

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

British Council

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement [Ideally the two years prior to this report]

From: 19 Feb 2018

To: 20 Feb 2020

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

Please use the box below to include the statement of continued support signed by your organization's Chief Executive or equivalent.

10 February 2020

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that British Council reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Sir Ciarán
Devane
CEO



Part II. Description of Actions

We would first like to state the context in which British Council operates. We are officially a Non-Departmental Public Body, with headquarters in the UK but over 100 offices in countries throughout the world. Therefore, using UNGC classification, we are a Public Sector Organization. As the UK's premier cultural relations organization, our reach is long and wide resulting in some activities that sit within other UNGC classifications.

Alignment and Promotion of the 10 Principles

a) Internalizing the UNGC and beyond

British Council senior management has circulated awareness of the UNGC and its 10 principles amongst staff working in our cultural engagement division. This includes colleagues in the UK and many abroad numbering several thousand in total. An internal communications plan is in development to move beyond the awareness stage and to start embedding as appropriate, some aspects of the 10 Principles into business as usual seeking outcomes of good ethical behavior and transparency leading to greater client/beneficiary/stakeholder trust and confidence. We expect the internal comms campaign to run from now until the summer 2020.

We have also refreshed our own internal Code of Conduct to ensure the 10 principles are contained within it. We plan in the next quarter to include articles on the UNGC to our wider network of stakeholders through a quarterly newsletter. We have paid great attention to our carbon footprint and in the last 2 years exceeded our targets.

Our plans for this coming year include putting links to the UNGC on our international development website.

- b) We have strengthened our commitment to the **Human Rights and Anti-Corruption** principles in general British Council mandatory training for ALL staff includes fraud prevention and child protection. This extends to some 7,000 staff worldwide. Moreover, as part of our delivery chain management, we ensure that our sub contractors are mandated to access to those policies and training materials. Indeed, the British Council counter fraud team recently won an award for Charity Fraud Team of the Year. To win this prestigious award, they had to demonstrate a proactive approach to fraud prevention using innovative approaches and best practice where possible. Furthermore, we have undertaken an audit on our approach to tackling modern slavery and reworked our Modern Slavery policy which we intend to make available to all staff through training packages and toolkits which can help with turning the policy into realistic action on the ground through whole activity lifecycle from procurement to close

We have introduced an Adults at Risk framework as part of our commitment to safeguarding and are in process of rolling this training out across the British Council network of offices. Part of our business assurance checks and scrutinizes the efficacy of our programme teams' child protection and Adults at Risk plans and processes.

Join and Support Special Initiatives and Workstreams

- c) British Council has worked closely with DFID as a key stakeholder and were prominent in their 2019 disability conference and has also participated and contributed to its safeguarding conferences held every 6 months. Additionally, British Council are active members of The Safeguarding Lead Network (SLN) managed by British expertise International and the Safeguarding Network for the Charity Sector managed by BOND.

d) Attracting new Participants to the UNGC

Through our work with the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO), we have been complying with and embedding their Codes of Conduct into our work. This has meant we have started to support our subcontractors, where appropriate, to join the UNGC and certainly to raise their awareness levels of what constitutes good ethical practice. Our policies on safeguarding are now included within our subcontracts and grants with downstream partners.

e) Participating in Local UNGC events

To date, British Council has attended one UNGC roadshow in Liverpool during 2019. Further attendance is planned during 2020.

Promotion and Support to the SDGs

British Council has had a substantial footprint in development work for many years. We have contributed to Goals

- Goal 4 – Quality Education
- Goal 5 – Gender
- Goal 8 – decent work/economic growth
- Goal 10 – reduced inequality
- Goal 13 – Climate Action
- Goal 16 – Peace, justice and institutions

A case study example of impact created through our programme delivery is the Connecting Classrooms Programme co funded by DFID and British Council. It is typical of many of our programmes in that it spans several of the SDGs. Connecting Classrooms is a global education programme building the capacity of teachers and school leaders in arrange of core skills to help young people develop the knowledge and skills needed to live in a globalized economy. These core skills are:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and communication
- Creativity and imagination
- Digital literacy and global citizenship.

The programme also facilitates international school partnerships and exchanges.

Selected evidence of how the programme supported several SDGs is listed below:

SDG 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere

The programme focused on the first step of raising awareness of, for example, discussing domestic violence and ways of combatting it. Discussing child marriage and teaching children to look at issues through different perspectives are strategies effectively used to change attitude and subsequently behaviors.

SDG 16.7 Ensure, responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels.

In Ethiopia, Nigeria and Bangladesh there is good evidence of teachers giving students more ownership and leadership over their own learning.

SDG 4,7 Education: Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.

The schools in Scotland have incorporated Connecting Classrooms materials and approaches to health and well-being, human rights and peace into their curriculum resulting in children having greater appreciation of cultural diversity and global citizenship.

SDG 5 gender equality

Training packages have been developed to support inclusive pedagogies in Ethiopia, resulting in greater participation and ownership by girl students.

SDG 5 - Gender Mainstreaming

British Council has introduced gender sensitive programming throughout its work with all staff encouraged to attend gender training in all regions the organization operates in. Gender awareness is written into the subcontracts for our delivery chains and in all aspects of our recruitment policy and process.

SDG 13 – Climate Change

All offices are aware of our environment policy and our Code of Conduct that all staff are mandated to read and abide by, stresses environmental sustainability. All British Council offices are required to complete an "environment scorecard" and the subsequent data used to measure actual versus target performance. All projects are required to include environmental risks into their main risk register and ensure mitigation is put in place.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

Please use the box below to include the most relevant qualitative and/or quantitative indicators to measure the outcome of the activities described in Part II above.

Promotion of the SDGs

Most of this work is client funded and relevance to SDGs are included in programme outcomes which are usually independently monitored and evaluated.

The British Council research and insight team collate SDG relevant evidence. In 2016-17, this was put into a country wide SDG exhibition. British Council is currently looking at how to continue that work in the next few months.

Gender – quantitative indicators are number of staff and consultants completing training and number of projects containing gender balance strategies. Qualitative data comes from business assurance activity through quarterly business reviews and client reviews.