



## **COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)**

Institute for War & Peace Reporting

**Period covered by this Communication on Engagement [2020-2022]**

From: 2020

To: 2022

### **Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive**

*To our stakeholders:*

I am pleased to confirm that the Institute for War & Peace Reporting 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 organisation has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organisation like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Anthony Borden  
Executive Director

### **Part II. Description of Actions**

**About IWPR:** IWPR is an international non-profit organisation founded in 1993. We give voice to people at the frontlines of conflict, crisis and transition to help them drive change and build more stable, just and inclusive societies. Drawing on three decades of experience in some of the world's most challenging environments, we support media, civil society, democracy and governance, women, and youth-focused projects in over 30 countries – promoting reliable information and responsible public debate and removing barriers to freedom of expression.

We work with a variety of local and international partners to achieve our mission, including academic institutions, media outlets, civil society organisations, governments and other INGOs. Our partnerships with UN agencies currently include work with UN Women in Georgia and UNESCO in Ukraine. We have also recently delivered joint work with UNICEF in Tajikistan.

**Engagement with UN Global Compact civil society actions.** In line with suggested actions for civil society by the UN Global Compact, IWPR has engaged a variety of stakeholders in work to advance human rights. This includes:

- **Engagement with members of local UN Global Compact Networks.** And with local NGOs in particular, with whom IWPR works extensively to support local sustainability and development. Examples of such engagement include co-creation of media initiatives to counter electoral disinformation in Georgia with local UN Global Compact member



GRASS (Georgia Reforms Associates). IWPR also seeks to collaborate closely with INGOs in our field and has participated in numerous coordination initiatives with groups such as BBC Media Action and Internews (members of the UK UN Global Compact network). Across our global offices, IWPR adopts a collaborative approach, prioritising partnerships with like-minded groups who can support us in achieving our goals.

- **Engaged businesses in Global Compact related issues.** Partnerships are a cross-cutting theme across all of IWPR's work. Examples of engagement with businesses on these issues include our [LeadX](#) initiative in Georgia which provides executive leadership education and networking with participation from experts from Microsoft, Price Waterhouse Coopers and the Financial Times, amongst others. Similarly, in Central Asia, IWPR has received sponsorship from organisations such as Coca-Cola and Chevron in the delivery of the [Go Viral Festival and Network](#) – a project to advance opportunities for young people across the business, technology, media and culture sectors. Through the project, over 8,000 young people have engaged in events and training.

**Actions in support of Principles 1 and 2.** IWPR's work to advance the UN Global Compact Principles as these relate to **human rights** include:

- IWPR works on a number of key issues related to the SDGs and the UN Principles. Our main focus is on **advancing freedom of expression**, although we work across a number of interconnected priorities to achieve this, including projects to advance gender equality, rights of refugees and migrants and support for other vulnerable communities, including LGBTQI+ individuals and religious and ethnic minorities. Our diverse portfolio includes work supporting women and girls in conflict-affected areas in [Syria](#) to improve their livelihoods and strengthen inclusion within their communities. Other significant work includes work to advance digital rights in [Kazakhstan](#) through partnerships, dialogue and training for local civil society groups. Our work is responsive to local needs and at all times guided by international best practices.
- IWPR has provided rapid and effective **responses to emerging global challenges**, including the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as **key geopolitical events** such as the Russian aggression in Ukraine. For example, during the pandemic, IWPR supported independent reporting in [Africa](#) around vaccines to counterbalance harmful health-related disinformation circulating online. In [Ukraine](#), we work with local journalists to provide access to independent information from the frontlines to local and international audiences, as well as supporting monitoring of international justice processes related to war crimes.
- IWPR's Global Handbook includes a **Code of Ethics and Compliance** which outlines policies on Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, Anti-Bribery & Corruption, Equal Employment/Discrimination, Respect in the Workplace, Child Safeguarding, Trafficking in Persons, and Proprietary Information. All IWPR staff and contractors are required to read and confirm understanding and adherence to these upon joining the organisation. A new training is being developed on these issues which will be rolled out by the end of 2023 and will be mandatory and refreshed annually.

**Actions in support of Principles 3,4,5 and 6.** IWPR's work to advance UN Global Compact Principles as these relate to **labour** include:

- IWPR's Global Handbook includes specific provisions in line with national legislation around **trafficking in persons**. The Policy outlines IWPR's position on Trafficking in



Persons (as defined in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime); procurement of a commercial sex act and use of forced labour in any respect, amongst others.

- To ensure the integrity of our personnel, subcontractors and suppliers, IWPR applies a **Vetting Policy** which includes of checking names against several US, EU, and global lists including OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control), HM Treasury, the EU Consolidated List and others. It must be undertaken prior to the commencement of any operational agreement, before the hiring of staff/contractors, and periodically throughout a staff/contractor's time with IWPR.
- IWPR has strict policies which promote and protect **equal employment, bar discrimination** in any form and outline expected behaviour/respect in the workplace. This code of conduct is a requirement not only for staff, but also for consultants and partners. IWPR has a zero-tolerance policy regarding any forms of discrimination, violence or harassment that applies to staff, consultants, partners and participants with a clear pathway for anonymous whistleblowing regarding all forms of malpractice. Policies outline formal processes and procedures on filing a complaint; worker's rights; confidentiality; and actions IWPR will take pursuant to its global and local policies should any discrimination, workplace harassment, or violence in the workplace occur.
- IWPR supports programming to strengthen local workforces in Central Asia through programming which improves young people's skills and expands their networks in critical growth sectors such as technology. To date as a result of our work in the region over the past two years, 41% of participants have reported enhanced professional skills and almost one third have gained new career/job opportunities.

**Actions in support of Principles 7, 8 and 9:** IWPR's work to advance UN Global Compact Principles in respect of the **environment** include:

- IWPR adopts a '**Do No Harm**' approach to environmental impact. Where possible we use locally available resources, minimising the carbon footprint associated with air travel or long-distance transportation, which is only used at key moments, as well as emphasising online publications and content. IWPR also actively seeks to capitalise on opportunities to adopt **climate sensitive approaches**. This includes using suppliers and providers which adhere to best practices in environmental management - e.g., venues for events or companies which have demonstrated commitment to sustainability.
- The IWPR Board is provided with a **quarterly environmental, social and governance report**, which also includes reporting on any safeguarding allegations/concerns. This ensures our institutional accountability in these areas and ensures engagement on these issues by our executive and non-executive management.
- IWPR's work supports good environmental governance and practices around the world. For example, in Central Asia we have supported **reporting on climate change** which achieved international recognition by the UN and the European Union for the pieces '*Restoring Biodiversity – our shared responsibility*' and '*Changes for Climate in Kazakhstan*', both of which were published with the support of IWPR's [Central Asia Bureau Analytical Reporting \(CABAR\)](#) Editorial team. Additionally, in South East Asia we work with local groups to improve environmental governance by strengthening civil society capacity and citizen participation in these issues.



**Actions in support of Principle 10** IWPR's work to advance UN Global Compact Principles in adherence to **anti-corruption** practices include:

- Policies to ensure suspected fraud is reported and investigated through our organisational **Whistleblowing Policy**, which ensures all staff are able to anonymously report any suspected irregular activities. In relation to fraud, the Policy covers violations of laws and regulations related to IWPR's status as a non-profit entity; and any theft, fraud, gross mismanagement, questionable accounting practices, gross waste of funds, or other abuse, legal or illegal, of IWPR's financial or other assets. The Policy includes anonymous reporting mechanisms and clear escalation protocols.
- Application of our global **Risk Management Framework** ensures all of our work takes into consideration the human rights, labour rights, environmental impact and corruption/fraud risks of our operations and projects. This includes the development of risk assessments and mitigations, escalation protocols and multi-layered approval systems which mitigate against corruption, fraud or aid diversion. This is supported by our Procurement Policies and Subaward Policies. The Risk Framework is reviewed at the end of each quarter by the Risk Committee and necessary remedial action is flagged and taken where necessary.
- IWPR's programmes supporting anti-corruption and public accountability efforts has included support for activists, journalists and watchdog groups in Ukraine. As part of this, IWPR produced the [Anti-Corruption Handbook](#) – a guide designed for local government, civic activists and journalists dedicated to overcoming and preventing corruption.

### **Part III. Measurement of Outcomes**

IWPR's work has delivered a number of results in line with UN Global Compact Principles. Over the past two years alone we have:

- **Partnered with over 50 local civil society organisations**, independent media outlets and other local groups to advance human rights-centred work. This has included successful initiatives to strengthen the capacity of local voices in over 30 countries, ranging from Ukraine to Libya and Mexico. Through our work we have increased the sustainability, expertise and connectivity of local groups so they are better equipped to drive forward positive change.
- **Increasing local skills and knowledge in critical areas to the advancement of human rights** such as independent reporting, advocacy, communications and digital security, amongst others. Most of our programming includes a capacity building element which improves our beneficiaries' abilities to advance democratic practices and good governance within their contexts. Examples of this include support to dozens of women rights organisations in the Eastern Neighbourhood to improve their resilience to conflict, with local groups now driving change across areas such as the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Moldova. Other examples of current work include support to Latin American media outlets to conduct investigative reporting into local issues related to disinformation and corruption.
- **Advocating for institutional and policy changes which promote human rights**. IWPR has worked with local groups to drive forward high-level changes in the practices, legislation and behaviours of institutions – including governments, state affiliated bodies and umbrella organisations. This has included support for initiatives which strengthen protections for human rights defenders, improve higher education standards, and support greater inclusion and equal rights for underrepresented groups.