



## COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

*Period covered by this Communication on Engagement: January 2019-December 2020*

### I. STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

January 8, 2021,

To our stakeholders,

I am pleased to present Population Media Center's Communication on Engagement with the United Nations (UN) Global Compact. By way of this letter, Population Media Center (PMC) also reaffirms its support of the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption.

In this Communication on Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its principles. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Best wishes,

William N. Ryerson  
President

## II. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS

Population Media Center (PMC) is a U.S. 501(c)(3) organization with over 20 years of field experience in social behavior change communication (SBCC). We use entertainment-education, especially mass media dramas, to promote social and cultural change by addressing the interconnected issues of the full rights of women and girls, population, and the environment. We aim to empower people to live healthier and more prosperous lives and to stabilize the global population at a level at which people can live sustainably with the world's renewable resources. From January 2019 to December 2020, our organization has delivered on multiple UN Global Compact Principles, including:

### Principle One: Human Rights

*Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.*

All PMC SBCC interventions, in addition to our ongoing business operations, are designed to support and respect the protection of **human rights**. Critical to our SBCC approach, which successfully motivates individuals to take actions to improve their lives and achieve their goals, every PMC program supports the **right to self-determination**.

In line with PMC's mission, **every PMC program addresses the right to health** (specifically reproductive health and family planning) **and equal rights of women and girls**. In the past two years, PMC implemented programs addressing such rights, and others such as those defined by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), in the following countries:

- ◇ **Burkina Faso:** PMC began rebroadcast of *Yam Yankré* ("The Choice") in December 2020. Over a ten-month period, this Mooré-language drama will broadcast over 15 radio stations and be available on social media networks nationwide. Listener contests, episode summaries in Dioula (for those who do not speak Mooré), training of partner radio station personnel, epilogues providing information about available services, and monitoring and evaluation will accompany the drama. This drama addresses such issues as female genital mutilation (FGM), reproductive health, substance abuse, education, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, and family planning. As such, it supports the **right to life, right to education, and rights of protection for the child**.
- ◇ **Burundi:** Our drama *Agashi 3* ("Hey, Look Again!") is airing nationally on eleven radio stations. In addressing topics like nutrition, family planning, hygiene and sanitation, substance abuse, gender-based violence (GBV), and maternal health, this drama also supports the **right to life**.
- ◇ **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** The drama *Pambazuko* ("Dawn") concluded a 12-station rebroadcast in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2019. An estimated 458,708 Congolese heard of *Pambazuko*, and 184,932 Congolese regularly listened to the show. In addressing child labor and trafficking, disability, domestic violence, and HIV/AIDS, it supported the **right to life, right to education, and right of protection for the child**.

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- ◇ **Ethiopia:** The *rights to liberty and security of person*, *rights of protection of the family* and the *right to marry* are addressed through a multi-faceted sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) project launched in September 2019. This project includes a radio talk show *Yalaleke Guzo* (“Unfinished Journey”), broadcast in the SNNP region and addressing female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage. It also includes a radio drama, *Nekakat* (“Cracked”) - broadcast over FANA and the EBC in Oromia, SNNP, Tigray, Amhara, and Addis Ababa administrative regions - that addresses issues like SGBV, child marriage, FGM, and family planning. Additionally, from 2018-2019 a Baby WASH and Cholera Prevention media and grassroots campaign supported the *rights of protection of the family* through promoting WASH care practices for children and addressing the prevention and treatment of cholera.
- ◇ **Guatemala:** The drama *Toma Mi Mano* (“Take My Hand”) concluded broadcast in September 2019. This drama supported the *rights to liberty and security of person* through storylines around topics like GBV and community violence, heard by over a quarter of a million listeners. The drama broadcast over 50 radio stations in all 22 departments of Guatemala, with episodes also available through YouTube, an online radio station, and Facebook.
- ◇ **Haiti:** *Zoukoutap 3 (Z3)* (“Limping Along – But Learning to Walk Straight”) broadcast nationally across 30 community and private radio stations in 2019. In addressing violence, GBV and domestic violence, family planning, and reproductive health, this drama supported the *rights to liberty and security of person* as well as the *rights of protection for the child*.
- ◇ **Mexico:** PMC partnered with Televisa to co-produce the telenovela *Vencer el Miedo* (“Overcoming Fear”), which broadcast nationally in Mexico (on Televisa) and rebroadcast in the United States (on Univision) in 2020. The 47-episode drama reached nearly 4 million viewers nightly throughout its broadcast, and quickly gained the highest viewership numbers in its timeslot. Social media accounts for the show also reached over 42 million users on various platforms. In addition to health, the drama supported the *right to life* and *rights to liberty and security of the person* through storylines addressing topics like GBV and STI prevention, and through its promotion of the OrientaSEX hotline, a hotline operated by professional counselors from MEXFAM and launched in coordination with the show.
- ◇ **Nepal:** In 2019-2020, PMC partnered with Janaki Women Awareness Society (JWAS) on a Community Theatre Program in Maithili communities where young girls face a high likelihood of early marriage. Under this partnership, PMC led drama design workshops for young girls leading to the production of community theatre dramas. Furthermore, hosted discussions of PMC’s drama *Hilkor* (“Ripples in the Water”), which addresses issues like child marriage, domestic violence, education, GBV, and maternal and child health, occurred in Life Skills Workshops for young girls at JWAS centers. PMC also developed two pilot radio drama episodes addressing GBV for a non-profit in order to support their girls’ life skills educational curriculum remote learning efforts. Together, these partnerships have supported the *rights of protection of the family and right to marry*, *right to life* and the *right to education*.

- ◇ **Nigeria:** Our show *Jolokoto* (“Mirror of Life”), currently airing in the states of Ogun and Oyo, seeks to positively impact Nigerian youth on topics including GBV, family planning, disability, financial literacy and independence, and education. As such, the drama also supports the **rights to liberty and security of person** and the **right to education**. *Jolokoto* was a finalist in Fast Company’s 2020 World Changing Ideas in Media and Entertainment, which honors businesses, policies, projects, and concepts that are actively engaged and deeply committed to flattening the curve when it comes to the climate crisis, social injustice, and economic inequality. Furthermore, our Resident Representative in Nigeria, Ephraim Okon, was awarded an Ambassador of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Award (SDG Award), an award decided by public poll and recognizing outstanding individuals working to make their communities a better place following the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- ◇ **Rwanda:** PMC is currently airing a national radio drama addressing issues including family planning, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, GBV and COVID-19. PMC also completed its broadcast of *Umurage 2* (“Legacy”) in May 2019. *Umurage 2* aired nationally in Rwanda, and was accessible through YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. In addressing issues like GBV, access to health services, and HIV/AIDS, this project, in addition to our current broadcast, supports rights such as the **right to life** and **rights of protection of the family**.
- ◇ **Uganda:** PMC began broadcast of two new dramas – *Akakunizo* (“Jigsaw Puzzle”), in Luganda-language, and *Sotakai* (“Footsteps”), in English-language – in October 2019 as part of the RISE consortium, led by Marie Stopes International. Both dramas are currently broadcasting in numerous Ugandan districts, ranging from Northeastern to Central-Western. Both dramas support the **rights to liberty and security of person** and **rights of protection of the family** by addressing issues like family planning, GBV, maternal and child health, and nutrition.
- ◇ **Zambia:** In July 2020, PMC completed the broadcast of two dramas on community radio stations: *Siñalamba* (“Impediment”), in Lozi-language (broadcast in the Western Province), and *Kwishilya* (“Over the Horizon”), in Bemba-language (broadcast in the Muchinga, Luapoula, and Central provinces). Both dramas addressed issues including family planning, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, GBV, education (particularly for girls), malaria, civic engagement, gender equality, and maternal health. As such, these programs supported the **right to life, rights to liberty and security of person**, and finally **rights of protection of the family and right to marry**. Additionally, in 2020, PMC led implementation of an SBCC campaign that aimed to both raise civic awareness of voter and electoral rights and to support voter registration efforts. As such, this program supported the **right to participate in public life**.

**Globally,** PMC conducted multiple training workshops for UNFPA implementing partners on the use of our SBCC methodology to address the topic of Female Genital Mutilation Elimination (FGM-E). In addressing FGM-E, the workshops for both French and English-speaking participants supported the **rights of protection for the child**.

## **Principle Two: Human Rights**

*Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.*

As outlined in our Employee Handbook and our Handbook for Field Offices, PMC has a policy of zero tolerance towards human rights abuses. All PMC staff and contractors are expected to uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct at all times. Furthermore, all PMC staff and contractors are expected to provide humanitarian assistance and services in a manner that respects and fosters the rights of beneficiaries and other vulnerable members of the local communities. In support of this goal, PMC implemented a new prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy that sets out PMC's approach to prevent and respond to SEA. The policy applies to all employees and related personnel, both on-and off-duty. Under this policy, all PMC employees are required to complete the UNICEF Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) training course.

## **Principle Five: Child Labour**

*Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour.*

In Haiti, our drama *Zoukoutap 3 (Z3)* broadcast nationally across 30 community and private radio stations. A core issue addressed in *Z3* is that of forced child domestic labour, or *restavek*. In addressing this taboo topic in a non-threatening, non-judgmental, yet realistic way, we sought to change attitudes in order to support the effective abolition of child labour. Additionally, our *Pambazuko* rebroadcast in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed the issue of child labour and trafficking. As such, both programs supported the ***right not to be subjected to slavery, servitude or forced labor and rights of protection for the child.***

## **Principle Six: Labour**

*Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.*

In 2019, PMC formed a new committee on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI). The high-level committee goals seek: (1) to create a culture and environment of inclusion at PMC, where all staff and stakeholders feel that their voices are valued and that they are empowered to bring 100% of their authentic selves into their work; (2) to connect DEAI activities to a broader business-driven, results-oriented strategy; and, (3) to encourage open, trusting communication between persons of differing backgrounds and cultures at all levels of the organization.

## **Principle Eight: Environment**

*Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.*

In 2019, PMC established a new Green Committee to promote environmental responsibility throughout the organization and affirm our commitment to caring for the environment. The committee circulates a monthly newsletter to all employees that provides ideas on ways to be eco-conscious and promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle in our daily lives. It also

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developed a ‘Going Green’ checklist for our international and domestic offices, addressing questions like material consumption and office purchases (i.e., implementing more electronic signatures and avoiding coffee pods in the office), the use of energy (i.e., turning off the lights or walking to work when possible), and external engagements (i.e., questioning vendors about their green initiatives).

Additionally, in September 2020, PMC hosted the inaugural No Footprint Event, *Confronting Crisis 2050*. The event featured PMC President Bill Ryerson leading an expert panel discussion around the current ecological and existential crises facing our planet, predictions of what the world will be like by 2050, and the role humans can play in slowing the environmental breakdown. While the world became virtual because of pandemic, PMC was ahead of the curve in planning such virtual events in 2019.

Finally, PMC SBCC interventions also addressed issues of environmental responsibility. For example, as one of the actors working in support of IUCN’s Conservation Action Plan 2012–2022, PMC rebroadcast its drama *Pambazuko* in partnership with the Jane Goodall Institute in support of its Conservation Action Plan (CAP). The drama addressed bushmeat consumption, the reduction of harmful human behaviors and habitat encroachment, and wildlife conservation. Additionally, PMC designed new epilogues with CAP partners as an ongoing, consistent, and strong awareness-raising mechanism to support the USHIRIKI consortium’s conservation actions. Of PMC’s 30 new epilogues, 10 specifically highlighted USHIRIKI consortium actors implementing the Grauer’s Gorilla and Chimpanzee Action Plan in the CAP landscape.

### **Principle Nine: Environment**

*Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.*

PMC has taken active steps to encourage and promote the use of more environmentally friendly technologies. We have, for example, encouraged and offered our supporters to opt out of print communications and receive digital-only correspondence. For those who require print communications, PMC has been working with a vendor certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, that uses ink free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and 100% recycled paper. Additionally, our business development and program management efforts have increasingly shifted to Zoom and related technologies, which we remain dedicated to using in the future in order to reduce our collective carbon footprint.

### **Actions Delivering on Multiple Principles**

PMC’s Employee Handbook and our Handbook for Field Offices include a detailed Conduct & Behavior policy to protect and uphold the **rights of employees**. The handbook outlines a firm stance against, and a formal complaint and investigation procedure for, all forms of harassment, bullying, exploitation, child abuse, and unethical behavior. This handbook also upholds rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining. Finally, it highlights **environmental safeguarding policies**. Both the PMC Employee Handbook and the Handbook for Field Offices

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meet responsibilities in the area of Human Rights (Principles 1 & 2); Labour (Principles 3, 4, 5, and 6); the Environment (Principle 8) and Anti-Corruption (Principle 10).

### III. MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

PMC programs and our principle-based approach to doing business have supported worldwide, positive shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of audiences around the world. Following are select indicators that illustrate how PMC activities produce measurable outcomes that support the UN Global Compact principles.

#### Globally:

- ◇ Seven of our country offices and nearly 40% of PMC headquarter employees worldwide have completed the UNICEF Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) training.
- ◇ PMC continues to foster collaborative partnerships among private, civil sector, and public organizations in our active country offices and through exploration of new countries for possible program implementation.
- ◇ As part of the Joint Programme on FGM-E, PMC conducted 3 regional workshops for UNFPA implementing partners. In total, 42 participants from 12 countries learned PMC's SBCC methodology.

**In Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Findings based on a representative, regional multistage cluster cross-sectional survey found that the drama drove change in relation to the **environment**. Compared to non-listeners, regular listeners to *Pambazuko* were 2.4 times more likely to have engaged in activities to protect animal species, 5.6 times more likely to have taken steps to find alternatives to bushmeat consumption, and 1.8 times more likely to respond that they have taken steps to protect the environment in their communities.

**In Ethiopia:** An endline evaluation for the 2018-2019 Baby WASH and Cholera Prevention media and grassroots campaigns project found the campaign effectively addressed issues tied to **human rights** in addressing baby WASH and cholera prevention practices. The qualitative data indicates that similar reflections of respondents to that of radio talk shows and radio spot messages programs have been exhibited. Respondents also remembered the key aspects of baby WASH and cholera prevention being promoted in social mobilization campaigns.

**In Guatemala:** A qualitative participatory study for *Toma Mi Mano* in Guatemala revealed how the drama increased issue awareness around **human rights**. The statement "*When your partner treats you badly, hits you, and even treats you like you are his maid, that is something that women don't have to allow,*" from a woman aged 15-24, is illustrative of such awareness. A cross-sectional endline survey also found that *Toma Mi Mano* listeners, relative to non-listeners, were more likely to use condoms to delay or avoid pregnancy (33% v. 14%) and more likely to know that the Public Ministry provides GBV prevention services (72% v. 47%).

**In Haiti:** An endline impact evaluation for our drama *Zoukoutap 3 (Z3)*, which reached an estimated 2.1 million listeners with over half a million regular listeners, revealed how the drama increased awareness around **human rights** and **labour**. Compared to non-listeners, listeners to *Z3* were 3.5 times more likely to know that a condom can protect against both pregnancy and STIs, 1.7 times more likely to know that unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature by a co-worker is a form of workplace harassment, 3 times more likely to think it's not legitimate for a man to hit or beat his wife/partner if she refuses to have sex with him, and 1.6 times more likely to intervene if they observed a family abusing a *restavek*.

**In Mexico:** Monitoring and evaluation for *Vencer el Miedo* in Mexico revealed how the drama increased issue awareness tied to **human rights**. For example, the OrientaSEX hotline received a weekly average of 2,868 calls – 500% higher than the initial goal. Significantly more adolescent viewers (28%) searched for information on contraception compared to non-viewers (19%). Additionally, young adult viewers were 1.8 times more likely than non-viewers to have used dual contraception to deter unintended pregnancies. Finally, adults who watched *Vencer el Miedo* were also 1.5 times more likely than non-viewers to discuss condoms and other contraceptive methods with their adolescent children during the run of the show.

**In Nepal:** An endline evaluation for our dramas in Nepal found that they reached over a million Nepalis and showed positive impacts regarding issues tied to **human rights**. Compared to non-listeners, listeners to the drama *Mai Sari Sunakhari* (“Orchid, Like Me”), were 7 times more likely to believe that they should be able to initiate a divorce if unhappy with their marriage, 3 times more likely to believe that people in their community advocate to end the practice of child marriage, and 2.1 times more likely to have taken action to discourage child marriage.

**In Rwanda:** A participatory evaluation for *Umurage 3* revealed positive impact around **human rights**. One female respondent, for example, spoke of helpful storylines “about fighting malnutrition by encouraging people to feed vegetables and fruits to children.” Meanwhile, a male respondent shared that he “learned more about AIDS, sexual reproductive health, and knew about HIV prevention, following messages in *Umurage 3*.” Finally, another listener shared that the drama “taught us always to think about our children in the future and family planning. I immediately decided to go for a five-year contraceptive plan so as to first cater for the child we have before getting another one, who we also intend to give a good life.”

**In Zambia:** An endline evaluation for our dramas in Zambia, estimated to have reached over a million Zambians, revealed positive impacts regarding various issues tied to **human rights**. Compared to non-listeners, for example, listeners to the drama were 1.5 times more likely to strongly agree that “people in my community think that any form of GBV is unacceptable,” 2.5 times more likely to believe that their community strongly disapproves of the practice of child marriage, over 1.2 times more likely to enroll or intend to keep their girl children enrolled in school and advocate for girls’ education, and 1.4 times more likely to have had a recent (within the last six months) HIV test. Listeners were also 1.8 times more likely to have been involved in volunteering for their community’s civic activities.

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