

POPULATION MATTERS

Spring 2025

Issue 46



All Populations Matter

How we'll achieve a fairer, sustainable future for all life on earth

Fragile Futures

Our new report challenges flawed UN data and outdated assumptions

Nature Can't Wait

Support our ambitious project and make a stand for biodiversity

**POPULATION
MATTERS**

TM

About us

Population Matters (PM) is an organisation that works globally with partners to achieve our mission to achieve our vision: a world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other. We are regulated by the UK charity commission.

We will achieve our vision by working to address the negative consequences of ever more people using ever more of the planet's resources and to inspire and engage with others to find, share and promote ways to make our vision a reality as quickly as possible.

We promote positive, practical, and ethical solutions. Using evidence, we advocate and advise decision-makers on the interconnections between population, health, and the environment. We also inspire people to consume sustainably, so that everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life while preserving the natural ecosystems all life depends on. We are committed to human rights, women's empowerment and global justice.

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“The complex and fragile relationships between humans and other species matter – they hold the key to a liveable future.”

THIS YEAR, WITH THE LAUNCH

of our five-year strategy, we have entered a defining chapter in the Population Matters journey.

Our new strategy (see page 12) marks a turning point – urgent, ambitious and rooted in the simple truth that humanity is using more than the planet can sustain. Our task – and our purpose – is to challenge that, openly, truthfully and fairly.

The relationship between humans and the natural world is more than a professional interest for me. Having recently completed a master's in anthrozoology, I arrived at Population Matters deeply aware of the complex and fragile relationships between humans and other species. These relationships matter – they hold the key to a liveable future.

We must never lose sight of the interconnection between human population growth and the natural world. If we are to thrive, all life and our planet must thrive with us. This is central to our new match-funded appeal, *Nature Can't Wait* (page 18). Your donations will be doubled and will go directly towards vital research, advocacy and partnership work that will enable the realisation of our vision: a world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other. If you're considering a gift, this is the perfect time.

OUR DEBT TO SIR DAVID

On 8 May, our patron, Sir David Attenborough, celebrated his 99th birthday with the release of *Ocean*, a powerful documentary that explores how humanity is draining life from the sea. Many of us owe a debt to Sir David for

opening our eyes to the beauty and fragility of the natural world. Since his birth in 1926, the global population has quadrupled – from two billion to over eight billion today – and because of that, the planet is under pressure like never before. We celebrate Sir David and amplify his call to restore the balance of nature he has spent a lifetime championing.

DELIVERING ON OUR GOALS

Thanks to your support, we are already delivering on some of our strategy's core goals. Our groundbreaking *Fragile Futures* report (pages 8-9) has challenged UN data on child mortality, exposing a gap in global projections that means many more children could die this century than currently thought.

We hope this edition of our magazine leaves you with a deeper understanding of the challenges we must overcome – and a renewed sense of purpose to help tackle them.

At the 58th Session of the Commission on Population and Development in New York, we presented the findings to policymakers, researchers and UN agencies – and the response was powerful (page 4). We've now opened the door to influence conversations on improving data and the need for more

urgent investment in maternal and child health.

As part of our broader mission, our global advocacy continues to grow. We've been proud to support our Choice Ambassadors and partners at key UN summits (page 15), and we're deepening our efforts to bring the population conversation into new spaces.

Throughout this magazine, you'll discover powerful stories – from the stark realities of reproductive rights backsliding under a second Trump term (page 6) to the growing momentum behind alternative economic models (page 16). We hope this edition of our magazine leaves you with a deeper understanding of the challenges we must overcome – and a renewed sense of purpose to help tackle them.

We are a unique voice in the civil society landscape: unafraid to speak difficult truths about the impact of population growth on people and planet, but always committed to voluntary, human-rights and choice-based solutions.

With your continued support, I believe we can normalise the discourse around population and bring it into the mainstream, where it belongs. Thank you, as always, for being part of our journey and we look forward to taking ever larger strides towards achieving our vision with your solidarity.

Amy Jankiewicz
CEO, Population Matters

Population Matters news round-up

PM challenges UN projections

For decades, the United Nations (UN) projections have been considered the gold standard for tracking global health trends such as infant and under-five mortality rates*. Yet new evidence from Population Matters' *Fragile Futures* report reveals a stark truth: child mortality this century will be higher than current projections suggest.

In April, a small team from Population Matters attended the 58th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD58) in New York to challenge current UN projections and call for immediate action. We presented our data and hosted a roundtable discussion – bringing together global experts and decision-makers in-person and online – to drive forward vital conversations about shaping policies that protect

children's health in a changing world. Eminent speakers Dr Peter Le Souëf (Professor of Paediatrics, University of Western Australia), Dr Melinda Judge (Fellow at KIDS Institute, University of Western Australia), Dr Joan Castro (Executive Vice President, PATH

Foundation Philippines, Inc), Wendo Sahar Aszed (Executive Director and Founder, Dandelion Africa, Kenya) explored how environmental crises, health inequalities and policy shifts are shaping the futures of millions of children.

Wendo commented: "Despite their minimum contribution to climate change, newborns and children bear 88%

of the disease burden linked to climate change."

PM's Dr Joshua Hill, who hosted the session, said: "The world cannot afford to base life-saving policies on flawed



PM's Madeleine Hewitt with Mathilda Yineboma Ayamba, Power to You(th) National Coordinator at Norsaac.



PM's Dr Joshua Hill with Margaret Edison of Nigeria's National Population Commission.

information. Protecting children's health starts with better data and stronger investment in health systems and services, for the sake of millions of women and children worldwide."



■ Turn to page 8 for more on the impact our *Fragile Futures* report is having >>

Gender equality – still an aspiration

The UN's updated *Gender Snapshot Report* for 2024 reveals that while some progress towards achieving gender equality has been made, significant challenges persist.

The annual *Gender Snapshot Report* looks at the progress made towards gender equality within the framework of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a global blueprint for a better future, addressing pressing challenges such as poverty, inequality and climate change. SDG5 specifically focuses on Gender Equality – but not a single indicator under this goal has been achieved.

Commenting on the report, Sima Bahous, UN Women Executive Director, stated that it: "reveals the undeniable truth: progress is achievable, but is not fast enough. We need to keep pushing forward for gender equality to fulfil the commitment made by world leaders in the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing almost 30 years ago and the 2030 Agenda."



The report highlights the need for legal reforms and strategic investments to ensure women and girls can participate fully and equally in all aspects of society. Also required is meeting the unmet need of an estimated 257 million women globally who want to avoid pregnancy by being able to access safe, modern methods of contraception. All these measures are crucial to closing the gender gap and fostering a more inclusive world.

Gender Snapshot 2024 - key findings

■ **Extreme Poverty:** The proportion of women and girls living in extreme poverty has finally dipped below 10%, yet the path to completely eradicating poverty for women and girls could span another 137 years.

■ **Child Marriage:** Despite global efforts, about one in four girls are still married before they turn 18. This statistic underscores the urgent need for continued advocacy and intervention.

■ **Education:** The annual global cost of countries failing to adequately educate their young populations is more than USD \$10 trillion. Low- and middle-income countries could lose another USD \$500 billion in the next five years by not closing the digital gender gap – the unequal access to and use of digital technology.

■ **Women in Parliament:** A decade ago, women held far fewer parliamentary seats. Today, they occupy one in every four seats – a significant step forward. However, achieving gender parity might still take until 2063 at the current rate.

*The under-five mortality rate refers to the probability a newborn would die before reaching five years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births. Infant mortality is a related term that refers to the probability a newborn would die before reaching their first birthday.

Big Give 2024 was our most successful appeal yet

Last December we held our fourth annual Big Give Christmas Challenge match-funded appeal to support the Nigerian Population Conversation in Africa's most populous country.

Match-funding means every pound you donate is doubled for Population Matters: a £10 donation becomes £20, a £50 donation is worth £100, and so on. We're delighted to share that this was our most successful Big Give appeal to date with our amazing supporters raising over £27,000. Thank you!

Over the past four years, by taking part in our annual Christmas Challenge match-funded appeals, you have raised more than £80,000! This has supported multiple projects, facilitated research, funded published reports, and ensured the challenges of population growth are discussed on an international stage. We're thrilled that one of our Africa-based supporters has pledged an incredible £10,000 to enable us to run a match-funding appeal this June for our urgent new campaign. With a range of ways to donate, we hope more of our supporters than ever will be able to take part.



■ See page 18 for details on how to donate to our latest appeal: **ACT NOW: NATURE CAN'T WAIT >>**

Access scholarly insights on population

The latest edition of the *Journal of Population and Sustainability* has recently been published.



This editorially independent, interdisciplinary journal, supported by Population Matters, explores all aspects of the relationship between human numbers and environmental issues. Providing a variety of perspectives and facilitating collaboration, the new issue explores a range of topics including trends in population dynamics, the pursuit of sustainability, and the impact of immigration policy on the

future size of the United States population.

■ It's available to read at whp-journals.co.uk/JPS/issue/view/156/26



Photo by Janika Top on Unsplash

What will your legacy be?

If, like us, you believe our planet really can become a place where nature and future generations thrive in harmony, then there's a way to help turn that aspiration into a reality.

Would you consider leaving a legacy that will enable others to continue pushing for positive change and keep population on the agenda, beyond your lifetime?

We're incredibly grateful to supporters who have already pledged to leave us a gift in their will, such as supporter John C, who told us: *"In my lifetime alone, the population of the world has increased threefold. The future looks bleak, with countries increasingly likely to fight over declining finite resources of land, water and minerals. If one's life is to have any meaning it should be devoted to leaving some benefit, however small. That is why I shall leave a bequest to Population Matters and why I urge others to do the same."*

Fellow supporter, David H, adds: *"I want to ensure help is given to charities which will benefit my grandchildren and great grandchildren's generations in the future world we bequeath them."*

We are always honoured when someone chooses to leave a gift to us in their will, or in memory of someone close to them. And, thanks to some incredible people, legacy gifts have enabled us to make real progress with the United Nations and to collaborate with amazing grassroots organisations across the world that are leading efforts to address the interconnected issues of population growth. But there is much more to do.

Population Matters is the world's leading population charity. We're on a mission to address the negative consequences of ever more people using ever more of the planet's resources and to inspire and engage with others to find, share and promote ways to make our vision a reality as quickly as possible. However, none of this is possible without the help of our supporters. We will continue doing everything we can, for as long as needed, to ensure population is addressed as a global issue. A gift in your will would make a direct contribution to achieving a sustainable human population, for the benefit of people and planet.

■ If you'd like to find out more about leaving a legacy, visit populationmatters.org/yourlegacy, email us at supporters@populationmatters.org or call our Individual Giving and Legacies team on 020 8123 9116. Thank you so much for your kind generosity.

Living in America – Trump 2.0



As part of Population Matters' *Welcome to Gilead* campaign, PM's **Madeleine Hewitt** spoke to **Olivia Nater**, Communications Manager at Population Connection, to explore what Donald Trump's re-election means for women's rights.

Q: Just days after Donald Trump's re-election, purchases of emergency contraceptives spiked. What does this say about the anxieties of many American women?

A: A second Trump term poses a real threat to US women's reproductive health and rights, which is why many sought out emergency and long-acting contraception ahead of his inauguration.

During his previous presidency (2017–2021), Trump appointed three anti-abortion justices to the US Supreme Court, resulting in the overturning of *Roe v Wade* in June 2022, which effectively ended the constitutional right to abortion in the USA. As of March 2025, 17 US states have enacted near-total abortion bans. As many feared, in January 2025, Trump signed an Executive Order to end the use of Federal taxpayer dollars to fund or promote elective abortion.

A further cause for concern is Project 2025, an extreme right-wing plan co-developed by people who served in Trump's previous administration. Project 2025 advocates banning medication abortion and blocking its delivery by mail (of vital importance for those living in abortion ban states). Other proposals include making it easier for employers to exclude contraceptive coverage from employee health plans, enabling hospitals to deny emergency abortion care, establishing an abortion surveillance system, and replacing comprehensive sex education with abstinence-only curricula.

Q: Vice President JD Vance has made derogatory comments directed at women who have not had any biological children, including his infamous "childless cat ladies" remark. He has also suggested that people without biological children do not have a "direct stake" in society. What are your thoughts?

A: Vance's ridiculous comments were motivated by his misogynistic beliefs that women should return to traditional

domestic and childbearing roles. He, like other conservative pronatalists, has repeatedly expressed alarm over the declining US birth rate. Vance believes a steady supply of American babies is needed for a strong country, while at the same time opposing immigration, which aligns with the racist 'Great Replacement' conspiracy theory motivated by the fear that 'traditional' white Americans will be replaced by foreigners with higher fertility rates.



Every person, regardless of whether they have biological children or not, has a stake in the future and is affected by the policies implemented by elected officials. Suggesting that non-parents should have less of a voting right (which Elon Musk has done too) is absurd and deeply undemocratic.

Q: Elon Musk has positioned himself as a key player in the Trump administration and has made several comments on X (formerly Twitter), stating "population collapse due to low birth rates is a much bigger risk to civilisation than global warming". How do you respond to these comments?

A: Musk's comments are so detached from reality that they are hard to take seriously, but a lot of people sadly do. As the richest man on Earth, Musk has

enormous power and influence, and his newly acquired role in the US presidential administration gives him even more of that, which is deeply concerning. First of all, our global population is still very much growing, and according to United Nations projections, is not expected to peak until the 2080s, at over 10 billion. It is projected to stay at this level until the end of the century. There's no chance of a 'population collapse' driven by low fertility. There is, however, a real chance of planetary collapse driven by our escalating environmental crises.

Declining fertility is actually one of the few global trends that are moving in the right direction. Stabilising human population growth is a prerequisite to a more sustainable future, and low birth rates are a result of women gaining more choices over their bodies and lives. Megalomaniac billionaires like Musk benefit from propping up our unsustainable economic systems with an endless supply of babies.

Q: Population Connection has already been through a previous Trump administration. What gives you hope for the next four years?

A: The reproductive health and rights community is bigger and more determined than ever before, and surveys continue to show that the majority of Americans are pro-choice. We will do everything we can to fight Trump's harmful policies. During his last administration, we established our far-reaching #Fight4HER campaign and we will continue to engage activists in the coming months and years. Adversity inspires vigilance, which is what's needed now.

Population Connection is a US non-profit organisation that focuses on education and advocacy to promote progressive action to stabilise the world population at a level that can be sustained by the Earth's resources.

■ See our latest findings on pronatal policies and the impact on women's rights by visiting populationmatters.org and searching for **Gilead Watch**.

“We will build an energising community, committed to tackling the causes and effects of population dynamics”

Discover what drives our new Director of Advocacy and Influence, **Jameen Kaur**.



I SEE MY ROLE as a catalyst to forge better linkages with strategic decision-makers and our target audiences, to enable Population Matters to achieve its vision where our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other. To deliver this vision, I aim to prioritise collaborative ways of working, grounded in respect for human rights and evidence-based solutions.

I started my position as Director of Advocacy and Influence just as Population Matters launched its new five year strategy, which coincided with unprecedented global political shifts and drastic cuts to USAID and UK overseas development aid.

In my initial weeks, the priority for me was to ensure that Population Matters stood with more than 130 UK NGOs to condemn the UK government's decision to cut foreign aid to fund defence spending. Together with our partners, Population Matters raised the alarm on the harm that such regressive decisions have unleashed in the lives of people, particularly those already living on the margins of society.

BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS SECTORS

Acting in solidarity is important. The history of social justice movements is testament to the fact that no one person ever builds alone. In an ever-polarised world, building bridges across sectors is ever more critical. To that end, Population Matters is

working to advance its advocacy and communications, to spread awareness on the interlinkages of the issues we work on – across sectors, being present and attuned to the environment, people, and the political contexts that influence decision-making.

Since the launch of our strategy in February 2025, Population Matters launched its latest report – *Fragile Futures* (see pages 8-9) – at the 58th Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD58). Our research demonstrated how current United Nations projections on infant

We are curious and determined to better understand how real sustainable change takes place – turning words into action and building grassroots-up.

mortality are inaccurate because they do not consider the impact of extreme heat, drought and air pollution on children's health and wellbeing. At CPD58, we had fruitful discussions with UN agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and government representatives, to discuss the need to include updated criteria, to enable accurate projections which would

drive improved evidence-based solutions, to save children's lives and improve their health.

ADDRESSING THE STIGMA OF POPULATION DYNAMICS

Alongside our advocacy work at national and global levels, we are deepening our work to address the taboo and stigma of 'population' demographics. We will do this through engaging and inspiring communication campaigns, centring on evidence-based research and case studies, and by amplifying the activism of our partners and our global Choice Ambassadors – young people who understand the crucial links between population, the environment and women's and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This is demonstrated by our Choice Ambassadors Isabella Cortés Lara and Dorcas Wakio who we supported to attend recent UN events (see page 15). By normalising the discourse around human population, we will strengthen understanding of its impact on the planet in local, national and international policy agendas.

With our new strategy, we are curious and determined to better understand how real sustainable change takes place – turning words into action and building grassroots-up – specifically with communities who have been historically marginalised. We will continue our conversations with strategic stakeholders across the globe, whose allyship and insights will be vital to achieve our vision. We have developed a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning framework, to strengthen the documentation and legacy of our work and apply learnings, insights and the wisdom of the communities we work with in real time. I am excited to be part of this new journey with Population Matters.

IN BRIEF: Jameen believes in the philosophy of Ubuntu – 'I am because we are,' – a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. This roots her commitment to achieving a more equal, just and sustainable society for all beings, nature and the planet. She has worked with a diverse range of stakeholders including global human rights organisations, public interest lawyers and grassroots social justice activists in the Global North and Global South. Her leadership to strengthen accountability for preventable maternal deaths at a reproductive rights unit in India resulted in the organisation achieving the prestigious MacArthur Creative and Effective Institutions Award. The award recognises the generation of provocative ideas, reframing debates, and providing new ways of looking at persistent problems.

The future looks FRAGILE

Current United Nations projections underestimate the true scale of future infant mortality and declining children's health. Population Matters' new report, ***Fragile Futures***, presented at the United Nations 58th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD58), reveals the negative impacts that climate change and population dynamics are having on children's health.

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) predicts that under-five mortality rates will keep declining through to the end of this century. While this sounds like something to be celebrated, those optimistic projections rely on past trends and do not reflect what the world is actually experiencing.

Climate and the environment are in rapid decline – our planet is getting hotter, and air pollution is rising. The UN's methodology fails to take this into account and therefore underestimates the true scale of future infant mortality and declining children's health.

Our new report – ***Fragile Futures*** – which Population Matters presented at the 58th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD58) – highlights a stark reality:

“The number of children adversely affected by climate change will increase – not only because there will be more children, but because of the increasing number of vulnerable children.”

The fully referenced report, authored by the Future Child Health team based in the University of Western Australia – leading child and public health experts – reveals that the UN's infant mortality projections overlook two major threats to children's health today:

- 1. The increasing impacts of climate change:** The UN's modelling does not include the rising risks posed by extreme heat, air pollution, droughts, and other accelerating climate-driven crises. These environmental changes threaten decades of progress and leave millions of children vulnerable.
- 2. Population dynamics:** The projections fail to account for the reality of global demographics. This century, most children will be born in the most climate-vulnerable regions, principally Sub-Saharan Africa and South & Central Asia. These regions also have the fewest resources to combat climate-related health threats.

Together, these blind spots paint an alarmingly incomplete picture. If we continue on this path – relying on outdated assumptions – we risk failing millions of children and their families by underfunding critical healthcare interventions.

THE IMPACT OF FLAWED DATA

Charities, policymakers and governments rely on the UN's figures to prioritise resources that shape and deliver health policies for children. Accurate data is essential to ensure cost-effective solutions reach communities that need them most, particularly in regions that are at high risk of infant mortality.

Thanks to decades of progress, more children than ever are surviving the critical first five-years-of-age window. But climate change threatens to undo those hard-won gains.

If catastrophic flooding in Spain, multi-year droughts in the Horn of Africa, and rampant Californian wildfires in January have taught us anything, it's that climate change is reshaping our world and putting children's lives at risk. Contrary to official predictions, recent data shows infant mortality is already increasing in both high- and low-income

■ Read, download and share our new report at populationmatters.org/resources/fragile-futures

■ Join our movement for change – visit populationmatters.org/newsletter and sign up for our email updates.



countries, including the United States, France, India, Madagascar, Cambodia, Nepal and the Philippines.

Fragile Futures co-author, Dr Peter Le Souëf, stated: “Let there be no doubt that we should have deep concern about what’s happening in the future, particularly for children.”

PEOPLE ARE LISTENING

At CPD58, Population Matters presented the *Fragile Futures* findings to a range of delegates, including representatives from the National Statistical Office of Malawi, the Mexican National Citizen Council on Population, the Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW) and the Ghanaian organisation Norsaac.

The audience was highly engaged, eager to discuss population and take forward the findings of our report. Dr Yasmeen Sabeeh Qazi, CEO of QZ Catalyst, an organisation working on family planning and health in Pakistan, commented: “Population does matter. Let’s start talking about it.”

Encouragingly, representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) also attended the discussion, and are now working to connect with the Future Child Health data team to help improve future UN projections.

THE URGENT NEED FOR FUNDING

One uncomfortable truth loomed over every conversation at CPD58: progress will stall without funding. And right now, funding is disappearing fast. USAID, one of the largest global funders of maternal and health services, had recently slashed its aid budget by 83%. Other governments, including the UK and in Europe, have taken similar steps.

Speaking during a Population Council side event, Margaret Edison, the Former Executive Director of Population Management and Development at Nigeria’s National Population Commission – a familiar face to PM from our Nigerian Population Conversation – addressed the reality head-on: “We need to resist depending on donors, start generating our own funding. Whoever owns funding has the right to withdraw it.” She also

highlighted the urgent need for her own government to show leadership: “Nigeria has the money, but it needs to be mobilised better. We need to get better at communicating the end results – women are dying, children’s health is worse.” Her words were a powerful reminder that the solutions we’re advocating for need both political will and proper investment.

ENCOURAGING SIGNS

CPD58 showed encouraging signs that the link between climate change, population dynamics and child health is being taken more seriously. PM’s Madeleine Hewitt, who attended the event, said: “People were really engaged and wanted to continue the conversation. We had very productive meetings with the Nigerian National Population Commission as well as the Population Council – both prominent organisations – and discussed working together in the future, focusing on ‘normalising the conversation on population’.”

In the weeks and months to come, Population Matters, along with its partners, will work to ensure that the pledges made at CPD58 – “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages” – are delivered into practical action.



Photo by Ante Hamersmit on Unsplash

Findings from our *Fragile Futures* report

Air pollution causes increased infant mortality

Higher population density directly correlates with higher rates of air pollution in cities. Air pollution is a leading cause of childhood respiratory disease and infant mortality. Air pollution in Africa, for example, caused an estimated 449,000 additional infant deaths in 2015 alone.



One in five children globally still suffer malnutrition

With projected increases in the global population, food supply will need to increase by 50 -70% by 2050. This will require 70 million hectares of additional land for planting crops, which will erode biodiversity further. The number of undernourished people worldwide has been increasing, the latest estimates placing the figure as high as 828 million. Malnutrition is a leading cause of physical stunting in children. In 2022, the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund estimated that more than 1 in 5 children globally were affected. The World Health Organization estimates that malnutrition is responsible for 45% of all childhood deaths in low- and middle-income countries.



There’s an urgent need for safe, modern contraception

Shortfalls in sexual and reproductive healthcare funding have meant an estimated 257 million women of childbearing age worldwide still face an unmet need for safe, modern contraceptives. If urgent action is not taken, the number of women with unmet need for family planning will rise due to population growth outpacing the expansion of family planning services. The withdrawal of USAID support between 2025 and 2028 is projected to result in 1,200 additional preventable maternal deaths in Afghanistan alone.* The total impacts of lost aid on women and children’s health remains unknown — but will be catastrophic without intervention.



*Pio Smith, UNFPA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific Press Briefing

Can humanity solve its biggest problem?

Despite awareness of the devastating impact of climate change and the decimation of the planet's biodiversity, it's business as usual and humanity's emissions continue to climb. The burning question, when there are practical, positive solutions available, is why?

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) cannot spell it out any clearer: *"No corner of the globe is immune from the devastating consequences of climate change. Rising temperatures are fuelling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism. Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning. It is clear that business as usual is not good enough."*

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

While human beings are the cause of – and can offer solutions to – climate change and biodiversity loss, progress on the issue seems inordinately slow. Despite numerous Conferences of the Parties (COPs) – the first United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place in Berlin, Germany, in 1995 – many despair that we've already run out of time. Are the changes required now so radical that it's beyond the scope of humanity to embrace them?

"Societies need to stop burning fossil fuels and stop using nitrates on the land. If they had done this 40 years ago the problem would not have become so serious," observes climate change economist and author Graeme Maxton, an Advisory Board Member of the UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) Pathways Project, which seeks to help countries develop, implement and track national

sustainable energy policies. *"The changes that are needed to avoid a crisis are so drastic that almost no one wants to do what's necessary. Quickly eliminating fossil energy, and changing the way humans grow food, is seen as too disruptive."*

CAN WE STEM THE TIDE?

Yet, as the infinite cost of climate change reaches irreversible highs, the UN remains upbeat, believing that with bold collective action – including embracing new, efficient technologies, improving agricultural practices, land restoration and the greening of food supply chains – humanity can solve its biggest problem: *"While science tells us that climate change is irrefutable, it also tells us that it is not too late to stem the tide. This will require fundamental transformations in all aspects of society – how we grow food, use land, transport goods, and power our economies."*

And it's the notion of fundamental transformation – and changing the way people think – that's key. *"The problem cannot be fixed until people think differently,"* says Maxton. *"It's just too hard for most people to consider that they need to radically change how they think. They believe that economic growth is essential for human progress. They believe that a rising population is desirable."*

The UN counters: *"If governments, businesses, civil society, youth, and academia work together, we can create a green future where suffering is diminished, justice is upheld, and*

harmony is restored between people and planet." However, as things stand, governments, businesses, civil society, youth, and academia face an immense challenge.

AS THE HUMAN RACE EXPANDS, NATURE IS DISAPPEARING

Our needs for food, water and land, and our demands for energy and more and more stuff, are destroying habitats, polluting our air and water, and driving species of animals and plants to extinction.

Healthy ecosystems, interdependent webs of living organisms and their physical environment, are vital to all life on Earth. Our ecosystems provide us with clean air, fresh water, food and resources. Biodiversity, the variation of life on Earth, is a major factor in nature's resilience.

Nature is our life support system, but right now it's in trouble. **We are losing biodiversity up to ten thousand times faster than it was disappearing 100 years ago.** That's more than half of all birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish gone in just 50 years. During that time, **our population has more than doubled, increasing from 3.7 billion to over 8.2 billion today.**

The World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) *Living Planet Report 2024* reveals that **wildlife populations have dropped 73% on average since 1970.** WWF warns that national governments are failing to meet biodiversity targets and

“Healthy ecosystems, interdependent webs of living organisms and their physical environment, are vital to all life on Earth. Biodiversity, the variation of life on Earth, is a major factor in nature’s resilience.”

calls for an urgent transformation from the current economic and food systems that are focused on the extraction and overexploitation of natural resources for profit, to a system that values nature.

While we applaud WWF’s call to action, its recent report only skirts around the issue of continued global population growth. We feel that this is a missed opportunity. The continued reluctance to address population growth as a driver of biodiversity loss only further stalls progress.

In May 2019, the Intergovernmental Science Policy platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), released its global assessment, identifying the major threats to biodiversity worldwide. It explicitly noted that **human population growth is an indirect driver of biodiversity loss**.

MASS EXTINCTIONS

IPBES reported that **one million species are now at risk of disappearing for good** and, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, **41% of amphibians, 25% of mammals, 34% of conifers, 13% of birds, 31% of sharks and rays, 33% of reef-building corals, and 27% of crustaceans** are threatened with extinction.

Biodiversity loss is attributable to several causes, but by far the biggest culprits are habitat destruction and overexploitation of species, **driven by our increasing numbers and unsustainable consumption**.

WE WILL SAY IT, AND SAY IT AGAIN, ALL POPULATIONS MATTER

Population Matters – with its unique understanding of the impact a growing human population is having on the planet – intends to be part of the urgently needed push for transformational change. One of our mission-oriented goals, outlined in our new strategy, is that by 2030, we will have normalised the discourse around human population and influenced the understanding of its impact on the planet in local, national and international policy agenda.

We’ll also promote practical ways of how to effect positive change, such as PHE. Population Health Environment is a development approach that recognises the interconnectedness of local communities, their health, and the natural resources they depend on. It focuses on improving wellbeing through family planning programmes integrated alongside environmental conservation projects, and education on sustainable resource management.

We urge you to stand with us at this defining moment in the the future of our planet.

Population growth underpins multiple drivers of habitat loss and biodiversity decline

- More people need ever more food. Land clearing and pesticide run-off from intensive agriculture accounts for up to **80% of extinction threats** to mammal and bird species.
- More people need ever more space. Damaging human activity continues to encroach on natural environments, with **humans expected to expand into 50% more land by 2070** – increasing human-wildlife conflict and nature loss.
- More people need more things. Our population’s relentless consumption of resources such as timber, oil and minerals is continuing to **destroy natural habitats around the globe**.
- More people produce **more emissions**.

Take action for all populations

The **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** is an international treaty signed by almost 200 countries, including the UK, which sets out an ambitious plan to halve and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. In support of this, **Population Matters** is embarking on a new push to protect and preserve the Earth’s biodiversity. **Find out how you can support our ambitious project on page 18 >>**

Acknowledging that All Populations Matter is how we'll achieve a fairer, sustainable future for all life on earth



The human population is due to hit 10 billion in a matter of decades. It is not sustainable. Our five-year strategy sets out a new approach to tackle the urgent challenges ahead, writes PM's CEO **Amy Jankiewicz**.

THE UNDENIABLE TRUTH is that our species – humanity – is using more resources than the planet and all its inhabitants – all fauna and flora – can sustain.

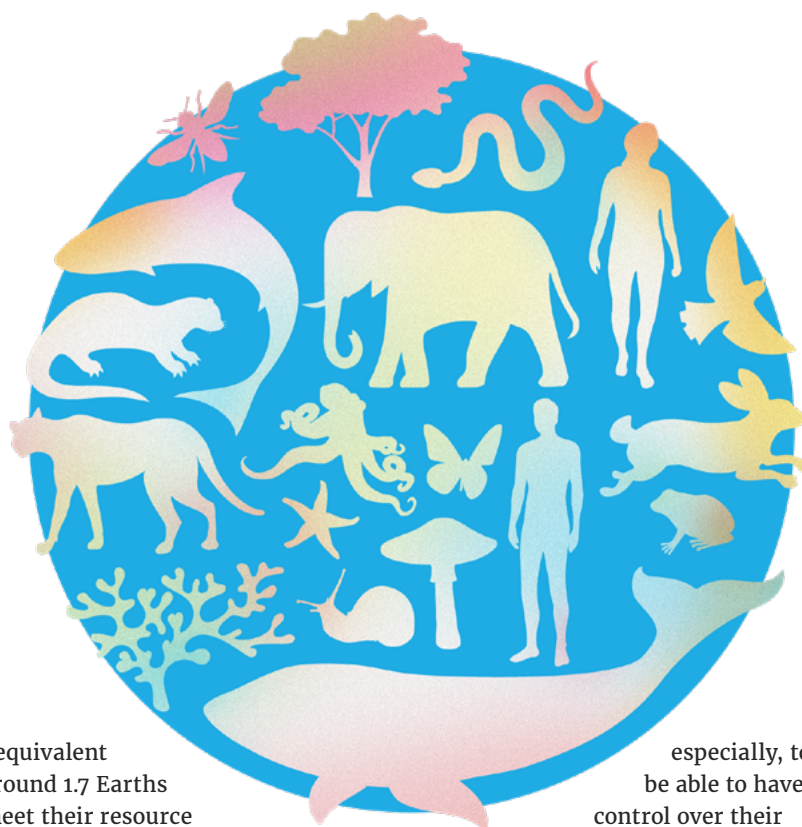
The effects of a rising human population include the destruction of the Earth through deforestation, pollution and the accelerating extinction of many species on which the health of the planet depends. The level of destruction is such that it now threatens humanity.

Communities across the world are already experiencing the devastating effects of climate change – from skyrocketing global temperatures to extreme weather events, rising sea levels and disruptions to ecosystems and food security – all driven by human activity.

WE ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED

Somehow, in our fast-paced world that seems endlessly focused on growth, expansion and increase at the expense of everything else, it seems to have been forgotten that we are all interconnected. Humanity is part of nature, and all species rely on each other to thrive – and survive. How we co-exist with the other species with whom we share this planet will define what life will be like for the natural world – and the human race – in the coming years. That's why our strategic focus for the next five years is **All Populations Matter**.

The human population simply cannot keep increasing because the Earth is unable to sustain us. According to the Global Footprint Network, humans are currently using



the equivalent of around 1.7 Earths to meet their resource demands and absorb their waste.

For humanity to survive and for the planet as we know it to thrive, we must actively stabilise, and ultimately lower our number – organically, consensually and through personal choice.

At Population Matters, we believe this can be achieved by empowering women, supporting gender equality and standing up for human rights.

ENABLING PEOPLE TO MAKE CHOICES

We affirm we are pro-choice; that is, firmly behind the right of all women to choose the size of their family. We want to empower women and men with the knowledge and resources they need to make those choices freely and with confidence. For women,

especially, to be able to have control over their bodies and their destinies,

this means being able to obtain a complete education and have access to equal opportunities and fundamental rights throughout their lives.

We know that conversations about the growing human population are challenging and that the reasons for that growth are many, varied and complicated.

Those causes include poverty, insufficient female leadership and support for female rights – including access to education – a male-dominated culture and an insatiable drive for global economic growth, which creates demand that far outstrips the earth's resources.

However, we're up to the challenge and we're committed to bringing these difficult yet vital conversations into

the mainstream. Population Matters remains the only charity in the UK dedicated to talking about population growth and how it impacts our lives, choices and opportunities – and the other species we share our planet with.

We connect the dots and speak up when no one else will. Our new strategy sets out our vision and mission – and, importantly, our plans for how we’re going to meet our ambitious goals.

“Thanks to our incredible donors and supporters, Population Matters has a proud history of punching above its weight. With our new strategy in place, we’re ready to take things to the next level.”

Our vision, as we build on our strengths and begin a new chapter of the Population Matters story, is of a world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other.

Our mission is to address the negative consequences of ever more people using ever more of the planet’s resources and to inspire and engage with others to find, share and promote ways to make our vision a reality.

Over the next five years, we will work at the intersection of both the causes and the effects of population growth, where our evidence tells us we can have the most positive effect at the greatest speed. Our task is to start those conversations and to amplify them. We will repeatedly share the message that **All Populations Matter** – and hope you will too.

WE NEED TO STIMULATE SWIFT ACTION

Not only is it imperative that we talk about these issues openly and clearly but also that we act.

We will collaborate with other NGOs, politicians and communities in the Global North and South, so that conversations everywhere stimulate action as swiftly as possible. As a small charity, we don’t underestimate

the scale of this challenge and the enormous task ahead of us.

However, thanks to you, our incredible donors and supporters, Population Matters has a proud history of punching above its weight.

With our new strategy in place and a team fortified with new members (*who you can meet over the page*) we’re ready to take things to the next level.

Time is of the essence, and to turn things around for a planet in crisis, we need your support now, more than ever.

■ Read our new strategy in full at populationmatters.org/resources/population-matters-strategy-2025-30 and check out populationmatters.org/what-else-can-i-do to discover a range of ways you can support us. Thank you.

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: 2025-2030

All Populations Matter



OUR VISION

A world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other.

OUR MISSION

Address the negative consequences of ever more people using ever more of the planet’s resources and to inspire and engage with others to find, share and promote ways to make our vision a reality as quickly as possible.



CURRENT STATUS



REQUIRED STATUS

OUR VALUES



We use evidence-based research



We promote women’s choices



We work through partnerships



We are committed to truth

OUR PRINCIPLES



Collaboration



Efficiency



Inclusive Leadership



Respect

STRATEGIC ACTIONS



Research



Influencing



Partnerships



Share and Learn



Female Leadership



Communication

OUR FIVE GOALS

GOAL 1

Establish firm footprints in three global regions.

GOAL 2

Establish an evidence-based research programme.

GOAL 3

Normalise the discourse around human population.

GOAL 4

Create a global funding model that is diverse and sustainable.

GOAL 5

Become an internationally reputable organisation.

Meet the 2025 PM team



Amy Jankiewicz, Chief Executive

Amy became Population Matters' first female CEO in March 2024, bringing over 12 years' experience in the charity sector as a Trustee and Senior Leader, alongside a background as a Senior Civil Servant at DEFRA and a former British Army Officer. Amy graduated from the University of Exeter in December 2023 with a Masters in Anthrozoology, which has transformed the way she views the world we share with nature. She provides strategic leadership and oversees all the charity's operations to ensure it meets its goals.



Marianne Kucera, Executive Assistant

Marianne has worked as a PA/EA in both the corporate and charity sectors supporting at Board and senior management level. She spent 13 years working for an international risk consultancy before moving into the not-for-profit sector. She works closely with the Board, Senior Leadership Team and Amy, our CEO, providing administrative and logistical support.



Dr Joshua Hill, Chief Research and Operations Officer

Joshua has 12 years of experience working in Finance across large multi-national corporates and within the charity sector. He has a PhD in Behavioural Economics within the context of international development. His role encompasses leading both the research and operational aspects of Population Matters, ensuring the effective delivery of various projects, while also driving evidence-based decision-making and impact measurement.



Jameen Kaur, Director of Advocacy and Influence

Jameen has worked with a diverse range of stakeholders which includes global human rights organisations, public interest lawyers and grassroots social justice activists. At Population Matters, she oversees the charity's efforts to shape public policy, influence decision-makers, and build support through strategic communication, advocacy campaigns, and stakeholder engagement.



Sho Nair, Director of Fundraising and Engagement

Sho has worked in the charity sector since 2005 in a variety of fundraising roles – primarily in health, social welfare, human rights and education. His strategic focus is cultivating a community of supporters to develop a diverse and sustainable funding model.



Emma Bowles, Individual Giving and Legacies Manager

With more than eight years of fundraising experience in health, housing, poverty alleviation and equality, Emma has joined Population Matters to support the generous individuals who fund our work through various methods, including membership, gifts in wills, individual and regular donations.



Anthony Howarth, Fundraising Officer

A qualified teacher, specialising in UK early years provision, outdoor education, and forest schools, Anthony has a background in fundraising and communications in the charity and museums sectors. At Population Matters, he develops and implements fundraising strategies, organises campaigns and builds relationships with supporters.



Shweta Shirodkar, Partnerships and Public Affairs Manager

Shweta has over six years' experience in international development, working across programme management, research, partnerships, and MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning). At Population Matters, she builds and develops relationships with our partners and stakeholders globally, and manages our Empower to Plan initiative, which supports grassroots NGOs that work to improve the lives of women, girls and communities, and protect the natural world.



Ben Stallworthy, Digital and Communications Manager

Having previously worked in various fundraising and marketing roles Ben is tasked with developing and implementing strategies for online and offline communication – including social media, email marketing, and other digital channels – to promote Population Matters' key messages and connect with people in meaningful ways.



Francesca Harrison, Content Specialist

Francesca has worked for over a decade in the private sector and has a strong interest in mental health and humanitarian projects. At Population Matters she is using her skills to create engaging content that has a meaningful impact. Using visuals, videos and the written word across various digital platforms, Francesca is focused on promoting the charity's mission to raise awareness and engage supporters.



Madeleine Hewitt, Campaigns and Media Officer

Madeleine has three years of experience working in the digital media space, including scriptwriting for content on YouTube on the impacts of climate change as well as conservation success stories. At Population Matters she is tasked with overseeing in-depth, original reports and managing campaigns to raise awareness and drive support for the charity's mission. She is the main media point of contact, coordinating with journalists and putting Population Matters' voice out there.



Lisa Vella, Accountant and HR Support

After nearly two decades of working in accounting roles in the private sector, Lisa decided to take her learned skills into the worthwhile world of the not-for-profit. At PM, she manages all the financial aspects, ensuring compliance with regulations and supporting the charity's mission through effective financial management and reporting. Lisa also supports the team's HR needs.



Rob Wadsworth, CRM and Engagement

Rob has worked in the charity sector for six years and has a background in charity support and working with databases. His role at Population Matters includes maintaining and updating the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system with accurate and up-to-date information on donors, supporters, volunteers, and other stakeholders.



All Populations Matter

PM Choice Ambassadors on the global stage

Two of our long-term partners – **Isabella Cortés Lara** and **Dorcas Wakio** – report on two key United Nations events they attended recently.



Population Matters was excited to sponsor Women for Conservation to attend the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP16) held in Cali, Colombia, last October.

Through their incredible work, Women for Conservation highlight the importance and interconnectedness of nature conservation, sustainable livelihoods and voluntary access to birth control and family planning. This closely aligns with the principles of Population Health Environment (PHE) – proven to be one of the most effective approaches to biodiversity conservation. PHE, which Population Matters campaigns to secure wider adoption of, addresses both the needs of the community, and reduces population pressure on natural resources, whilst improving community support for conservation of local biodiversity.

“COP16 in Cali was one of the most significant events of my life,” reveals Isabella Cortés Lara. “A key focus was on bringing women leaders from La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Chocó, and other regions across Colombia, including indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and sustainability champions, to the forefront. Witnessing their excitement as they participated in such a globally significant event underscored the importance of providing access and opportunities to those from marginalised communities.”

While Colombia has legalised abortion and family planning services, there remains a cultural taboo, especially in rural regions, and Isabella noted a lack

of awareness about PHE programmes: “It was surprising to see how little attention was given to family planning in the larger conversations on conservation. This gap highlighted a crucial intersection: that empowering women to access family planning not only benefits their personal development but also contributes to conservation efforts by reducing human impact on nature.”

Isabella reflects: “COP16, with its rich representation of indigenous and grassroots voices, was a powerful platform, but it became clear that more emphasis on integrating sexual and reproductive health into conservation strategies is essential. We have a long way to go, but the energy and enthusiasm from the event offer hope. It’s up to us to ensure that family planning and holistic approaches to conservation become more widespread.”

Isabella Cortés Lara and her mother Sara Inés Lara founded Women for Conservation in 2019. The organisation runs family planning and conservation programmes in Colombia, and partners with grassroots women’s groups around the globe to protect endangered wildlife and their habitats.

Last November, we supported Dorcas Wakio at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, which focused on climate finance.

Dorcas reports: “I arrived with cautious optimism, hopeful that as a finance COP, it would bring much-needed progress for marginalised, women, vulnerable, and indigenous communities. However, the summit exposed critical shortcomings for developing nations. Despite an agreed

target of \$300 billion in climate finance by 2035, this figure remains far below the \$1.3 trillion needed to effectively address climate adaptation and mitigation, leaving crucial efforts at risk.”

Commitments to phase out fossil fuels also fell short, with no firm deadlines set due to opposition from fossil-fuel-reliant nations. Progress on the Loss and Damage Fund was also undermined.

“I closely followed the negotiations surrounding gender and climate finance, specifically in relation to the Loss and Damage agenda,” says Dorcas. “These two topics are deeply interconnected, as women and gender-diverse people are disproportionately impacted by climate change. I was able to ask pressing questions on the accessibility and transparency of the Loss and Damage Fund, particularly in how it can better support vulnerable communities, who often lack access to decision-making tables.”

Throughout COP29, Dorcas engaged with policy makers and networked with youth climate leaders, documenting key events, discussions and developments and sharing her findings across social media channels. She adds: “I look forward to collaborating with all the connections that I made. The work isn’t over yet, but we are making progress, and together, we can create a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.”



Dorcas Wakio is a Kenyan environmental and climate justice activist. She is the founder of the Mazingira Pamoja Initiative, a youth-led organisation which aims to protect and restore the environment while also uplifting local communities and empowering women and girls.

The unsustainability of indefinite growth – and the alternatives

Rethinking our entire economic system is no pipe dream. There's growing momentum for challenging the 'growth is good' mantra.

WHEN WE THINK of economic growth, it's often assumed that more is always better. But for Herman Daly, one of the founding voices in ecological economics (and member of PM's Expert Advisory Group until his death in 2022), this mindset was fundamentally flawed. He stated: *"The economy is a subsystem of the earth's ecosystem, and you cannot grow something indefinitely within a finite system."*

As we face rising inequality, biodiversity loss and a climate crisis, Daly's ideas resonate more strongly than ever. His vision of sustainability is about rethinking our entire economic system – a vision that's shared by a new generation of economists and sustainability experts.

"Growth has become an icon – an unquestioned dogma of our times. But questioning it is vital for our survival," urges Tim Jackson, a British economist and author of the groundbreaking book *Prosperity Without Growth*. Jackson's challenge to conventional economics questions the most highly prized goal of politicians and economists alike – the continued pursuit of exponential economic growth. His findings have inspired debate and led to a new wave of research building on his arguments and conclusions.

NOW, OR NEVER?

Many would argue that the time for debate has long gone and what's urgently required is a global economic transformation. As econometrician and sustainability researcher Gaya Herrington vividly puts it: *"We live in a now-or-never moment in history to preserve what we have or lose a good chunk of it with doomed attempts to grow further. Either we choose our own limits, or we'll have them forced upon us. Now that humankind has attained global reach and unparalleled power, limits to growth confront us with a question we've never faced before: who do we want to be and what world do we want to live in?"*

The concept of 'Degrowth' – which challenges the 'growth is good' mantra – advocates for reducing economic production and consumption in wealthy countries for reasons of sustainability, equity and wellbeing. It seeks to create societies that prioritise ecological health, fair resource distribution and quality of life over GDP growth. Proponents say it's not about austerity or stagnation,

The economy is a subsystem of the earth's ecosystem, and you cannot grow something indefinitely within a finite system.

but rethinking progress in harmony with planetary limits, focusing on both people and the planet in order to strike a balance and protect both.

The Degrowth movement has been shaped by influential thinkers across the world. Jason Hickel, an economic anthropologist and author, has brought Degrowth to a broader audience through his bestselling book *Less Is More*. He argues: *"Degrowth is not the same as recession – it's about deliberately scaling down destructive activities while investing in human wellbeing."*

Another prominent voice is Serge Latouche, a French economist and professor emeritus at the University of Paris-Sud. He emphasises the need to *"decolonise our imagination"* from the idea that infinite growth equals progress, arguing that true prosperity lies in reducing excess and focusing on what truly matters.

Historically, the pursuit of growth has been necessary. But today, we face a different set of challenges. Environmental crises and glaring global inequities demand that we rethink the primary goal of our economic systems. This is something that resonates with



Photo by Adobe

Population Matters as we seek to achieve our vision of a world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other, and continue our mission to address the negative consequences of ever more people using ever more of the planet's resources.

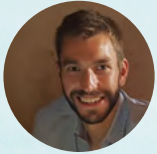
■ Visit populationmatters.org/news to find a series of in-depth blogs that explore alternative economic models.

Alternative economies in brief

- **Solidarity economy** prioritises social, environmental and ethical objectives over profit.
- **Social capitalism** is structured with the ideology of liberty, equality, and justice. It values social capital, human capital, and natural capital.
- **Care economy** encompasses all paid and unpaid work and services that support caregiving such as childcare, eldercare, and domestic labour, which are vital for individual and societal wellbeing.
- **Green growth** aims to achieve sustainable economic development by integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and practices.
- **Doughnut economics** was created by Oxford economist Kate Raworth. The inner ring represents the basic human needs that everyone requires. The outer ring shows the boundaries which humanity must not exceed in order to remain sustainable.

"If people lose knowledge, sympathy and understanding of the natural world, they're going to mistreat it and will not ask their politicians to care for it."

Sir David Attenborough, patron, Population Matters



PM's **Dr Joshua Hill** sets out our bold new approach that will use original research and compelling, comprehensive evidence to inspire people across the globe to take urgent action to safeguard the future of our planet.

EVER SINCE Population Matters was first established, we have based our activities and actions on facts and hard evidence.

From those early days, we have evolved to become an organisation that works at the intersection of population, environmental sustainability, and human rights, with an emphasis on women's empowerment and leadership, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). We promote ethical, choice-based solutions through campaigning, awareness-raising and research. And it is research that is key to reaching our ultimate goal – achieving a world where our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other.

In order to enable more people to understand the impact of unsustainable population growth – overconsumption, excess resource use, and nature loss – and to move it into the mainstream discussion, we need pertinent facts and figures at our fingertips that will inspire positive action. As our patron, Sir David Attenborough, so eloquently puts it: *"If people lose knowledge, sympathy and understanding of the natural world, they're going to mistreat it and will not ask their politicians to care for it."*

We want as many people as possible to understand that as the global population increases, so does the demand for resources like food, water, and energy, putting a strain on vital ecosystems, leading to environmental degradation. Ultimately, this will result in a planet that can no longer sustain its inhabitants. This simply cannot continue.

We want population to be as recognised and cited as climate change in environmental discussions across the board – from local communities to

governments, and from wildlife and environmental activists to policymakers.



WE'RE RAMPING UP OUR RESEARCH

In order to amplify the connection between unsustainable population growth and the environmental crises devastating the planet – as well as providing practical, ethical and sustainable recommendations and solutions – we need compelling and comprehensive evidence. That's why we've taken the decision to ramp up our research.

While we're immensely proud of all the research and reports we have produced over recent years, we are now focused on taking things to the next level. We plan to commission strategic, evidence-based, high-quality academic work that will cut through and yield long-term, credible outputs.

The link between biodiversity loss and population growth is already well documented within the academic literature. Pressures caused by increased consumption and resource demand

(particularly agriculture and land clearing), climate change, urbanisation and industrialisation all directly or indirectly put ecosystems under significant strain. However, there are notable gaps within the literature, which make it difficult for policy makers to design and apply effective policies. There are no silver bullets when it comes to addressing biodiversity loss. While the drivers are understood at the macro level, these aggregated trends oversimplify the complexity which exists at the grassroots level.

PM intends to work directly with strategic governments and partners to understand the insights required within specific political and geographical contexts. For example, how localised population growth interacts with aspirations to protect biodiversity, or how policies can balance sustainable economic growth with conservation efforts. These are complex questions, and only by being honest about the impact of population pressure will we stand a chance at finding effective policies. We believe that this approach will enable us to break through the barriers that surround the population issue and get our voice heard.

Our latest fundraising appeal – *Nature Can't Wait* (see page 18) – marks the first stage of our new approach.

We've already achieved so much – Population Matters is now a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), has consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and is a member of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance. But there is so much more we want to achieve. As our bold, exciting plans develop, we'll keep you informed every step of the way.

NATURE CAN'T WAIT



Together, we can make a stand for biodiversity and ensure that future generations inherit a world filled with life, not loss. PM's **Anthony Howarth** explains how your match-funded donation will enable us to increase understanding of the impact our growing human population is having on the natural world.

SINCE THE BEGINNING of the year, the Population Matters team has been excitedly planning our latest appeal: **Act Now: Nature Can't Wait** – because it really can't. Ever more people are using ever more of the world's finite resources, which is devastating the natural world.

Population Matters is the leading organisation making clear the link between our human numbers, overconsumption, excess resource use, and nature loss. **Imagine if population growth was as often cited as climate change in environmental discussions – far more people would become engaged and population growth would move into the mainstream discussion.**

We campaign for a future in which our human population, through voluntary means, lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other: **population matters** and **All Populations Matter**.

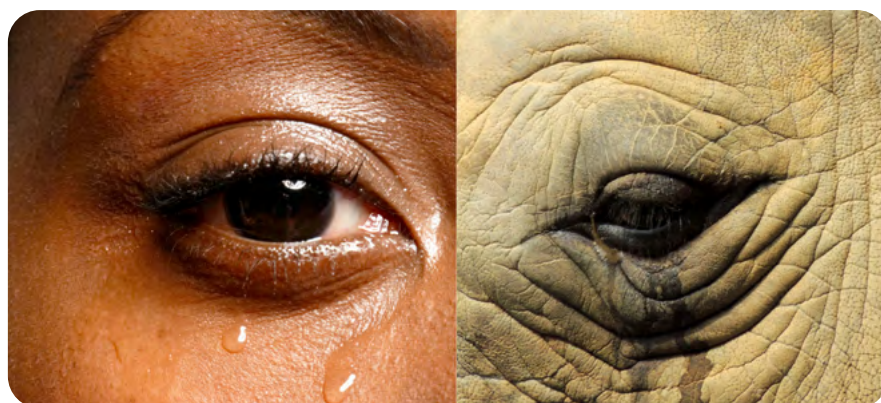
DONATIONS ARE DOUBLED

If you are planning a gift to Population Matters, a match-funded donation to our **Nature Can't Wait** appeal really is the most impactful way to do so. Your donation will be doubled by match-funding and all funds raised will help us continue our vital work.

Your gift will fund specialist research, help to engage local and global partnerships with governments, academics, and organisations, and empower communities to consider human population growth and all its effects at home and overseas.

Your gift will help tackle the impact of an unsustainable, growing human population, resulting in deforestation, pollution, and the accelerating extinction of many species on which the health of the planet depends.

Together, we can make a stand for biodiversity and ensure that future generations inherit a world filled with



life, not loss. Your gift will fund our vital research, amplify sustainable choices, engage communities, and enable us to advocate to local and national governments. Population Matters is the only UK-based charity campaigning about our ever-increasing human population and its impact. **It is you, our incredible supporters, who make everything we do possible.**

YOU CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT

Our **Nature Can't Wait** appeal is now live. Please donate today. Our cause is urgent. The appeal will run for the whole month of June. Donations received up to £10,000 will immediately be **doubled in value** from **Monday 2 June until Monday 30 June 2025** at no additional cost to you. There are three ways you can make a donation:

- Online at www.populationmatters.org/magazine-nature-cant-wait
- Call our friendly fundraising team on **020 8123 9116**
- Send a cheque, writing '**Nature Can't Wait**' on the reverse, to Population Matters, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY, UK

From everyone at Population Matters – **thank you.**

Vanishing Icons

This in-depth report details how population growth is driving our most loved animals to extinction. Despite increasing global awareness of nature's decline, and the fact that population growth is recognised as a driver of biodiversity loss by scientific authorities, exactly how it drives extinctions isn't always understood. That's where our compelling, fully referenced report comes in. It examines how human-driven pressure is threatening the natural world. We also consider what can be done to reverse nature's decline, with recommendations for governments, conservation organisations and funders.

- Read it at populationmatters.org/resources/vanishing-icons



Q&A with Everlyne Bowa, founder of Kenyan youth organisation AWOCHE

The Agape Woman and Child Empowerment (AWOCHE) Foundation, creates and implements uniquely crafted programmes that transform lives and enable women, children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to fulfil their potential.



Q: Can you tell us about how you came to set up AWOCHE?

A: Growing up, I faced a lot of body shaming, which led to low self-esteem and poor academic performance. This continued into my college years until I participated in a mentorship programme that changed my perspective on life.

While on my academic practicum at Daystar University, a few girls asked for help with sanitary towels for their school. I could relate because I had gone through similar experiences. I used my savings to support their sanitary towel needs and conducted weekly mentorship sessions in their schools. Students then began inviting me to other schools.

I carried out these initiatives out of love for my community because I didn't want the students to perform poorly due to life's challenges. This inspired my mission of 'Agape', which translates as 'love' for women and children.

Q: What are the key challenges facing local communities that AWOCHE engages with?

A: Our main challenges include unplanned pregnancies, inadequate access to family planning information, and a lack of resources on life skills and sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR). These issues contribute to low self-esteem and higher school dropout rates.

Q: Can you tell us a little about AWOCHE's incredible range of programmes?

A: AWOCHE implements impactful programmes that address both immediate needs and long-term transformation. For example, the Mentorship Programme connects young people, especially girls, with positive role models to support their personal and academic growth. In the area of SRHR, AWOCHE provides youth-friendly education and access to essential services. The Teen Moms Programme offers support to adolescent mothers through counselling, vocational training, and assistance with educational

continuity, helping them build brighter futures. The Economic Empowerment initiative equips women and youth with practical skills and entrepreneurship training to achieve economic independence. The Empowered Men Programme engages men and boys to challenge harmful gender norms and foster positive masculinity.

AWOCHE also promotes eco-conscious practices by educating the community on climate action and sustainable menstrual health solutions. Through these integrated efforts, AWOCHE drives meaningful change within the community, positively impacting individuals and families alike.

Q: What was the impact of the Population Matters grant for AWOCHE?

A: The impact was significant. We hosted 100 girls for a week during the holiday mentorship programme and increased the number of schools benefiting from this initiative. We expanded our reach to the informal settlement of Korogocho and implemented SRHR training. We worked with student ambassadors to champion SRHR and environmental awareness in their schools. For World Environment Day, we established a tree nursery and planted trees in schools and public markets – and our partnerships with government stakeholders in the Ministry of Environment, Climate

Change, and Forestry also grew. In addition, we carried out environmental waste management initiatives through community clean-up events.

Q: Looking long-term, what do you think are the key things that will create positive change?

A: Empowering women and children and transforming communities requires deep structural change. We must dismantle harmful gender norms that limit women's potential, shifting mindsets to value equality and challenge patriarchy. Access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities is essential; girls should be able to pursue their education without threats of early marriage, while women need access to reproductive health services and fair wages.

It's also crucial that women and girls are leaders and decision-makers in development. At AWOCHE, our community-driven approach collaborates with individuals rather than working for them, engaging everyone in the solution. We blend education, health, economic empowerment, and environmental action to create holistic change. This collaborative model inspires others and scales impact, as communities own their change. A future where women and girls assert their rights is not a distant dream – it's what we're building together every day through AWOCHE.



Photos courtesy of AWOCHE Foundation. Background image by Panel Czerwinski at Unsplash

NATURE CAN'T WAIT

Together, we can make
a stand for biodiversity
and ensure that future
generations inherit a world
filled with life, not loss.

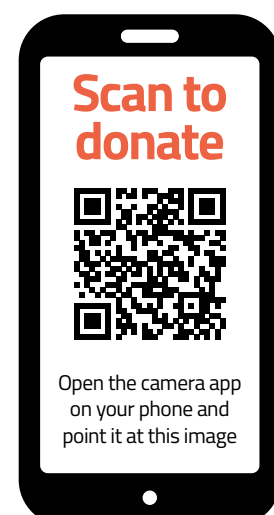


We need to bring discussions about the impact our growing and unsustainable human population is having on the planet to the fore – and we need to act now. **Donate** to our NATURE CAN'T WAIT appeal during June 2025 and your gift will be **match-funded, doubling its value, at no extra cost to you.**

There are three ways you can make a donation:

- Online at **www.populationmatters.org/give** – or **scan the QR CODE**
- Call our friendly fundraising team on **020 8123 9116**
- Pop a cheque in the post, writing '**Nature Can't Wait**' on the reverse, and send it to **Population Matters, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY, UK**

From everyone at Population Matters – **thank you.**



DISCOVER MORE AT POPULATIONMATTERS.ORG

Population Matters is a UK-based charity campaigning to achieve a sustainable global population through ethical means, to protect nature and improve people's lives.

