



International Rescue Committee UK
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Rescue-uk.org

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 2019-10-25 To: 2022-01-23

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

23 January 2022

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the International Rescue Committee UK 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 IRC UK and affiliated IRC entities 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.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Kyrke Smith', is positioned above the printed name.

Laura Kyrke Smith
Executive Director IRC UK



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Part II. Description of Actions & Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

The IRC works in more than 40 countries, whether that context is a war zone like Yemen, a conflict-affected country like the Democratic Republic of Congo, a refugee-hosting community like Uganda, or with refugees resettled in [Southeast England](#).

In our crisis-response, humanitarian, development, and resettlement work, we support clients in five outcome areas: ensuring safety from harm, improving health, increasing access to education, improving economic well-being, and ensuring people have the power to influence decisions that affect their lives. Across all five of these areas of our programming, we work to tackle gender inequality to understand and address the unique needs and barriers to progress facing the women and girls who represent the majority of those displaced.

IRC is committed to the ten principles of the UN Global Compact in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and corruption. Our values, policies and practices are aligned with the UN Global Compact, as set out in IRC's strategy documents ([Strategy100](#)) and code of conduct (The IRC Way) and documented in our [Annual Reports](#) (see [Who We Are](#) on [Rescue-uk.org](#)).

One of our core commitments is to the kind of principled partnership in action that the UN Global Compact represents – with the people and communities we serve, other humanitarian and development actors, governments, and with the private sector. IRC has built successful partnerships with the private sector that are based on joint problem solving by equal partners. Our partnerships are comprehensive and often include employee engagement, shared technical skills and expertise, knowledge, and perspectives of the contexts in which we work, and building solutions together. Examples include:

- Unilever supported the IRC with a partnership seeking to provide Covid prevention awareness activities and information in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar. This grant, given through Unilever's and FCDO's Hygiene Behaviour Control Campaign, has now reached over 5 million people in the three countries with Covid prevention messaging. (Human Rights)
- Standard Chartered Foundation has supported our COVID-19 response in 2021. Thanks to their valuable partnership, the IRC was able to access 130,000 clients in Zimbabwe, raising awareness and providing them with lifesaving protective equipment. We also supported 480 young entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone and Cameroon with business grants and training opportunities and are aiming to continue this work in 2022. (Human Rights and Labour)
- Our flagship partnership with Citi continues to grow and is now present in 7 countries and 4 continents. Together we provide host and refugee youth with business skills trainings, mentorship and start up grants and have now reached over 3000 young people. (Labour)

We constantly work to strengthen our policies and procedures to ensure that we uphold our values and promote the UN Global Compact principles in our own work and with our partners. In this



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Communication on Engagement, we have described some of the actions we have taken to support the UN Global Compact and its principles over the period from October 2019 – January 2022.

Principles 1 & 2: Human Rights

IRC serves the most vulnerable people in communities affected by conflict and displacement, people who are often at risk of human rights abuses. Recognizing this, IRC has developed policies and procedures to ensure we comply with our commitment to Principles 1 and 2 of the UN Global Compact. For example, The IRC Way, our code of conduct, incorporates a suite of policies designed to protect the people we serve and our staff, including:

- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Retaliation and Reporter Protection Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Combatting Trafficking in Persons Policy

We are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards and other humanitarian and human rights standards, including:

- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- U.N. Secretary General's Bulletin on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Beneficiaries

Consistent with our core values of accountability and integrity, the IRC requires a comprehensive due diligence review of a potential partner or supplier prior to entering into a partnership agreement to ensure that IRC has a strong understanding of the organization's history, relationships, past performance, reputation, and capacity. The pre-award due diligence process enables IRC to identify and appropriately manage or avert any significant risk associated with a proposed partnership, including the risk of causing harm to the communities we serve.

We carry out annual IRC Way Day training with all staff to ensure widespread understanding of our code of conduct and key policies and procedures, including confidentiality and whistleblower protections, and provide multiple channels for confidential reporting for staff; partners and vendors; and the people we serve, including phone and email channels run by an independent third-party, EthicsPoint, which provides anonymous reports to IRC's Ethics and Compliance Unit.

Principles 3, 4, 5 & 6: Labor

IRC is committed to ensuring safe and secure conditions for all workers, regardless of position or location, and to maintaining a work environment that promotes staff well-being, equality, resilience, health and productivity. As set out in the IRC Way, this requires that staff:

- Treat all colleagues with dignity and respect
- Make employment decisions based on an individual's abilities and merits, not personal characteristics unrelated to the job
- Respect the rights of all individuals



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- Provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or special needs
- Reject any form of violence or abuse of power
- Stay aware of safety and security concerns, follow local security protocols, and stop any work that becomes unsafe
- Safeguard the confidentiality of personal information.

Key policies and procedures that operationalize these principles include:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- Harassment-Free Workplace Policy
- Accommodation Policy
- Workplace Violence Policy
- Combatting Trafficking in Persons Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Security and safety protocols

Expanding our comprehensive work on institutionalizing gender equality in our programs and operations, in 2021, IRC has elevated our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), forming a Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) unit which has developed staff-led DEI priorities to be included in IRC's GEDI Action Plan. These priorities were developed through over 100 listening sessions with more than 2,000 participants across the organization and included leadership diversity goals, improved recruitment practices to attract more diverse talent, and the development of a global DEI demographic all-employee survey.

Principles 7, 8 & 9: Environment

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) recognizes the critical importance of a healthy environment to our global society, economy, work, clients, employees, donors and other stakeholders. We are committed to strong environmental stewardship in our operations and programming in all of the countries in which we work, including headquarters and representative offices demonstrated by the inclusion of mitigating the impact of climate change through our programs and operations as a goal of Strategy100 and as a part of our organizational mission. The IRC operates with respect for the environment by conserving and protecting natural resources, working to minimize environmental hazards, and responsibly managing energy usage.

We recognize that humanitarian programs can have a range of effects on the environment, both negative and positive, and we work to ensure that the communities we serve and the ecosystems and natural resources upon which they depend on are not put at further risk due to unintended consequences of our programs or operations.

Our commitments are set out in the IRC Environmental Policy and include:

- Providing a safe and healthy workplace
- Ensuring the responsible use of energy throughout our operations
- Using natural resources, including raw materials, energy, and water, as efficiently as possible



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- Avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating adverse environmental impacts caused by our operations or programming where possible
- Acting as an environmentally responsible actor in the communities where we operate, and acting promptly and responsibly to correct incidents or conditions that endanger the health and safety of the environment

Further, the Climate Change Ambition of Strategy100 identifies key programmatic and operational goals to contribute to the global efforts of mitigating climate change and its impacts on the people we serve and in the geographies in which we work, particularly as a driver of displacement.

Principle 10: Anti-Corruption

To achieve our mission, IRC must remain uncompromised and efficient in carrying out its work and act as a responsible global citizen. Our interactions with governments, regulators, donors, partners, vendors, the media, and the people we serve must be grounded on honesty, trust and fairness. We support the legitimate rule of law and will do our part to promote high ethical standards in the countries and communities where we work.

Our commitment to working against corruption is set out in the IRC Way and operationalized in a series of policies, procedures, and protocols, including:

- Fiscal Integrity Policy
- Organizational Gift Solicitation and Acceptance Policy
- Open Information Policy
- Supply Chain (Procurement) Standard Operating Procedures
- Finance Manuals
- Conflict of Interest Policy for Employees
- Partnership Excellence for Equality and Results System
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Economic Sanctions and Anti-Terrorism Compliance Policy
- Export Control Policy