

Communication on Engagement (COE)

Period covered by this COE:

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive

July 7, 2023

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the Population 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,



Julia Bunting
President

Part II. Description of Actions

In addition to incorporating the Global Compact principles into our internal operations and communicating progress following the COP requirements, the Population Council conducts applied research and thought leadership that advance the Global Compact. Germane examples from the reporting period include the following:

Human Rights

For 70 years, the Population Council has transformed global thinking on critical health and development issues through our social science, public health, and biomedical research. Through our [2023-2030 Strategic Plan](#), we are harnessing our expertise to advance **four global goals** that reflect the urgent problems the world faces. Through these, we contribute to the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. For example:

- We participated in a [series of studies](#) published in partnership with the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) on labor migration in India and Bangladesh. This research examined the role of debt in overseas labor migration; safe migration; addressing commercial sexual exploitation of women and children; ethical recruitment and employment in the construction industry; and assessing overseas labor migration systems.
- The Population Council leads the [Baobab Research Programme Consortium](#) through which we are conducting rigorous sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) surveys in refugee settings in Uganda and Ethiopia. By collaborating with the UNHCR, Baobab is delivering evidence to inform context-appropriate SRHR interventions and effectively respond to SRHR needs in refugee situations.
- In Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District, home to more than one million Rohingyas forcibly displaced from Myanmar, we conducted a [livelihood needs assessment](#) study, identifying the need for training among youth. Subsequently, in collaboration with RTM International and the Underprivileged Children's Education Program, we initiated a soft skills training program for male and female Rohingya youth, with the purpose of improving their personal, social, and financial management skills. Following a successful pilot, we are now rolling it out on a larger scale.
- The Population Council's [acquisition](#) of the dapivirine vaginal ring is a significant step towards expanding the range of HIV prevention options for women, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where women and girls account for nearly two-thirds of new infections. This discreet and woman-initiated option is the first long-acting product to reduce women's HIV risk in large clinical trials. The ring has already been approved in nine African countries, and the Population Council is working to expand introduction and access in the region and beyond.
- In 2009 and 2014, the Population Council spearheaded the [Survey of Young People in Egypt](#) (SYPE), one of the largest of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa. We are now partnering with the Egyptian government to conduct a third round of SYPE, which will provide an updated portrait of young people's experiences with health, education, employment, family formation, gender attitudes, climate change, and other factors, and help policymakers understand the effects of social and economic reforms and political changes since 2014.
- The Population Council incubated *Casa Productiva*, a feminist, indigenous led initiative to foster sustainable agricultural practices and harness nature-based solutions. The young women who founded *Casa Productiva* are graduates of the Council's [Abriendo Oportunidades](#) program, which provided them with a base of critical life and leadership skills, and hands-on professional

training and experience. Through *Casa Productiva*, they draw on Indigenous knowledge and farming practices to support innovative and sustainable agricultural livelihoods, highlighting the important role Indigenous women play in building climate resilient futures for themselves and their communities.

Labor

The Population Council's mission includes a commitment to improve the lives of underserved populations around the world. In accordance with this mission, the Council ensures that a robust set of policies are in place to protect staff and program participants.

The Population Council's staff are required to observe a code of conduct to comply with all applicable labor laws, to ensure orderly operations, and to provide the best possible work environment based on best practices for all employees, volunteers, fellows, and interns. All staff are required to sign the code of conduct to indicate that they are aware of these policies, know where to locate them, understand them, and will abide by them. The code of conduct includes policies on anti-trafficking of persons; bullying; child protection; close personal relationships; confidentiality of personnel information; conflicts of interest; discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; fraud and other corrupt practices; illegal use of controlled substances; misconduct in science; safeguarding; solicitations; and whistle blowing.

Of particular salience to the Global Compact principles are our:

1. **Child Protection Policy:** The Council believes that all children, regardless of age, race, gender, socio-economic status or cultural background, deserve the opportunity to live full and productive lives and to be free from all forms of abuse. It is the policy of the Council to strive to empower children to reach their full potential and to keep the children who participate in Council work safe from harm. Our Child Protection Policy sets forth the standards, including a Code of Conduct, that our organization adheres to in such work involving children.
2. **Safeguarding Policy:** Vulnerable adults and children are the key populations with which we work. The Council has zero-tolerance for all forms of exploitation including sexual abuse, harassment, bullying, and neglect, and it is our policy to ensure the safety of these populations and protection from such behaviors. We implement this policy through safeguarding measures, reporting, and monitoring procedures that are incorporated in our research and program interventions.

Trainings related to policies are produced by the Human Resources department. All-staff trainings are disseminated through an online training platform. These trainings are designed to cover both regulatory requirements and best practices and require staff to respond to a number of scenarios based on real-world incidents. Recent trainings have centered on workplace harassment, a review of the Council's Global Conduct Policies, and, in line with the Council's [values and strategic goals](#), the tools to promote an inclusive and supportive work environment that values innovation and diverse perspectives.

As part of its dedication to equal opportunity, it is the continuing commitment of the Population Council to be fair and impartial in all its relations with its employees and applicants for employment. In all matters affecting, but not limited to recruitment, employment, upgrading, transfer, layoff, termination, rates of pay and other forms of compensation, promotion, training, salary administration, performance appraisal, and disciplinary action, the Council takes action to ensure that all employees,

regardless of age, color, creed, national origin, disability, political belief, veteran status, religion, marital status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation are afforded equal opportunity. Action is taken to ensure that no discrimination in the form of sexual harassment exists in either explicit or implicit terms.

The Population Council provides equal opportunity; it does not discriminate against any person with regard to age, color, creed, national origin, disability, political belief, veteran status, religion, marital status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Decisions on employment are based on an individual's qualifications as related to the position for which they are being considered. The Council especially encourages applications from members of underrepresented groups including but not limited to Black people and people of African descent, Indigenous people, people of color, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, including people who identify as transgender, non-binary, or gender expansive, people with disabilities, first-generation college graduates, and those from communities with the most to gain from expanded access to sexual and reproductive health services and information and quality education. The Population Council is international in the composition of its board of trustees and its staff, as well as in the nature and deployment of its activities.

The Population Council believes in the power of diverse perspectives. We champion all voices, treat one another with dignity and respect, and build trust and belonging. Through our ongoing [Agenda for Change](#) initiative, we work to become an antiracist organization and to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We refine systems, structures, and processes to achieve and measure meaningful and sustainable impact across multiple dimensions. Recent [achievements](#) include:

1. Accelerated efforts to be “location neutral” in our hiring (within the US and globally), enabling us to operate in an even more globally collaborative and inclusive way
2. A revised [statement on Trustees' commitment to Board diversity](#), which includes targets for age, gender, and geographic representation and strengthens accountability.
3. A [commitment to DEI](#) in our two scholarly journals, *Population and Development Review* (PDR) and *Studies in Family Planning* (SFP), including actions to tackle biases that perpetuate injustices in scholarship.
4. [Joining BankFWD](#) to accelerate the banking sector's alignment with global climate goals—part of our efforts to support progressive changes in the wider world through means including leveraging our resources.
5. Recognition by [Global Health 50/50](#)—an initiative to advance action and accountability for gender equality in global health—as a “**high performer**” and a “**fast riser**” for the improvement the Council has made in recent years.

Environment

The Population Council's [Population, Environmental Risk, and Climate Change](#) (PERCC) initiative generates ideas and conducts research on sustainable and equitable solutions to pursue justice in the face of climate and environmental change. The PERCC initiative builds a global body of evidence on population and climate issues and fosters innovation and collaboration among often compartmentalized research disciplines—across the climate sciences, demography, economics, and public health. Our global network of social, public health, and climate scientists works directly with impacted communities, advocates, and decision-makers in government and industry to define research questions, conduct research, test and evaluate programs, and translate evidence for policymakers to invest in effective solutions. Select examples include:

- [Innovative Models of People and Climate across Time and Space](#) (IMPACTS), which leverages complex computational technologies, such as machine learning and geospatial analysis, to process the diverse data needed to model climate change and population dynamics.

- The [Community Demographic Model](#) (CDM) is a tool that provides computer simulations of population dynamics and change. The CDM is an open access, freely available model framework developed and applied in collaboration with colleagues across the research community.
- After the devastating 2022 floods in Pakistan, Council researchers responded quickly with [data analysis](#) to help optimize response, relief and rehabilitation.
- In districts of India that are highly vulnerable to climate variability, we conducted a large-scale [observational study](#) that examined the association between the degree of vulnerability in agriculture to climate change and child nutrition at the micro-level; the spatial effect of climate vulnerability on child nutrition; and geographical hotspots of both vulnerability in agriculture to climate change and child nutrition.
- Council researchers, in collaboration with other experts, have published extensively on a variety of topics related to our PERCC research agenda. To cite just a few:
 - An [article](#) describing frameworks to envision equitable urban futures in a changing climate.
 - A [report](#) on addressing the root causes of migration from Guatemala, including climate change, by investing women and girls.
 - An [ecological analysis](#) of self-reported rates of stillbirth, recurrent pregnancy loss, and infertility in relation to ground water arsenic levels in India — one of the first studies of its kind.

Anti-corruption

It is the policy of the Population Council that all of its activities and operations be carried out free of fraud and other corrupt practices. The Council has zero tolerance for all fraud and corruption. The Council upholds this policy by following guidelines in order to prevent, promptly identify, and address fraud and other corrupt practices that may occur in connection with the conduct of our mission, activities, and operations. The policy applies to all Council employees, volunteers, fellows, and interns.

On recruitment and periodically, new and current staff are required to review and sign off receipt, review, and agreement to comply with the terms of the policy. Staff also undergo ongoing training on the various policies and any updates made. The policy encourages employees to promptly make good faith reports about fraud and other corrupt practices in accordance with the reporting procedures in the Council's Whistleblower Policy. Those who wish anonymity may use the whistleblower hotline that is provided by an independent third-party provider.

The Population Council also employs several other measures to prevent and mitigate corruption: (1) Stringent financial management for thorough monthly review of all expenses and financial transactions; (2) Annual 'ethics training' for all staff that includes anti-bribery and corruption rules as well as conflict of interest guidelines; (3) Due diligence and monitoring for partners; (4) Procurement policies that ensure transparency and segregation of responsibilities on all stages of procurement (i.e., requisition, bid analysis, purchase order, receiving, invoice, and payment) and an enterprise resource planning system to monitor unusual trends at project, country, and headquarters levels; (5) Signing authority matrix to ensure segregation of duties and verification/approval by relevant staff for all types of payments; and (6) Subcontracts with partners that require compliance with our anti-bribery and corruption procedures.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

The Population Council utilizes a variety of quantitative metrics to document and measure the impact of our research. Highlights from the reporting period include:

	2021 (Q3-Q4)	2022 (Q1-Q4)	2023 (Q1-Q2)
Number of peer-reviewed publications	62	166	58
Percentage of peer-reviewed publications in top 25% journals in their respective fields	74%	75%	70%
Number of citations*	369	380	65
Number of media mentions of research articles*	45	63	17
Number of social media mentions of research articles*	390	1,133	511
Number of products developed and/or brought to market by the Population Council (cumulative)	7	8	8
Estimated number of current users of Council-developed contraceptive products ¹	170 million	170 million	170 million

*These numbers will continue to increase over time as research published in previous years is cited and mentioned.

The Council also documents our impact qualitatively through our [annual reports](#), with the theme of our most recent (2021/2022) report, “[An Equitable and Sustainable Future for Everyone, Everywhere](#),” and through a series of [Research Utilization and Impact Briefs](#) highlighting how the Council’s evidence is translated into meaningful action. Recent briefs have focused on our work [enhancing health in West Africa and the Sahel](#), and [Research and Analyses for Scientific Transformation and Advancement \(RASTA\)](#), which promotes evidence use and strengthens analytical skills of young researchers in India.

The Council is committed to sharing our extensive body of research and data to advance evidence-based approaches for solving development challenges. We created [Knowledge Commons](#) as an open access institutional repository to make widely available the Council’s world-class research. Knowledge Commons gathers, indexes, preserves, and makes widely available a broad range of research content in multiple formats and languages. The site has had more than 200,000 downloads in the past year alone.

¹ Excluding Annovera® which was approved in 2018 and initially available in the US.