

Press Release

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ICTI Ethical Toy Program

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Thirty Thousand Children to Benefit as Family-Friendly Factory Program Expands to Vietnam and Mexico

- IETP secure crucial funding from key partners
- Family-Friendly Factory Program will expand to Vietnam (2023) and Mexico (2024)
- 30,000 children to benefit across China, Vietnam and Mexico by 2025
- Follows successful pilot launched in China in 2016 to support “left behind children”
- Renewed invitation to brands for further funding or knowledge partnerships

[Hong Kong & London] [ICTI Ethical Toy Program](#) (IETP) today [4th May] proudly unveils plans to support 30,000 children by expanding its [Family-Friendly Factory program](#) (FFF) outside of China for the first time. Having secured funding from key partners, the FFF program prepares for operations to begin in Vietnam later this year and Mexico in 2024. IETP is now inviting more brands to assist with funding or knowledge partnerships.

The [Family-Friendly Spaces](#) (FFS) program was originally launched in China in 2016, to support ‘left behind children’ - children whose parents migrate domestically to major cities for work but are unable to bring their children to live with them. In China, there are an estimated 31 million ‘left behind children’.

About Family-Friendly Spaces and the Family-Friendly Factory program

The Family-Friendly Spaces initiative creates factory-based, safe, educational spaces for the children of workers to play and learn while their parents are able to work. IETP has now successfully operationalised this program in China for seven years. A Family-Friendly Factory is a factory that has considered the needs of its workers and engaged with them to develop appropriate responses to those needs. This can include the provision of childcare by implementing a Family-Friendly Space and/or the development of new policies which offer parents benefits like flexible working or enhanced parental leave. It can also take the form of training and support for parents, helping them to develop new skills.

These programs have proven to be sustainable, with 66% of factories continuing their Space following the first year of implementation, despite the impact of COVID in recent years. IETP

has now taken lessons learned and insights from parents, along with [UNICEF's Family-Friendly Policies](#) guidance and expert advice, to further develop the FFF program, which will incorporate family-friendly policies in the workplace and promote the provision of safe, educational spaces for children to learn and play. The not-for-profit has set out its ambition to scale and support 30,000 children by the end of 2025, by creating 100 new Family-Friendly Spaces and formally recognising factories who participate in the FFF program.

The business benefits of Family-Friendly Spaces are clear; data from IETP shows that, due to the provision of a Family-Friendly Space, 91% of workers intended to stay working at a factory for over two years. 90% of managers said more workers were attracted to work at their factory, with 90% of managers also saying Family-Friendly Spaces improved worker retention rates. You can read the 2022 Impact Report [on the IETP website](#).

Funding secured and an invitation for additional funding and knowledge partners

IETP has today announced that it has secured funding to help it achieve this ambition, with [the LEGO Group](#) named as the program's primary funder, alongside additional funders and longstanding supporters including [Spin Master](#). The LEGO Group has supported the Family-Friendly Spaces program since 2017, with this latest commitment enabling the delivery of the innovative Family-Friendly Factory program. **IETP is now inviting additional funding from brands that wish to join this partnership, to help support 30,000 children by 2025.**

This tranche of funding will enable IETP to further develop workplace policies and open childcare spaces all over the world. Initial growth plans focus on expansion from China to Vietnam in 2023, and to Mexico in 2024, with the ambition to announce more locations as the program develops and needs are identified in other geographies.

Speaking about the partnership, **Anne-Mette Lehm Laursen, Senior Director, Responsible Sourcing at the LEGO Group**, says: "We are extremely excited to support the globalization of the Family-Friendly Factory program and work with IETP and expert partners on program content development. Learning through play is an essential part of child development, enhancing social, physical, emotional, creative, and cognitive skills. We look forward to embedding our Learning through Play activities into the Family-Friendly Spaces Teacher Training program, and seeing the positive impact that the program will have on children, parents, caregivers, and worker well-being."

Carmel Giblin, President & CEO of IETP, adds: "I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved so far and excited for the future of the Family-Friendly Factory program. The mission of the Ethical Toy Program is to help improve the lives of workers, their children and their communities. We are achieving this through a ground-breaking commitment to worker well-being, by developing a supportive working environment that will benefit working parents and carers, both personally and professionally.

"We are delighted to have the support of the LEGO Group and Spin Master. The financial support and expertise they bring will be invaluable and we would like to invite more brands to join us in helping us to achieve this mission."

Tammy Smitham, Spin Master's VP Communications and Corporate Citizenship, adds:
"IETP's Family-Friendly Factory program will provide valuable programming to improve the lives of workers with family responsibilities, which in turn can have a positive impact on their children and their work life. Much like the Family-Friendly Spaces program, it is a win-win for both factory workers and management, strengthening the factory culture and engagement. Given our commitment to helping children grow and learn through play, we are thrilled to be supporting the expansion of this program which is at the epicenter of where play experiences begin and look forward to seeing the positive impact it can have."

How can brands get involved?

IETP is inviting organisations and brands of any size and from any sector to join this global ambition, by coming on board as a funding or knowledge partner, alongside the LEGO Group and Spin Master, to collectively make a life-changing difference to children and families around the world.

For more information on the program, please contact Anita Lo, General Manager, at: anita.lo@ethicaltoyprogram.org or visit www.ethicaltoyprogram.org.

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