

United Nations Communication on Progress (COP)

1. Statement of continued support

In 2019, World Challenge has continued to build a commitment to responsible travel through refined product ranges, operational procedures, and engagement with our global community of students, staff, teachers, leaders and local partners. Our roadmap for the next five years gives priority to responsible and ethical initiatives, holding strong foundations in the framework laid by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals continue to underpin our core values and purpose, and where we aspire to progress to.

Following two years of membership to the UN Global Compact, we build the associated principles into our organisational direction, centring our main commitments over the past twelve months around three core areas:

- Promoting responsible travel. Organisationally, we're prioritising responsibility across six key commitments. These encompass promotion of ethical volunteering and community engagement, reduced negative environmental impact, offering participants an opportunity to learn about responsible travel through critical thinking workshops, and building a responsible product range.
- Ethical volunteering and community engagement. In the past year, we've built processes for assessing our community initiatives against key ethical benchmarks. With each experience holding strong roots in the UN SDGs, we focus on building understanding around these goals in our participants, ensuring that activities conducted within local communities are done so in a responsible manner.
- Reducing our environmental impact. We're working to reduce the environmental impact of our offices through green energy, reduced waste and reduced printing. On our trips we're engaging activities to raise awareness around climate change and animal welfare issues. And, for a second year, we have selected Plastic Oceans as our charity of the year, and have conducted a number of fundraising activities to support them.

In 2020, we will continue to prioritise this commitment to responsible travel, building around our connections to the UN SDGs and exploring additional ways to deepen the with them for our participants.

Kind regards,



Pete Fletcher

Global Managing Director

2. Practical actions across the 4 main areas / 10 global compact principles

Human Rights

- We remain committed to supporting all basic human rights, enshrined throughout our company policies and practices throughout our supply chain.
- We take measures to support the physical and mental wellbeing of all our contracted staff.

Labour Standards

- In addition to refraining from engagement with any orphanages and/or residential care institutions, in recognition that they can perpetuate forms of modern slavery, we have also removed all such activities from our supply chain. We engage in advocacy on this issue across our network of stakeholders.
- We continue to implement measures which ensure the company does not participate in any form of exploitative behaviour or bonded labour, including child labour.
- All employment-related decisions are based on relevant and objective criteria, part of our commitment to best practices in human-resources.
- We are implementing an equal opportunities assessment into our supplier auditing processes.

Environment

- We're focussing on key goals to reduce the impact of our offices on the environment including reducing printing and waste, and promoting a refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle policy. Throughout 2019 we have transitioned the energy supplies to our UK Head Office to green sources, with the final section completing in January 2020. All of the paper supplied to our UK Head Office carries FSC certification of sustainability, and we are now working to adopt this practice globally and across our outsourced printing.
- We're reducing the amount of single-use plastics sent overseas with our travellers in their equipment, and have removed the provision of single-use plastic water bottles from all of our trips. Our travellers are provided with water purification supplies to promote sustainable drinking water solutions. Our packing lists also include plastic-free and environmentally friendly recommendations.
- We participate in a number of environmentally positive initiatives on our trips, engaging our travellers with information about these SDGs. Through practical engagement with these initiatives we build knowledge with regards to the importance of protecting the natural world amongst our travellers.

Anti-Corruption

- We remain fully compliant with the Bribery Act 2010 and current EU legislation governing active work against all forms of corruption. Internal procedures underpinning the evaluation and contracting of local partners overseas, seek to enforce our commitments to anti-corruption and ethical behaviour.

3. Outcomes

- All of our community partners for the provision of volunteering and engagement experiences on our trips are now assessed against key ethical benchmarks prior to receiving our travellers. This allows us to uphold high standards for responsible engagement with initiatives that connect our students to knowledge on the UN SDGs, without causing detriment or disruption to local people.
- We hosted 4 Ethical Student Travel forums in 2019, in London and Manchester, UK, Atlanta, US, and Toronto, Canada. These events engaged members of the school and student travel industry with information regarding the promotion of ethics, particularly with regards to child welfare, in responsible student travel experiences. These were conducted in partnership with ReThink Orphanages and Save the Children.
- Since their conception in 2017, 5626 students, teachers and leaders have participated in our Responsible Travel Workshops, which promote critical evaluation of travel experiences and volunteering overseas from a position of responsibility, and engage participants with a broad context of knowledge on the UN SDGs in their destination. Of these, 3969 participants were engaged in 2019.
- Our Responsible Travel Workshops also place a spotlight on issues around orphanage tourism, educating participants as to why we do not engage in these activities. From those surveyed, 98% of participants in 2019 indicated that they felt both their knowledge of these issues and confidence talking about them increased from the beginning to the end of the workshop.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting mental health and wellbeing amongst our community, all of the trip leaders traveling with us are now trained in Mental Health First Aid prior to travelling.