Our global team speaks a total of 30 languages, enabling us to connect more effectively with clients and those in lower tiers on the ground



Diversity

Our team comprises individuals from 22 nationalities, bringing a diverse range of perspectives and cultures to our work



Flexible Work Arrangements

48% of staff work hybrid schedules, while 52% work remotely

People & Culture

At The Centre, our people are the driving force behind our work. Their passion, expertise and commitment to child rights fuel our mission of strengthening business practices to protect the most vulnerable within global supply chains.



“

I'm proud to be the voice for the workers and their children in creating a mother and child-friendly workplace under the Mother and Child-Friendly Seal for Responsible Business initiative.

Thilini Lakshika
Seal Initiative Manager, Sri Lanka



“

Working for The Centre fills me with great pride and motivation. What resonates with me most is witnessing the direct impact of our work on children and their families. I am dedicated to helping local communities understand and respect children's rights while contributing to the betterment of my country and its people. Each day, I am inspired by the chance to effect tangible change and collaborate with passionate and committed colleagues to improve children's living conditions in supply chains. It's a privilege to be part of this mission.

Pam Nguz
Case Manager Coordinator, DRC



“

Since joining The Centre in July 2022, I've come full circle with my experiences in child labour. My journey began in 1994 with National Task Force of Working Children. During my time at UNHCR, I saw refugee children forced into work due to poverty. Now, at The Centre, I'm committed to addressing child protection and labour issues alongside businesses to ensure they create job opportunities responsibly. I'm proud that The Centre is making significant strides with responsible business owners who align policies with actions for positive change.

Letchimi Devi
MY Voice Project Manager, Malaysia

Celebrating Our People: Growth, Loyalty and Impact

Our strength lies not just in numbers but in the dedication and passion of our people. With an average staff tenure of 4.5 years, we are proud to recognise long-standing team members who have been instrumental in our journey. As we continue to grow, we remain deeply committed to supporting and celebrating our staff.



15-year Milestone
One team member

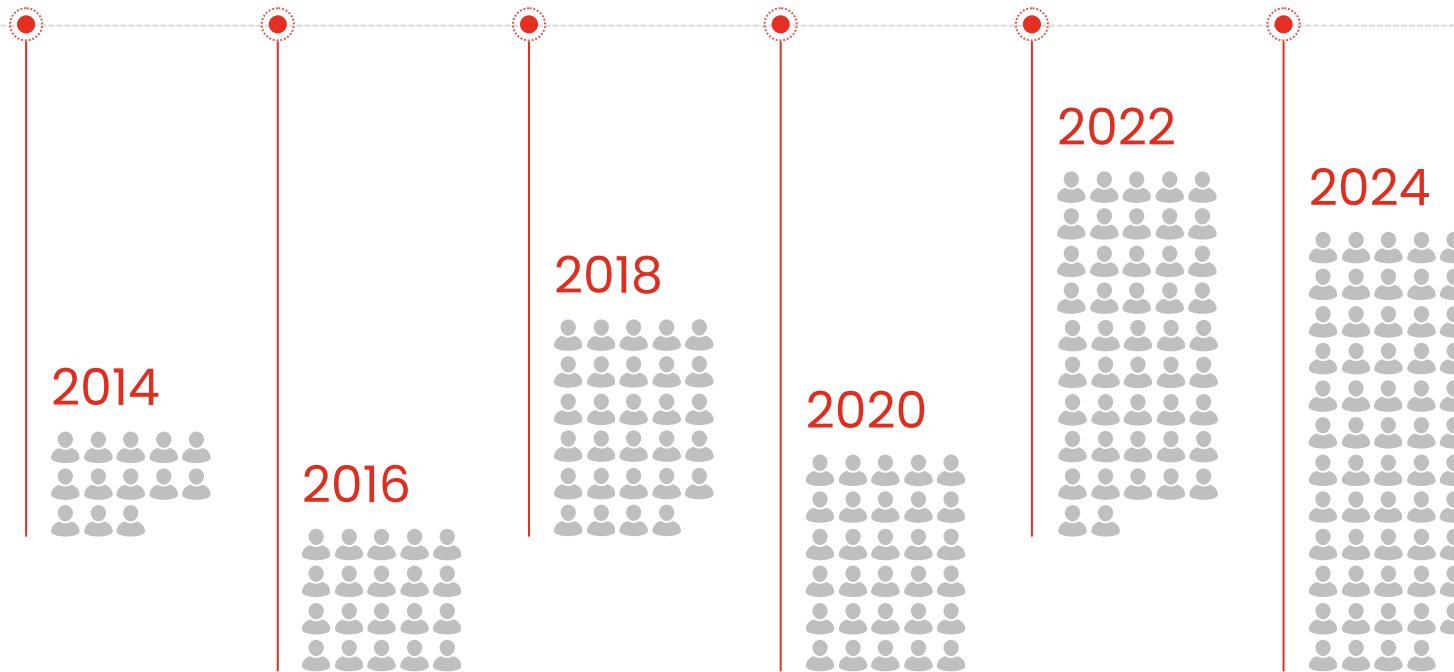


10-year Milestone
Three team members



5-year Milestone
Nine team members

Staff Growth Over the Years



16 years with The Centre have been an extraordinary journey for both my family and I. I am deeply proud to have grown within an organisation that values trust, support and personal development. Moreover, I have also learned to become a better parent through my work. The opportunities I have received have not only shaped my career but have also profoundly influenced my personal growth.

Lynn Zhang
Senior Global CLR Specialist, China

Our Clients and Partners

Our Clients

Fifteen years ago, we started with a vision: to make business work better for children, youth, and families in global supply chains. Today, that vision is made possible by the companies that partner with us to understand and improve working conditions of the millions of people who make our products. In 2024, 69% of the companies that signed contracts with us were returning clients—clear evidence that businesses trust us to help them navigate complex supply chain issues. Through their investment in child rights, worker well-being and human rights due diligence, we can continue innovating and pushing even further to continue improving lives, little by little.

Client Profiles



65

international brands and companies



11

brands listed as Fortune 500 companies



16

non-government organisations



5

government/national organisations

Industries



Agriculture



Food & Beverage



NGOs/Foundations



Apparel



Government/National Organisations



Retail



Business



Home Decor



Sports



Cosmetics



Media



Tea



Digital Learning



Mining and Extractives



Toys



Extractives and Energy



Natural Stone



Transportation

Our Partnerships

Meaningful collaboration is essential to advancing children's rights in businesses' global value chains. There is so much work to do, and we certainly cannot do it alone. By partnering with civil society organisations, advocacy groups, industry leaders, and experts in the field, we are able to amplify our impact and drive greater awareness and action.

Through joint research, workshops, digital learning courses, awareness campaigns, and programme implementation, our partners help us equip more businesses with the knowledge and tools to protect children and families.

- Action pour le Développement Régional Intégré
- Alternatives for Action
- amfori
- Association of Professional Social Compliance Auditors (APSCA)
- Association des Femmes Pour Le Développement Communautaire
- Bangladesh Labour Foundation (BLF)
- Blue Moon
- BuyYourWay
- CORE – The Human Side of Business
- Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)
- Fair Cobalt Alliance (FCA)
- Global Child Forum
- Global March Against Child Labour
- Humana Child Aid Society Sabah
- Humanitarian Emergency Rescue Action for People in Need
- Institut Congalaise des Droits Humains
- Kshitij Associates
- National Peasant League for Human Rights
- Our Journey
- Proforest
- Quizrr
- Rainforest Alliance
- Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)
- Social Accountability International (SAI)
- Save the Children
- Shift Project
- The Remedy Project
- UN Global Compact Network
- UN Global Compact Network UK
- UNICEF

To everyone who has partnered with us in 2024, thank you for your great support. We hope to continue our collaboration in the years to come.



“

The Centre has been a great partner for Farbest to help strengthen our culture of putting our people first.

2024 Financial Report

In 2024, The Centre recorded **USD 3.27 million** of revenue.

Where the Money Came From

Revenue Breakdown by Services



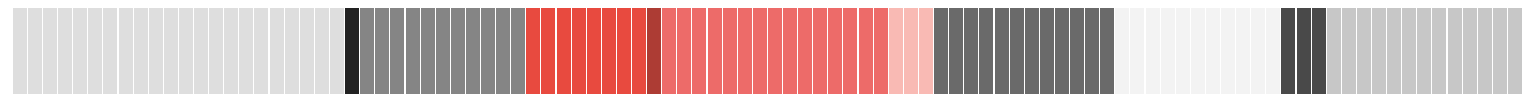
- Child Labour-related Training and Services (30%)
- Young Worker Development (1%)
- Research and Child Rights Impact Assessments (11%)
- Consultancy and Technical Advisory (15%)
- CRIB Working Group (6%)
- Child Labour Rapid Assessment and Remediation (17%)
- Other Projects (2%)
- Family-Friendly Workplaces (18%)

Revenue Breakdown by Stakeholders



- Private Sector (65%)
- Membership (6%)
- Joint Projects (8%)
- NGOs/Business Associations (21%)

Where the Money Went



- Child Labour-related Training and Services (22%)
- Young Worker Development (1%)
- Research and Child Rights Impact Assessments (11%)
- Consultancy and Technical Advisory (8%)
- CRIB Working Group (1%)
- Child Labour Rapid Assessment and Remediation (15%)
- Other Projects (3%)
- Family-Friendly Workplaces (12%)
- Business Development (11%)
- Communications (3%)
- Admin and Management (13%)

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