



CREATING A POPULATION CONSCIOUSNESS

Problem Statement:

In a world of nearly 8 billion people, we can no longer ignore the impacts a still growing number of people have on the planet. The UN projections are for nearly 11 billion people by 2100¹. Population growth, along with overconsumption and unsustainable resource use, which are linked to population, will undermine environmental efforts to address climate change and other pressing problems. Yet population growth isn't that hard to address, when we support family planning services commensurate with the desire for access, in the context of expanding the opportunities for women and girls to acquire education.

Grounds for Optimism:

The difference between a world with 9 billion people and 11 billion people is mostly determined by two factors: the age of marriage and the birth rate. If families, on average, choose to have fewer children and are able to send girls to school rather than marry them off, the world would see population rates decrease. The more education a girl obtains, the later she will marry and the fewer children she is likely to bear. With this decline, the chances for a healthy population – and planet – increase.² This indicates how access to healthcare, family planning technology, and education can make a significant difference in the quality of life for billions of people.

Moral Imperative:

Every person deserves the right to a life where basic needs are fulfilled. Every child born into this world should be wanted and loved and given the opportunity to thrive. The best path to get there is through empowering women and girls with education, healthcare, voluntary family planning, and socio-economic development.

Not to be overlooked is the moral dilemma of the 'haves and have-nots' created over centuries of colonialism, racism, and globalization, with some societies consuming resources at unsustainable levels while the basic needs of others go unmet.

Also, what are the rights of all species to thrive on Earth? Humans are part of the web of life yet society exploits rather than respects nature.

Purpose:

To engage actors – especially environmental and human rights organizations and activists, as well as media – who aren't presently addressing population growth via targeted outreach and educational

materials, strategy meetings and events. We endeavor to effectively work together to move forward on making the connection between population impacts and the environment.

Mission:

Advancing positive discussions on population growth — seeking just solutions for a thriving planet, human well-being, and responsible communities.

Goals:

To develop an informed network of advocates on population issues and provide them with reputable data to inform their campaigns and foster greater collaboration about population growth that is grounded in a holistic, rights-based framework.

Objectives:

Over the next year, engage with environmental, health and justice activists, journalists, academics and others, including youth; from those conversations, create a “population talking points” brief and resource guide.

Vision:

Prosperous families, communities, planet.

Expected Outcome:

To have positive and open discussions with a variety of audiences – from environmentalists to reproductive justice advocates to new economy activists – in order to find common ground and messages that resonate with different audiences, so as to better include population growth issues in efforts for greater success for people and nature.

Creating a Population Consciousness is a collaborative effort guided by a steering committee comprised of Transition Earth, Center for Biological Diversity, Millennium Alliance for Biosphere and the Humanity, Population Media Center, Post Carbon Institute, and Venture Strategies for Health & Development.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/423).

² Ibid.