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TOY BOOK®

SERVING THE GLOBAL MARKET

Saving the World, One Doll at a Time

Dolls Teach Diversity, Self-Kataem, and Eco-Friendly Alternatives

You know it all too well—kids are growing up too quickly. Children gain necessary development skills when they are exposed to age-appropriate activities. Meanwhile, overexposure to adult content leaves children to mature at a faster rate and address issues that they are not mentally or emotionally prepared to handle. Many technological advances and a preoccupation with pop culture have contributed to the increased maturation of children, especially young girls. Clothing and cosmetics companies are marketing products to younger girls and toy manufacturers are capitalizing on this trend, as young girls trade in their dolls for “play” makeup and shorter haircuts.



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by Susan Miller

Dolls

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Technology is advancing their understanding and exposing them to cultural/social discussions to which they were not previously exposed. So how do we find a balance? How do we produce toys that appeal to young girls without understating their maturity?

Some toy manufacturers have found a happy medium by making products with global messages such as environmental protection and diversity promotion. These companies understand that young people are being exposed to mature topics, but, rather than focusing on the negative images in society, they are embracing the positive.

Diversity and cultural acceptance are lessons many toy companies are attempting to teach. bolstered by the success of Nickelodeon's popular bilingual children's character Dora the Explorer, toy retailers across the country are filling their shelves with dolls that not only reflect the cultures of the children that play with them, but also explore greater societal issues. KidsGive's mission to raise global awareness among youths aligns with this trend. The newest collection of Karito Kids Dolls, Travel Charmers, educate children about different countries. The collection is comprised of five smaller versions of the company's original Karito Kids World Collection of dolls.

Each Travel Charmer doll represents a girl from a different country, and is dressed in a contemporary outfit

and ethnic style. Each doll also comes with a background story to introduce kids to overseas adventures and gives them insight into life in another land.

KidsGive is dedicated to teaching children the importance of helping others. To meet this mission, the company has developed a unique concept that brings the child directly into the process of giving to others, and understanding the development of humanitarian projects around the world. Karito Kids invites each child to donate a portion of their doll's retail cost to one of four charitable causes, including growing up healthy, learning, habitat, or livelihood. In the process, KidsGive is teaching a new generation of children what charitable giving really means.

Social influences, which include the media and popular mainstream culture, may promote specific images and standards of beauty and attractiveness. Toy manufacturers such as Adorable Originals have made it their mission to not only celebrate cultural diversity, but also to advocate a positive self-image.

"I feel like it is important to teach girls that beauty starts inside and felt that it would be more effective when the message was carried by a doll that resembled their outward appearance," says Melanie Corjstein, president

and CEO of Adorable Originals, Inc. Adorable Girls is a line of six huggable dolls that come with a



Travel Charmers, from KidsGive