



International Rescue Committee
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Rescue.org

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 2020-09-30 To: 2023-01-03

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

03 January 2023

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, which appears to read 'David Miliband', is positioned below the 'Sincerely yours,' text.

David Miliband
President and CEO



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

Since inception, The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has continued to help people affected by humanitarian crises—including the climate crisis—to survive, recover and rebuild their lives. Founded at the call of Albert Einstein in 1933, the IRC is now at work in over 40 crisis-affected countries whether that context is a war zone like Ukraine, a conflict-affected country like Afghanistan, a refugee-hosting community like Uganda or settlement community like Abilene, TX. We deliver lasting impact by providing health care, helping children learn, and empowering individuals and communities to become self-reliant, always seeking to address the inequalities facing women and girls.

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.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:

- Play Well is a LEGO Foundation program supporting the IRC by funding an emergency program aiming to build children's social-emotional skills through playful, interactive audio stories and activities. Play Well was launched in the fall of 2020 in direct response to the need of children out of school due to the pandemic. The program's innovative approach delivers audio-based content that promotes social-emotional learning skills through play, and through a cast of characters. In 2022, Play Well was expanded to Uganda and Tanzania with unique content for the East African context. Initial reports from Uganda show a peak listenership of 2.7M people in one week and another 3.6M radio listeners reached through Play Well in Colombia.



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- Since 2015, the IRC and the Airbnb.org team have partnered together to provide temporary housing to people who have been displaced by conflict and disaster. This partnership has helped to streamline resettlement efforts by providing a revolutionary way to support refugees and asylum-seeking families with temporary housing. In response to the crisis in Afghanistan in the fall of 2021, Airbnb.org provided housing to over 20,000 Afghan refugees worldwide through partnerships including the IRC, which received increased annual support for its resettlement efforts. Additionally, Airbnb.org funded and facilitated accommodations for other IRC clients and humanitarian workers around the world. Airbnb.org's continues to support the IRC and has remained committed to expand temporary housing for displaced people.
- Our flagship partnership with Google.org and a Google.org Fellowship continues to grow and recently gave the IRC a grant towards the United for Ukraine, an information portal and civil society effort that helps displaced people find access to critical services. The initiative is part of the IRC's Signpost Project, a global humanitarian technology program operating in 15 countries that helps refugees find resources to meet their urgent needs.

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 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 September 2020 – December 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
- Gender Equality Policy
- Harassment-Free Workplace 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



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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 refresh and renew their knowledge of and commitment to Standards for Professional Conduct. The training ensures widespread understanding of our code of conduct and key policies and procedures, including confidentiality and whistleblower protection, 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. We also provide additional, specific training on a range of policies and procedures, including Anti-Sexual Harassment Training.

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
- 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



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We have prioritized investing in our work in diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) and continued exploring the importance and role of DEI in our work. While we had already begun prioritizing and centering gender equality, it was clear that there were additional elements that needed to inform our client and community work and our organizational culture. As a result, we combined the Gender Equality and the DEI workstreams, allowing us to address different systems of inequalities through an intersectional lens and set goals to increase leadership diversity leading to a new and permanent **Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Unit** and [2022-2025 Action Plan](#). This work reiterates and expands on the commitments to diversity, equality and inclusion outlined in our strategy ([Strategy 100](#)). ([Read the 2022 DEI annual progress report](#)).

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 [Strategy 100](#) 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
- 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



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The International Rescue Committee (IRC) aims to meet the climate and environmental-related needs of our clients, while also tackling the environmental impact of our operations. 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. The IRC helps communities respond to the changing climate by mapping climate hazards and developing early warning systems, supporting local efforts to manage natural resources and conserve water, and training people in sustainable livelihoods. We also partner with other organizations to advocate for [policy changes](#) to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lessen the effects of climate change on people with the least power and fewest resources. In addition, the ambitious [IRC climate action plan](#) has set us on a course to change how we work in order to reduce our own carbon footprint. We have also made a commitment to [reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions](#) by 2050.

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
- Finance Manuals
- Fiscal Integrity Policy
- 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
- Global Supply Chain Sourcing Policy