



COMMUNICATION  
ON PROGRESS  
2017/2018

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Epsilon Publishers Limited is proud of our commitment in embodying the spirit of the United Nations Global Compact. We pledge to align our business operations to the United Nations Global Compact's fundamental pillars of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. To this end, we have signed the letter of commitment to the United Nations Global Compact, pledging to align our efforts to operate responsibly and to advance societal goals in tandem with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



TRACE has completed a TRACEcertification due diligence review of Epsilon Publishers Limited. Certification by TRACE signifies that Epsilon Publishers Limited has completed internationally accepted due diligence procedures and has been forthcoming and cooperative during the review process. TRACEcertification underscores Epsilon Publishers Limited's commitment to transparency in international commercial transactions.





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LETTER OF COMMITMENT



This Communication on Progress report provides a detailed account of how we have implemented the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact in each of its four issue areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption for the period 2017-2018. The report further considers our engagement in realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that concern our business and our undertaking of strategic actions towards the realisation of SDGs.

Our organisation theme during this period was operation excellence. As such, this reporting year, we focused on the company’s brand strategy, setting up corporate governance systems, and the completion of the TRACEcertification.

TRACE is the world’s leading anti-bribery standard setting organisation. Certification by TRACE signifies that we have completed internationally accepted due diligence procedures and that we have been forthcoming and cooperative during the review process. TRACEcertification underscores our commitment to transparency in international commercial transactions.

We know that much remains to be done in emerging sustainability issues and therefore, we reiterate our commitment to advance societal goals and embed sustainability deeper into our business.

Yours sincerely



R. Mumbi Gichuhi (Mrs.)  
Managing Director  
Epsilon Publishers Limited

UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT  
THE 10 PRINCIPLES

HUMAN RIGHTS

- PRINCIPLE 1 Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- PRINCIPLE 2 make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

LABOUR

- PRINCIPLE 3 Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- PRINCIPLE 4 the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- PRINCIPLE 5 the effective abolition of child labour; and
- PRINCIPLE 6 the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

ENVIRONMENT

- PRINCIPLE 7 Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environment challenges;
- PRINCIPLE 8 undertake initiative to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- PRINCIPLE 9 encourage the development and discussion of environmentally friendly technology.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

- PRINCIPLE 10 Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.



HIGHLIGHT

aligning brand strategy

In 2017, we contracted a brand advisory firm to help us develop our brand strategy in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This process was aimed at creating a compelling brand promise that would help us to align our operations to be more deliberate in creating value to all our stakeholders. Furthermore, creating a strong brand would help to maximise our the full potential as well us to provide us with opportunities for product and service innovation.

This reporting year, our aim has been implementing brand business levers from the brand strategy and which are: adapting a more customer-centric culture that invests in interactive relations between ourselves and our clients; communicating our brand more deliberately and initiating conversations that drive the brand and its values; and, simplifying our processes to hasten project output.

This will ensure we remain deliberate in delivering on our brand promise.

brand promise

We sieve through your manuscript to unearth the kernel at the heart of your message because we understand that communication is more than just sharing information.

We nurture your publication from its inception through to its completion, so that your publication message resonates with its intended audience.

We create publications that drive impactful conversation.



WHAT WE DO

we continue to diversify

We continue to diversify our products and solutions across the publishing and production spectrum. This ensures that we continue to anticipate the future trends in publishing so that we align our operations and strategies accordingly.



We provide editorial, translation, publishing and printing services to help you to communicate your message succinctly with your audience. We offer editorial, translation, graphic design and printing services. These include imaging (photography, illustrations, and infographics); content (curating content and content management); and publications (newsletters, reports, brochures, online publishing, coffee table books, electronic and print newsletters and magazines, and blogs).



our work

We work hard to bring your publication to life. Good publishing means work that attracts and retains attention because it has communicated congruently to its intended audience.

our values

Our values lie at the core of what we do. We measure our work by our three non-negotiable values: we act with integrity; we take responsibility for quality; we deliver excellence.

our philosophy

We aim to nurture and personalise publications so that we ensure that the intended message is communicated in a concise and consistent manner, with a credible and compelling message.

our approach

We nurture your publication and treat it like our own. We ensure that your message is communicated in a concise and consistent manner so it sends out a credible that relays your core message.

THE PUBLISHING PROCESS

the work flow

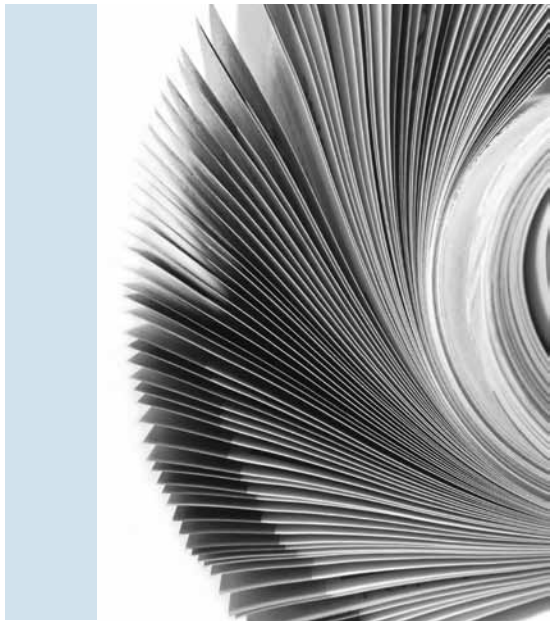
At Epsilon Publishers, we know that publishing is an art and a science; it is the culmination of the editorial and design processes. The overall design and appearance of a publication must appeal to the heart and its content to the mind. Our detailed work-flow ensures that your publication is planned in minute detail so that it communicates succinctly for the audience for which it is intended.



HIGHLIGHT

understanding the project

We create publications that deliver results for your intended audience. We create content that delivers your key message in a way that it is easily understood by your target audience.



STAGE TWO

photography, illustrations & infographics

*We introduce visual elements to your publication so that it is both visually appealing, and easily understood by the end reader.*

STAGE ONE

editorial & translation

Our editorial services include copywriting, copy-editing and proofreading. We do this for both print and online content.

The photos that you use in your publication should evoke powerful imagery. We provide you with carefully selected and curated photography to enhance your different publications.

We develop illustrations for your publication to make your message compelling.

We develop infographics to make your publications more accessible and easy to understand. Infographics synthesise information in a visually appealing manner.

STAGE THREE

publishing & print

We never lose sight of the fact that a design has to communicate effectively on all fronts. We like to think of design as a visual language.

The publishing process culminates in the production of the book, report, newsletter or any other form of written material. We provide an array of printing solutions, depending on your target audience. We have no minimum print run.

Printing is an intricate process that requires meticulous preparation and attention to detail. We strive to ensure that our publications meet international print standards. We oversee every step of production to ensure that we deliver a sterling publication. We deliver all our publications to anywhere that you are in the world.



the advisory board



The advisory board during the brand induction training  
(L-R) Mrs. Mumbi Gichuhi (managing director), Mr. Peter Mugendi (board member), Dr. Mbithe Anzaya (board chair), Mr. Philip Gichuhi (director), Ms. Rose Wahome (board member), Dr. Patricia Murugami (CEO and lead consultant, Breakthrough Consulting Solutions)

HIGHLIGHT

establishing a board

After the brand strategy exercise was complete, it was clear that the establishment of an advisory board would be instrumental in implementing the brand strategy. The board members are drawn from diverse industries and this has lent a lot of richness and experience to the board.

board charter

Further to this, we developed a board charter to set the right tone for corporate governance. This provided concise overview of the respective roles, responsibilities and authorities of the board members and management as well as the practices of the board.

BOARD INDUCTION

training for effective board meetings

Finally, we contracted a leadership consultant to take the board members through a structured, comprehensive and practical induction which helped us to identify our management styles, approaches to work, leadership, self-assessment and conflict management. This would enable the board to be more effective and deliberate in executing its mandate.



Three out of the five board members are women. The female-led advisory board constitutes 60% women and this is in line with our strategy for affirmative action.



TOWARDS OPERATION EXCELLENCE

ISO finalisation

In order to achieve credibility as an ISO certified business, Epsilon Publishers Limited undertook the ISO certification journey in the second quarter of 2017.

Towards the submission of our first Communication on Progress (COP), each department had developed its own standard operating procedures (SOPs), guiding policies and strategies in line with the ISO 9001:2015 requirements. The departments had also established and defined responsibilities for each function.

The standard operating procedures, policies and strategies were then integrated to develop the organisational work flow that established what Epsilon does from point of contact with our clients to post delivery of any work carried out. This year has seen us steer forward the journey of ISO certification completion as the main goal for 2018.

Our staff developed and implemented a quality management system (QMS), which uses ISO 9001:2015 as a framework that allowed us to document and improve our practices in order to better satisfy the needs and expectations of our clients, the advisory board, suppliers, management and other stakeholders.

The quality management system and manual was also aimed at familiarising our clients, stakeholders and interested parties with the controls that had been implemented and to assure them that the integrity of the quality management system was maintained and was focused on continual improvement.

To ensure that all processes and departments were in synchrony, management further organised an inter-departmental internal audit to establish best practises and determine whether the quality systems were being effectively implemented and maintained.

HIGHLIGHT

MEA  
MARKETS  
AWARD

UK based MEA Markets launched an inaugural award, The African Excellence Awards. This award aims to recognise the achievements of businesses within a variety of sectors and industries. It measures businesses that have attained noticeable results in their varied endeavours. Epsilon Publishers Limited was awarded the best corporate publishing company in Nairobi.

HIGHLIGHT

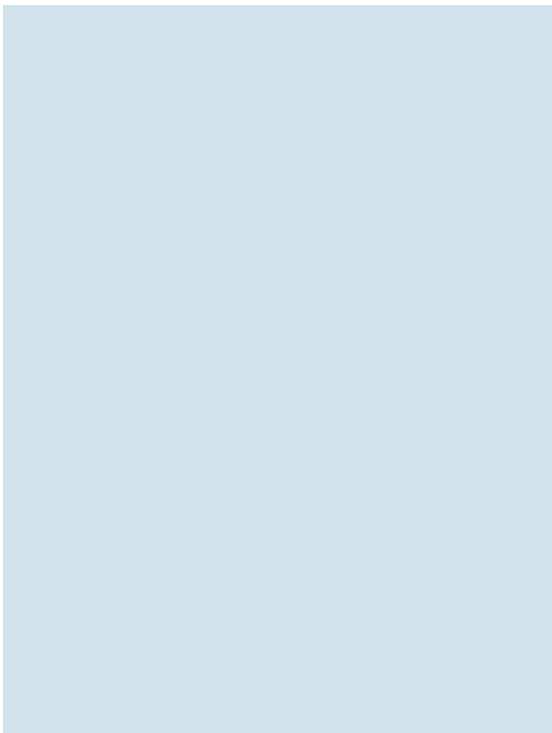
Epsilon Publishers cooperative agreement with Phoenix Design Aid

We are proud to announce the signing of our partnership with Phoenix Design Aid. Phoenix Design Aid is a first-class design and communication agency. The company, which is based in Denmark, and has an office in Nairobi, and representative offices around the world, delivers contemporary and innovative designs by focusing on the needs of the client and delivering on them expeditiously.

The basis for our partnership is that we are always looking for innovative ways to serve our clients better. This as we strive to deliver on our promise to our clients as envisaged in our core values, that:

we act with integrity; we take responsibility for quality; we deliver excellence. These are shared values in both our organisations. Moreover, we are committed to operate responsibly and to advance societal goals in tandem with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Our partnership will see us collaborate on doing different publications for our respective clients, thereby adding value to the whole process in terms of expertise and experience. The partnership will also contribute to the long-term sustainability of the two businesses by way of indentifying different areas for partnership.



Dennis Lundo Nielsen, CEO, Phoenix Design Aid and Mumbi Gichuhi, Managing Director, Epsilon Publishers Limited sign a cooperative agreement at the Embassy of Denmark in Nairobi.

human rights

*We know that the responsibility to respect human rights is a global standard of expected conduct for all businesses and enterprises. Furthermore, businesses can only have a long term future if the management is running a decent business which is socially responsible and is taking care of its people and the planet.*



In light of the recent rise in sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) cases in Kenya, we were deliberate in our involvement in several commitments and activities focused on the promotion of human rights as provided for by the International Bill of Human Rights. It states in part that, depending on circumstances, business enterprises may need to consider higher standards in respect of human rights of individuals belonging to specific groups or populations that require attention, where they may have adverse human impacts on them. Such individuals and populations include: indigenous people; women; children; persons with disability; national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities; and, migrant workers and their families.

As a result, we forged partnerships with external stakeholders such as Equality Now and FEMNET. These are organisations that work toward (primarily) safe guarding the rights of women and children.

PRINCIPLE 1

Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

PRINCIPLE 2

make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

In the organisational context, our human resource procedure and policies continue to be guided by the following principles:

HIRING PROCEDURES

Recruitment, promotion and development of employees based on each individual's competencies, abilities and skills.

DIVERSITY

We strive to create an inclusive environment with particular attention on gender diversity in order to support the development of all.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

We do not discriminate our staff on the basis of gender, religion, race, political affiliation or other opinion. Our focus remains to create equal opportunities for all our staff.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY

We do not undertake any work from clients that compromises the safety and integrity of our staff.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

One of our key values is open communication. Unless something is confidential, it can be communicated in a complete, unambiguous and timely manner.

CLIENT RELATIONS

We uphold strong and respectful relations with our stakeholders. We believe it is essential to cultivate positive relations with our partners and clients.

SUPPLIER RELATIONS

We work with recognised suppliers who uphold labour policies to ensure that we are not complicit in human rights abuses.

## taking a stand on sexual gender based violence



(L-R) Patrick Waswani, head of production, Mary Wagura, head of operations and Mark Muthiora, head of editorial pledge their support to stop the silence of sexual and gender based violence.

With the alarming rise in the number of gender based violence cases, we chose to be part of the activism activities surrounding this. The only way to reduce sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) is to speak out about it, create awareness about it and condemn the vice. This has seen us support and commit to the initiatives as publishers and as individuals. As publishers, our core strength lies in creating impactful conversations through publications and other media such as posters, postcards and banners with a message.

We attended the National Dialogue on the Protection of Children against Sexual and Gender Based Violence held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2017 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi. The dialogue was on how children are suffering silently at the hands of their would be caregivers. This forum brought together various stakeholders for practical commitments, interventions and solutions on all forms of SGBV: sexual violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and sex trafficking.

## HIGHLIGHT

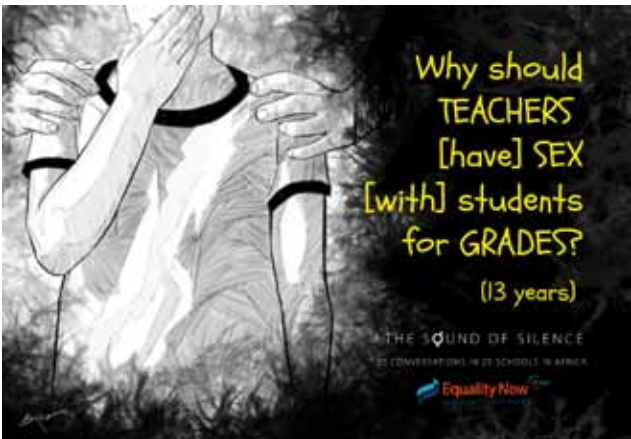
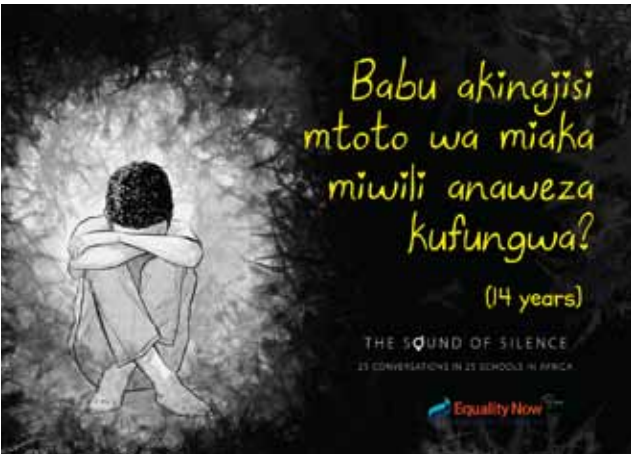
### the sound of silence

Our biggest achievement in 2017 was developing the sound of silence gallery. This was a mobile gallery aimed at starting conversations around child rights in Africa while creating a platform for dialogue on the protection of children against sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).

We developed illustrations to create visually impactful posters with actual quotes from children who had suffered in the hands of their abusers. We presented it in the format of an art gallery. We then translated the posters from English to French and Swahili so that the message could reach a wider audience.

This gallery was presented first presented in Mauritius to the African Union Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The managing director flew to Mauritius to support the cause. The travelling gallery was subsequently presented in Mauritania, the Gambia, Kenya and Tanzania.

These forums brought together non-governmental organisations, policy makers and leaders from both the government and the private sector for practical commitments, interventions and solutions on all forms of SGBV: rape, defilement, child marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM) and sex trafficking.





COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

labour

*An ideal culture ought to focus on competency, empowerment, incentives and accountability. Epsilon continues to foster an employee centric culture which is highly energised and professional.*

PRINCIPLE 3

The businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

PRINCIPLE 4

the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

PRINCIPLE 5

the effective abolition of child labour; and

PRINCIPLE 6

the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



GOAL

We will organise a conflict management self-assessment/training that will allow our employees to identify their preferred conflict styles. The primary value of this activity will be to generate discussion on conflict styles and the possible impact each style might have on how people address conflict situations.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Epsilon ensures that it provides a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. The objective of observing a healthy and safe work environment is to reduce workplace hazards while ensuring the well-being of both employers and employees and improved performance.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We continue to be an equal-opportunity employer. We recognise that women continue to be discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities and when employed, in terms of career advancement, leadership roles and compensation. Towards this end, we practice affirmative action and we have an equal-work-for-equal-pay policy.

HUMAN RESOURCE PROCEDURES

Staff turnover level this reporting year has been at 0. All our human resource procedures and processes are periodically audited to ensure that they are implemented and maintained. The audit also ensures that they conform to ISO 9001:2015 requirements and the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) principles.

environment

*We recognise that protection of the environment is an integral part of our business as publishers. We are thus committed to executing our mandate and activities in a manner that contributes to environmental sustainability.*



ENVIRONMENT

PRINCIPLE 7

Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

PRINCIPLE 8

undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

PRINCIPLE 9

encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technology.

TREE PLANTING

In the period 2017-2018, we planted 100 indigenous trees in Nanyuki, Kenya. We pledge to double that number to 200 for the COP reporting cycle for 2018-2019.

SUSTAINABLE PRINTING

We envision Epsilon engaging in sustainable printing in our next COP reporting cycle. Also, the organisation aims at pursuing environmental certification under ISO 14001:2015 in 2019.

This will help us to manage its environmental responsibilities in a systematic manner that contributes to the environmental pillar of sustainability and achieve the intended outcomes of its environmental management system, which provide value for the environment, the organisation itself and interested parties.

GOAL

We remain committed to be the benchmark in the publishing industry for environmental and sustainability initiatives in Kenya

anti-corruption

PRINCIPLE 10

Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.



At Epsilon, we remain committed to conducting our business with integrity, fighting corruption in all its forms. We continue to promote integrity among our employees and external stakeholders to ensure that we are accountable for our business and transparent in all our dealings.

One of our anti-corruption goals for 2016–2017 was providing quality employee training on anti-corruption. Two (2) employees from different departments attended the Bribery Act, 2016 workshop organised by Global Compact Network Kenya as a framework for joint collective action efforts.

We were taken through the provisions of the Bribery Act, lessons from other jurisdictions, actors in implementation, legislative gaps, challenges, implementation and proposed solutions.

Notable issues raised by participants

Challenges faced by SMEs in setting up internal compliance systems.

Lack of political will in the war against corruption.

The requirement to report within 24 hours being too ambitious and not taking into account standard escalation processes within companies.

Need for a defined threshold to distinguish between a “gift” and a “bribe”.

Guidance on where offences such as sexual harassment lie in the Bribery Act.

Proposal to enhance protection for whistle-blowers. Section 21 may be in conflict with section 9 as whistle-blowers can still be penalised for reporting after 24 hours.

Difficulties in establishing intent of the person receiving a bribe.

Proposal to define comprehensively all parties affected by the Bribery Act outside of the parties already mentioned.

Proposal to elaborate terminologies used in the Bribery Act such as “intent”, “suspicious”, “advantage”, “senior officer”.

GOAL

For the next communication on progress reporting cycle, we intend to develop and publish a code of conduct which shall outline our business ethos and practices. This publication shall be available as a downloadable PDF on our website and as a printed document. It shall be shared with our partners, suppliers, clients and stakeholders.

Opportunities for collective action identified

Pursuing joint amendment to the legislation and establishment of guidelines.

Continued awareness creation on the Bribery Act; highlighting corruption high-risk processes and sectors.

Pursue certification of companies upon compliance.

Harmonise the Bribery Act requirements with companies’ codes of conduct.

To enhance private sector ownership of the process, the sector should consider funding capacity building of the implementation process.

Professional bodies should incorporate anti-corruption clauses in their codes of conducts aligned to the Bribery Act.

Exploring the option of having the Bribery Act as an East African community legislation because of the prevalence of cross-border corruption.

Explore partnerships with the media to create awareness on the importance of addressing corruption as well as highlighting progress made by stakeholders.



COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

training on anti-corruption

IMPLEMENTATION

Participants were advised on the need to put in place internal compliance mechanisms while recognising that the fight against corruption begins at a personal level. We have integrated this knowledge into the company's decision making processes. Issues raised from the workshop would further be analysed by the Siemens project advisory committee and prioritised for collective action.



HIGHLIGHT



We successfully completed TRACEcertification, an internationally recognised due diligence review administered by TRACE, the world's leading anti-bribery standard setting organisation.

Certification by TRACE signifies that Epsilon Publishers has completed internationally accepted due diligence procedures and has been forthcoming during the review process. TRACEcertified companies are pre-vetted partners for multi-national companies seeking to do business with suppliers and consultants who share their commitment to commercial transparency.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

To scale collective action, our staff was part of the incubation lab which was the second phase of the Siemens project.

The project was aimed at: maintaining continuity on an existing path towards Anti-Corruption Collective Action (ACCA); providing context for the proposed ACCA; building the case for the potential funders and providing detailed project plan; and,

maintaining energy and synergy throughout the project implementation period.

From the proposed tasks, the team worked on the second track that was raising standards of SMEs in terms of compliance by developing an SME tool kit inspired by ISO 37001 to comply with the Bribery Act. The toolkit will go a long way in helping SMEs practically

implement the code of ethics for business operations.

The team analysed variables around the agenda such as the threats to the implementation of the project, the strengths SMEs have, weaknesses experienced in the sector and opportunities SMEs can tap in the implementation process.

SMEs constitute 97% of the businesses operating in Kenya and are therefore exposed to the highest risk of corruption.

Often, SMEs have been forced to operate in an unfair playing field and business environment with the government and large corporates.

However, being the bedrock of the Kenyan economy, SMEs can collectively work together and push for reforms and a level playing field if they took advantage of their strength which is in their numbers and influence on the economy. They could also lobby for implementation of compliance to anti-corruption and the code of ethics for businesses operating in Kenya.

Further, the team put together all these variables with mitigation principles for the threats and weaknesses. All this would be substantial in the development of the SME tool kit. In the long run this would:

1. Increase transparency in operations and processes.
2. Reduce the cost of operating businesses in Kenya.
3. Level the playing field for SMEs, large corporate and government parastatals.
4. Create trust and credibility among businesses and institutions.
5. Businesses can pursue long term government incentive initiatives such as tax incentives for compliant businesses.
6. The network would provide resources and resource persons such as compliance auditors to help members in the compliance implementation processes and sustainability of standards.
7. Increase the level of credit extensions to compliant businesses.

dissemination

We shall distribute this communication on progress (COP) through various channels. These shall include; providing a link of our COP on the United Nations Global Compact page, as a downloadable PDF on our website, on our email signatures, on our social media channels and on all our communication materials.

Behind the Scenes



### KAREN BLIXEN MUSEUM

Born 17th April 1885, Karen Blixen was a Danish baroness who moved to Kenya upon accepting a marriage proposal from her half cousin, Bror von Blixen-Finecke. They got married in Mombasa in 1914 then honeymooned on Lake Naivasha, succeeded by them settling down and residing in Mbagathi. They later bought a 4500-acre plot in 1917 where they used 600 acres for their coffee plantation which they had been convinced to do by relatives and close friends. Karen and the Baron resided in a house that has already been built. The coffee plantation was self-contained, employing locals to work on it, as well as having 200 houses built for the workers.

The house was very quaint having six rooms: the Baron's study, his sleeping

quarters, Karen's library, and her sleeping quarters, a dining room, a single bathroom and a kitchen. The kitchen however was separate from the rest of the house as the cooker would remain lit all day and night. Karen would write in her study to her mother in Denmark telling her she had good relations with the local people in the area, as well as she wore Somali attire to symbolise their unity. She also had multiple elaborate clocks in her house, a cuckoo clock being extremely popular amongst the local children, who could go to the house every hour of the day, anticipating its chime.

Alongside being a well-known author, Karen Blixen was also a renowned artist. Karen did many paintings such as one of a Kikuyu girl named Njeri

who was said to be the most beautiful girl in the tribe at the time, having a dowry of 250 goats and a pot of honey. She further painted a man by the name of Farah Aden, who worked for her on the farm.

Sadly, Blixen and the Baron's marriage failed after eight years and the Baron left Karen to run the farm by herself. As if to trail onto this series of unfortunate events, the coffee farmed failed, having the factory burn down and continuous bad harvest. Shortly after, she fell in love with Englishman Denis Finch Hatton in 1926, who later moved in with Karen into the house, which she dubbed "Bogant". He slept in the Baron's quarters. It was around this time the Baron returned and finalised his divorce with Karen. Her lover unfortunately died in a plane crash in Voi and he was buried on the foot of Ngong Hills. Heartbroken and bankrupt, Karen was forced to move back to Denmark where she then wrote two of her most renowned literary pieces: Seven Gothic Tales and Out of Africa, which has now been translated into several languages such as Chinese, Russian and French but also has become an Oscar-winning film. Karen died on her family estate in 1962, aged 77.

The Danish government gained possession of what used to be her land in 1964 and gave the house to the Kenyan government as an independence gift. The Kenyan government then set up a college of nutrition which was originally intended for Kenyan women. The school neighbours the museum. Her house was declared a museum in 1985.

HIGHLIGHT  
Youth programme

We pledge to continue with our youth membership programme for this reporting cycle. This year, we hosted two students from Hillcrest Secondary School in Nairobi Kenya who did work experience with us for one week. A teacher from their school came to our office to check on their progress. During this time, we exposed them to all aspects of publishing; editing, design and printing. They visited a printing press and a museum, after which they were expected to write and edit a report on their visit. They also interviewed our head of production and wrote a piece on him. We then published a 4 page newsletter for them. We are pleased to report that one of the students who did interned with us got the Work Year Experience Award at her school. This gives us the impetus to continue to provide mentorship opportunities for the youth.

