

POPULATION MATTERS

Autumn 2025

Issue 47

World Population Day

Meet our grassroots partners
protecting nature with local knowledge, community engagement and creative ideas

tree planting
waste recycling
nature restoration
sustainable agriculture

Saving the sea to save our world

Protecting the ocean starts with us

Earth Overshoot explained

Our planet is under threat from ever more people using ever more resources

**POPULATION
MATTERS**



About us

Population Matters (PM) is an organisation that works globally with partners 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 limited 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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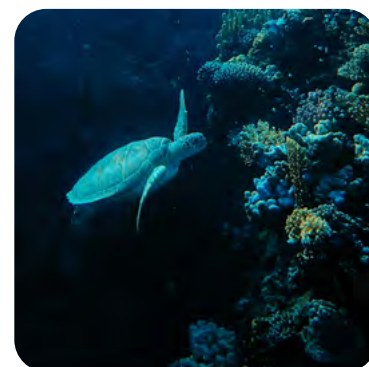
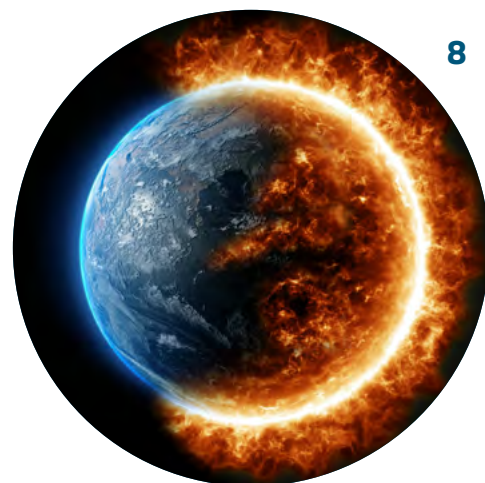
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“Our collaborations with local and global partners enables us to learn, contribute our insights, and be part of a global team that delivers practical solutions, to address the causes and effects of population growth”

AS WE WERE COMPILING this issue of our membership magazine, we heard the sad news of Dame Jane Goodall’s passing. Over her 65-year career as one of the most respected conservationists of our time, Jane Goodall redefined the way we all understand humanity’s place in nature. Through compassion, research and commitment to truth, she dismantled the idea of human exceptionalism and showed us that humans are part of, not separate from, the living world around us.

At the heart of our vision

This recognition of interconnectedness is at the very heart of our vision: a world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other. Even with her awareness of the pressures the natural world faces, Dame Jane Goodall remained committed to hope. She believed that every individual action matters, and that through empathy and understanding, we can create a thriving planet for all species. We were truly honoured to have had her as a patron, and her commitment to hope will guide us as we honour her legacy through our continued work.

The urgent need for action

Indeed, continuing our work is more critical than ever. Despite compelling evidence for rapid climate change and decades of conservation efforts, the path we are on is still unsustainable. If we do not act, the impact on the planet’s life-support systems – systems on which humanity’s survival depends – will be irreversible. This urgent need for action was the focus of the recent IUCN World Conservation Congress – a once every four years gathering of nature conservation

experts, leaders and global decision makers – which PM attended in October. The Congress focused on driving bold, transformative change via elevating ambition, accelerating action and scaling up collaborative solutions that address the needs of both nature and people, ensuring that sustainability efforts are equitable and just.

Population Matters stands ready to be part of this bold, transformative change. We’ve forged new global partnerships, launched a new research directorate (*see page 7*) as part of our five-year strategy, and expanded our team to ensure we have the skills and expertise we need to address the negative consequences of ever more people using ever more of the planet’s resources.

Continuing our work is more critical than ever. Despite compelling evidence for rapid climate change and decades of conservation efforts, the path we are on is still unsustainable.

Our partnerships are integral to much of what we do. Our collaborations with local and global partners enables us to learn, contribute our insights, and be part of a global team that delivers practical solutions, to address the causes and effects of population growth. For example, to further our Population Conversation in Nigeria, PM’s Chief Research and Operations Officer, and our Director of Advocacy and Influence, working alongside our key partner

CISLAC (Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre) recently met with Nigerian government ministries and conducted a nationwide workshop to share insights and challenges (*see page 13*). As a result, a national and state-level theory of change is now in development.

Partners protecting nature

In Kenya, Venezuela and Pakistan, our grassroots partners are also driving positive change. On World Population Day, we were proud to showcase the innovative ways they’re protecting nature through local knowledge, community engagement and creative ideas (*See page 10*).

We have many exciting plans for 2026, which we’re hoping to fund via the Big Give Christmas Challenge. This match-funded appeal – **A Fairer Future for All Populations** – takes place in December, but if you’re able to donate, you can register now (*see page 18*). Population Matters receives no external funding – our work is made possible entirely by you, and we are eternally grateful for your support.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to Sara Parkin OBE as her second term as Chair of our Board of Trustees comes to a close. Sara, a staunch campaigner for achieving a better world for 50 years, shares her parting thoughts on page 7.

Thank you for being part of this community. Together, we’re keeping hope alive and building the fair, sustainable world Dame Jane Goodall believed in.

Amy Jankiewicz
CEO, Population Matters

Population Matters news round-up

Wild Summit 2025 – why was population not discussed?

PM's Amy Jankiewicz and Madeleine Hewitt, our Campaigns and Media Officer, attended the first Wild Summit in Bristol in September, heralded as the UK's new flagship conference for the nature sector.

Hosted by the Wildlife and Countryside Link coalition, the event featured representatives from major wildlife and environmental charities, including Natural England, RSPB, National Trust, World Wide Fund for Nature UK and the Marine Conservation Society. The day featured presentations, panel discussions and workshops focused on how to help the UK halt and reverse nature's decline by 2030.

The shadow of Rachel Reeves, Chancellor of the Exchequer, loomed large, with every speaker urging the government to invest in nature recovery. The government has ambitious targets to meet the commitments made under the Convention on Biological Diversity

Treaty – to protect 30% of land and 30% of oceans by 2030. Yet so far, their policies have fallen short of expectations.

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. For nature to recover, we need to address our consumption, both through individual choices and government-led policy changes. Indeed, there was a promising discussion of potential solutions such as nature-friendly agriculture and reducing land use. However, these solutions seem unrealistic when the fact that the UK's population is set to keep growing was not acknowledged.

According to the latest Office for National Statistics mid-2024 projections, the UK population will surpass 70 million people by 2030. That growth will drive higher demand for resources – for more food, water, power and housing. Yet the impacts of this were not widely discussed in relation to how this will affect UK nature recovery efforts.



Representatives from major wildlife and environmental charities were at Wild Summit.

For some, addressing the impacts of population may seem like a 'difficult problem' best left unspoken. But, as our new strategy makes clear, solutions do exist, and they are overwhelmingly positive, prioritising improving people's wellbeing and protecting nature.

At the Wild Summit, we focused our advocacy on normalising discussions on population, so it becomes part of the conversation on how to protect and restore the UK's nature.

Landmark moment for ocean protection

After two decades of campaigning, a global agreement designed to protect the world's oceans and reverse damage to marine life is set to become international law.

The High Seas Treaty received its 60th ratification by Morocco in September, meaning that it will now take effect from January 2026. Once it comes into force, countries will propose areas to be protected, and these will then be voted on by the countries that sign up to the Treaty.

The Treaty will make it possible for ocean sanctuaries to be created – safe havens from destructive human activity such as industrial fishing and oil drilling – across 30% of the world's oceans by 2030. This will allow marine life to have the chance to recover and thrive again.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said: "Covering more than two-thirds of the ocean, the agreement sets binding rules to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity." The



Treaty will pave the way for the world's first-ever Ocean Conference of Parties (Ocean COP1), expected next year.

Mads Christensen, Executive Director, Greenpeace International, said: "Governments around the world must use this time now to ensure the first historic Ocean COP becomes a turning point and start to develop plans for the first-ever sanctuaries under the Treaty. Our ocean can't wait, and neither can we."

■ **Can we meet the ocean challenge?**
Find out more on pages 16-17 >>

Ocean agreement now requires action

■ The ocean is crucial for the survival of all organisms on the planet. It is the largest ecosystem, provides up to 80% of the oxygen we breathe, and, according to The World Wildlife Fund, the 'blue' economy – the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem – is estimated to be worth \$24 trillion.

■ Greenpeace estimates that currently, just 1% of the high seas are fully protected, leaving marine life at risk of overexploitation.

■ Protecting the high seas is challenging. No one country controls these waters, and all nations have a right to ship and fish there.

■ New analysis by Greenpeace International reveals that to fully protect 30% of the high seas by 2030, governments would need to protect more than 12 million square kilometres every year for the next five years – an area bigger than Canada.

Match-funded appeals are enabling us to take action

Our summer match-funded appeal, **Nature Can't Wait**, was a tremendous success. It raised more than 250% of its original fundraising goal, and we received more individual donations than ever before. If you are among those who kindly donated, thank you!

The all-important funds our summer appeal raised are already helping us to take a stand for nature and biodiversity, funding vital research that makes the case unequivocal; our ever-increasing human population and resulting unsustainable resource use are driving nature's decline and biodiversity loss across our shared Earth. All populations matter!

With lots of exciting plans in place, our attention turns now to our next appeal, which goes live at the end of the year. Our 2025 Big Give Christmas Challenge – **A Fairer Future for All Populations** – will run for one week only from Tuesday 2 to Tuesday 9 December, to raise money for our work into 2026 and beyond. You can register today for this match-funded appeal, and every donation will be doubled, at no extra cost to you. If you're able to donate, it will be a fantastic way to round off the year.

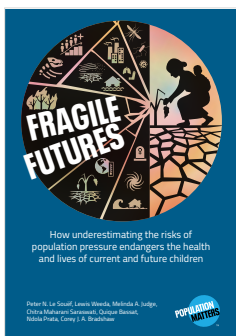


Photo by Canva.

■ See page 18 for details of our latest appeal, **A Fairer Future for All Populations**, and how to register >>

Countries call for cleaner air

More than 50 countries, cities and organisations have now pledged to halve the health impacts of air pollution by 2040.



This goal is backed by a petition from 47 million health professionals, patients and advocates demanding that clean air be made a public health priority.

This timely commitment came just before a team from PM attended the 58th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD58) in New York, earlier this year. The team shared our **Fragile**

Futures research – linking climate and environmental harm to rising infant mortality – with global experts and decision-makers to drive forward vital conversations about shaping policies that protect children's health in a changing world.



A huge thank you to Martin Earl

Martin has been the co-ordinator of the **Population Matters London Group**, a voluntary role he has held since its inception in 2017.

In 2022, he was awarded the PM Change Champions Supporter Award to acknowledge his dedicated contribution and unwavering support. He has now retired from the role and told us: *"I will miss working with everyone at PM and especially those in the London Group – past and present. We know through our local events that most people are aware of the devastating impact that overpopulation has and will have on us and our beautiful planet. But this truth is so often deliberately denied and ignored, not so much by ordinary people, but by leaders and opinion formers. This is why it is so important that PM continues to work with its vital campaigning and research."*

Everybody at Population Matters would like to thank Martin warmly and wish him all the best in his retirement.



A legacy for future generations

We're incredibly grateful to people who pledge to leave us a gift in their will – and were deeply touched to receive this message from Christine, the partner of one of our long-term supporters: *"When Peter told me he wanted to leave a gift to Population Matters, it felt completely right. We both shared a deep belief in leaving the world better than we found it, and this was his way of staying true to who he was. It brings me real comfort to know his values live on; he'll always be remembered for caring, for thinking beyond himself, and for taking action. I know he'd be proud to see the impact he's still having today."*

Thanks to fantastic people like Peter (pictured above), legacy gifts have enabled us to influence global policy and support global grassroots organisations. A gift in your will is a lasting legacy that helps build a better future for people and planet.

■ Find out more at populationmatters.org/yourlegacy, email us at supporters@populationmatters.org, or call 020 8123 9116. Thank you for your kind generosity.

myth-busting

The solution to the world's problems is *not* more people

After the Spike, a new publication by Dean Spears and Michael Geruso, has been gaining media attention, but its arguments about the negative impact of falling birth rates are flawed.

IN AFTER THE SPIKE, Dean Spears and Michael Geruso, economic demographers from the University of Texas at Austin, argue that global depopulation is the biggest future challenge the world faces, promoting myths rather than focusing on the facts.

Spears and Geruso's arguments are designed to scare us into the idea that any decline in the size of the global population would be catastrophic, instead of assessing the more nuanced demographic reality that the world's population is set to keep growing.

They make the unfounded prediction that unless the trend for low birth rates is reversed, the world's population will peak in the next four to six decades and then plummet off a cliff. This misinterprets the most widely cited demographic projections put out by the United Nations (UN). The organisation predicts that the global population will continue growing for the next 50 to 60 years, peaking at approximately 10.3 billion by the mid-2080s. It will then plateau and remain relatively stable, hovering above 10 billion through to the end of the century.

While *After the Spike* gets it right in proposing that governments adopt policies that make parenthood easier and more accessible – the latest UNFPA 2025 report identifies that low birth rates in the Global North are largely the result of people being unable to start a family or have as many children as they want primarily due to financial barriers – it ignores the real fertility crisis that needs to be urgently addressed.

Millions of women and girls in the Global South are unable to exercise their reproductive rights due to persisting socio-economic barriers, gender-based violence, and legal restrictions. It's a global injustice that they are unable to make free choices about their fertility and their own bodies. Social policies designed to ease the burden for new

parents should be embraced regardless, independent of an agenda to increase birth rates. No one should feel pressured to have children from a state power, nor feel they have been priced out of parenthood due to financial constraints.

We should create a society where everyone can freely exercise their reproductive rights and realise their choices about their desired family size. This includes an individual's right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.

Funding misinformation

After the Spike frames the current trend of low birth rates, predominantly in the Global North, as our collective moment of doom, stirring a false panic that we must all start having more children to increase the current birth rate and fanning the flames of 'depopulation' conspiracy theories. Indeed, the substance of Spears and Geruso's arguments falls into pronatalist ideology rather than rationality, perhaps explained by their sources of funding.

A Bloomberg investigation revealed that in 2021, Elon Musk donated \$10 million to the University of Texas at Austin for the development of the Population Wellbeing Initiative (PWI), which is headed by none other than Dean Spears. Musk has repeatedly spread misinformation about population collapse, claiming it is a "bigger crisis than climate change".

Low birth rates are in part a development success story, reflecting more women pursuing higher education and careers, with access to contraception meaning more women have the freedom to choose whether or when they have a child. To make progress, governments and the private sector must increase funding for the delivery of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Evidence supports that investing in SRHR is one of the most cost-effective

development interventions, returning up to US\$120 for every US\$1 spent. This is the real story that should be making headlines.

After the Spike myths debunked

■ **INNOVATION IS DRIVEN BY NUMBERS OF PEOPLE** Scientific discovery originates from investment in education and research, not the number of people on Earth. According to UNESCO, 251 million children and youth remain out of school. With stark disparities between regions, 33% of school-aged children and youth in low-income countries are out of school, compared to only 3% in high-income countries. Ensuring that everyone has equal access to education, and opportunities to pursue careers in science and engineering, is what will deliver more scientific innovation and discovery.

■ **POPULATION IS NOT RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS** Globally, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and population growth have remained the strongest drivers of CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion in the last decade. To solve the world's environmental crises, we must address the impacts of our growing global population, alongside reducing our consumption. Consistent investment in improving access to education and sexual and reproductive healthcare for everyone is one of the positive solutions to achieve a higher quality of life for all people.

■ **Population Matters** has published a report debunking Musk's claims about population collapse, highlighting the amount of misinformation he has spread on his platform X, which you can read by visiting populationmatters.org and searching for 'Elon Musk'.



A message from our outgoing Chair, Sara Parkin OBE

THIS YEAR, Population Matters has lost, in person but not in influence, two of its patrons: Dame Jane Goodall in October, and in April, Malcolm Potts.

Malcolm moved from the UK to the USA to become Professor of Public Health at the University of California, and was a consistent advocate for women being the best placed to manage their own fertility. It was up to everyone to ensure women had all they needed by way of knowledge, materials and facilities to do that.

Jane made headlines as the ‘chimpanzee lady’ and plenty of waves as someone who understood that protecting wild animals, securing peace and ending poverty were not separate issues, but *only resolvable together* through changing how

we humans lived. Like me, Jane and Malcolm remembered the first UN Earth Summit in Stockholm in 1972, when another PM patron, Paul Ehrlich, along with John Holdren coined the famous $I=PxAxT$ equation to illustrate how our impact (I) on nature was a multiple of our number (P for human population), times the volume of resources we each use (A for affluence), times how efficiently we do that (T for the technology of avoiding every scrap of waste).

While we didn’t do too well over the last 50+ years, it doesn’t mean we can’t do better in the next 50 or so. The failure of the governance and economics systems we rely on is only too obvious. We need a new logic, based on collaboration more than competition. Population Matters’

new strategic plan unites our ambitions with others on the same mission – to find ways of living fairly and sustainably with nature and each other – as soon as possible.

As my second term as Chair of the Board ends, I say farewell to an organisation embarking on an ambitious strategy with modernised governance, a new CEO, and fresh competencies on the Board and the Senior Leadership Team, all boding well for the future. Now, I join you readers, campaigning in other ways, and wishing PM, and everyone involved, courage, energy and every success.



An update from our Chief Research Officer, Dr Joshua Hill

MY COLLEAGUE Jameen Kaur, Director of Advocacy and Influence, and I have recently returned from Nigeria, where we continued our vitally important work, which you can read about on page 13. Nigeria is currently the world’s sixth most populous country – and its population is set to continue rapidly increasing.

The challenges facing Nigerians, particularly Nigerian women, are already vast. Access to quality education and healthcare, particularly family planning, is limited. Economic uncertainty and high levels of unemployment (at around 30%) are making it exceptionally difficult for Nigeria to recognise the potential of its demographic dividend. Nigeria is also a hotspot for deforestation and land use change, meaning the loss of traditional livelihoods, biodiversity and localised ecological collapse. Without an intervention, these issues are very likely to compound over the next 25 years.

To further progress our Population Conversation, we met with several government ministries and conducted a nationwide workshop, alongside our key partner CISLAC (Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre). Participants shared insights and regional challenges relating to

population growth, enabling us to develop a national and state-level theory of change. These insights are essential ahead of our future work, not just in Nigeria but throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. The workshop also revealed the true human cost of ever-increasing population pressure. While ‘every child is born with its own wealth’, the reality is much more alarming; child abandonment, human trafficking, sexual abuse, drug addiction, crime and a sense of hopelessness all seem to be increasingly prevalent. The challenges are significant, but PM is well placed to continue to raise awareness and catalyse change.

A great opportunity

Back in the UK, a recent highlight for Population Matters was that we were asked to contribute expert insight on the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology’s briefing on the social and economic consequences of falling fertility. This was a great opportunity for us to challenge the economically focused pro-natalist narrative increasingly seen across the Global North. We emphasised the need for better healthcare (with a focus on healthspan instead of lifespan),

opportunities for later-life training and re-education, as well as the likely impact of AI and robotics over the next 10 years.

Right now, we’re preparing to launch some new international research projects in 2026, focusing on the intersection between climate change, food security, bioscience innovation and migration. Fundamentally, we want to better understand how these factors interact, whether we can feed an ever-increasing population, and how climate change affects this. This is supported by our academic partnership with the Norwich School of International Development (NISD), where we are addressing research gaps on the causes and effects of population, and have established a dedicated research programme supported by world-leading experts.

We’re looking to our latest fundraiser – **A Fairer Future for All Populations** – to help us achieve our aspirations for 2026 (*see page 18 for more details*) and would like to thank you for your support. Without you, none of what we do would be possible.



EARTH OVERSHOOT

our demand is outstripping what our planet can supply

There is only one Earth. Oceans regulate global temperatures. Forests generate the oxygen we need to breathe. Fertile soil grows the crops that feed us. These interconnected systems sustain all life on Earth, for all species, yet they are increasingly under threat due to ever more people using ever more resources – a phenomenon known as Earth Overshoot.

THE ECOSYSTEMS we depend upon are breaking down. In recent times, we've witnessed intensifying heatwaves, hellish wildfires, freak floods and degradation turning productive lands into arid deserts. These are not isolated events – they are symptoms of broader ecological collapse, caused by humanity's outsized impact.

The Earth is a closed system, which means all the resources we use originate and renew within it. When timber is harvested, for example, then forests can regrow. But it takes time and energy for forests to grow and replace the ones chopped down; this is known as biocapacity and is the rate at which the Earth can absorb waste materials and generate new resources. If timber is harvested at the same rate that forests grow, then there is an ecological balance.

However, as is happening all over the world, forests are being slashed and burnt down faster than they're growing, causing global deforestation that is tipping the scales on climate change and putting us in ecological debt. We're not just destroying forests; we're using up all resources – from blast mining of precious metals to overfishing in our oceans – faster than the Earth can renew them.

It may seem hard to understand how we can consume more natural

resources than are available on an annual basis, but this level of overuse is possible by depleting natural capital.

We're stealing resources from the future

To put it another way, we are effectively stealing resources from the future. For example, when mega-trawlers rake up a seabed, hoovering up fish, this destroys the marine habitat and leaves fewer fish able to breed and replace the species, resulting in smaller catches of fish in the future. We are choosing short-term gains at the expense of long-term sustainability.

For example, deforestation and over-pumping of aquifers have drained groundwater, leading to more frequent and intense droughts. During severe droughts, trees and plants die off, the ground hardens and compacts like concrete, so when heavy rainfall occurs the ground can't absorb the water, causing flash floods. When degraded land cannot retain any groundwater, vegetation can't grow, and the land is unable to regenerate. A vicious cycle of severe often multi-year droughts, followed by flash floods begins.

As recently seen in the Horn of Africa, where between 2020–2023 the region suffered from one of the worst droughts in 40 years, followed

by a deluge of flash floods in 2024, devastating the area, costing lives, and affecting millions of people. This is just one example of how depleting natural capital can lead to a domino effect of natural disasters as complex ecosystems break down.

Human activity is driving biodiversity loss

Humanity's impact is driving us into what is now considered the Sixth Mass Extinction. The last was 66 million years ago, triggered by the asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs.

Today, human activity is the greatest driver of accelerating biodiversity loss. We are now losing biodiversity up to one thousand times faster than it was disappearing a century ago. Our needs for food, water, land, energy and more are destroying habitats, polluting our air and water, and driving wildlife and plants to extinction.

The more we deplete natural capital now, the more we risk crossing ecological tipping points, where ecosystems collapse entirely.

It's vital that everyone is given adequate resources to live in dignity, however, our current economic and social systems steer us toward high-consumption lifestyles, consuming far more resources than we need.



Photo by Javier Miranda on Unsplash.

“Our needs for food, water, land, energy and more are destroying habitats, polluting our air and water, and driving wildlife and plants to extinction.”

How can we change the date?

To solve the pressing environmental challenges the world faces, we need to repay our ecological debt and reduce our collective demand upon the Earth's resources. We need to address the impacts of our growing global population and drastically reduce our consumption, especially for individuals living in richer countries, such as the UK.

We know that in areas where population is growing the fastest, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, this is primarily due to millions of individuals, mainly women and girls, unable to exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Persisting social and economic barriers prevent millions of individuals from accessing family

planning and education. That's why Population Matters works with our international partners to remove barriers to reproductive healthcare, including family planning services and information, and to increase access to quality education for all.

At the same time, we also need to drastically reduce our consumption. On an individual level, we know that simple steps like switching to a plant-based diet or cycling to work rather than driving, can reduce one's ecological footprint. The more of us who work together to reduce our ecological footprint, the greater impact we will have.

Together, we can make a more sustainable world, to protect nature and improve people's lives.

EARTH OVERSHOOT DAY ARRIVES EARLIER EACH YEAR

■ **Earth Overshoot Day**, calculated by the Global Footprint Network (GFN), marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources exceeds what the planet can regenerate in a given year. In 2025, Earth Overshoot Day landed on 24 July. This means that from that day forward, we are depleting resources at an unsustainable rate, using up resources faster than they can be replenished.

■ According to the GFN, humanity is using up natural resources **80% faster** than the Earth can regenerate – the equivalent of using the resources of 1.8 Earths. And, if everyone on the planet lived like the average person in the UK, we'd need the equivalent resources of 2.6 Earths to fulfil our resource needs.

■ Today, human activity is the greatest driver of accelerating biodiversity loss. We are now losing biodiversity up to one thousand times faster than it was disappearing a century ago. In the last 50 years, resource use has tripled, just as the world's population has grown from 3.6 billion in 1970 to over 8 billion today. Our own consumption behaviours – how we as individuals or groups use and dispose of goods and services – have also dramatically increased. More people are using more resources than ever before.

■ Rising affluence explains **40% of the global increase of material extraction**, while population growth contributed to 27%, according to the United Nations Global Resources Outlook 2024. Despite rhetoric from Silicon Valley, green technology is unlikely to be the miracle solution to reduce the strain of our demand, as the report found technology only mitigated global material extraction by 5%.

■ The report also predicted a **60% rise in resource use by 2060**. We're set to demand even more from the Earth, when we're already in ecological debt. Rising resource demand is in part due to the continued growth of the global population – estimated to reach 10.3 billion by the mid-2080s – as well as increasing consumption.

■ **Population Matters' mission is to achieve a fairer, more sustainable world. Visit populationmatters.org/ newsletter and sign up for our email updates. Also read our report on the drought and desertification environmental crises, available at populationmatters.org/resources/dried-up-futures-report.**



partnerships

Ground force



To mark **World Population Day 2025**, we were proud to showcase the work of some of our grassroots partners, who are protecting nature through local knowledge, community engagement and creative ideas.

WORLD POPULATION DAY, which is held each July, provides us with a moment to reflect on the collective impact of more than 8 billion people on Earth. Our growing population and rising consumption are putting our planet under pressure like never before. With wildlife species already going extinct, nature can't wait for us to take action. For World Population Day 2025, we decided to spotlight our partners to show what they're doing to protect and restore nature in their communities. Their stories are incredible and inspiring.



Dorcas Wakio
MANGROVE
RESTORATION

Photo courtesy of the Mazingira Pamoja Initiative.

Dorcas Wakio is a passionate climate activist based in Kenya, and one of our Choice Ambassadors – young people who understand the crucial links between population, the environment and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

She co-founded the Mazingira Pamoja Initiative, which works closely with schools and the community to create awareness about protecting the world's limited resources and sustainability. As part of this, Dorcas organises community-led mangrove restoration projects.

Mangroves are considered a nature-based solution to climate change. Their biggest strength is their ability to capture and store carbon in the muddy soil they prefer to grow in – mangrove forests are a valuable carbon sink that absorbs excess carbon from the atmosphere. Mangrove forests also improve local biodiversity, their vast root systems providing habitat for local species, including juvenile sharks, shellfish, and even bees.

Mangrove forests also provide employment opportunities for local communities. Shellfish gathering,

fishing, and beekeeping are some of these opportunities from which communities living alongside mangroves can benefit, with a thriving mangrove forest.

Working with communities, Dorcas's organisation has already planted 20,000 mangroves and plans to hit 1,000,000 by 2030, with women and girls playing a leading role in conservation.

Dorcas says: *"We are combining traditional knowledge with modern conservation to promote local ownership, to empower communities, and to build a sustainable future."*

Photo by Carey Bates on Unsplash.



Photos courtesy of Komb Green Solutions and Ghetto Clean.

Komb Green Solutions is a Kenyan environmental group that has participated in the Nairobi River Regeneration, a project aimed at revitalising Nairobi's rivers into vibrant waterfronts.

The project seeks to improve the quality of life for the residents by reclaiming the river as a shared public good, enhancing biodiversity and providing a sustainable water resource. Komb Green volunteers have been

busy removing the mounds of trash polluting the local rivers. They've also participated in growing seedlings to plant along the banks of Nairobi's rivers. Tree planting helps to improve soil health and stability, turning riverbanks into thriving ecosystems that support a wealth of local species.

Ghetttoh Clean, a Youth Environmental Group based in the informal slum settlement of Kibera on

the outskirts of Nairobi, organises groups of volunteers to remove and recycle waste littering the streets and polluting the local rivers. They also organise tree planting days, bringing benefits to the local community and environment.

Founder, Brian Omariba (right), says: "Ghetttoh Clean Youth Group was founded in 2016, right after I finished high school in 2015. I couldn't manage to go to college or university since my parents couldn't

afford to pay for my fees. I got passionate about trying to get a solution regarding the bad image of our environment and, with some of my friends did some cleaning up in the small, narrow river. There was some change, but still, we were not satisfied. So, I spent two months getting together some money for an environmental campaign and also for purchasing the polythene bags, which were used at that time. I initiated a garbage collection activity after holding the campaign in Kibera."

The group's commitment is resulting in real, positive change for local communities and their environment.



partnerships



Turimiquire Foundation SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Turimiquire Foundation is a community-based organisation focused on family planning, rural education and agricultural development with communities in Sucre, Venezuela. It follows a Population Health Environment (PHE) model – an integrated, community-based development approach that links voluntary family planning and reproductive healthcare with environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods. PHE recognises the inherent interdependence between human health, population growth, and natural resources.

The work of the Foundation has stopped destructive slash and burn practices to clear forest for farmland and, by working with the

local community, is promoting more sustainable agricultural practices, such as fruit tree planting (agroforestry) and helping them to grow cash crops such as durians and cashews.

Turimiquire Foundation recognises that the health of the people is just as important as the health of the environment. With its PHE model, the organisation promotes environmental education and fulfils the unmet need for family planning.

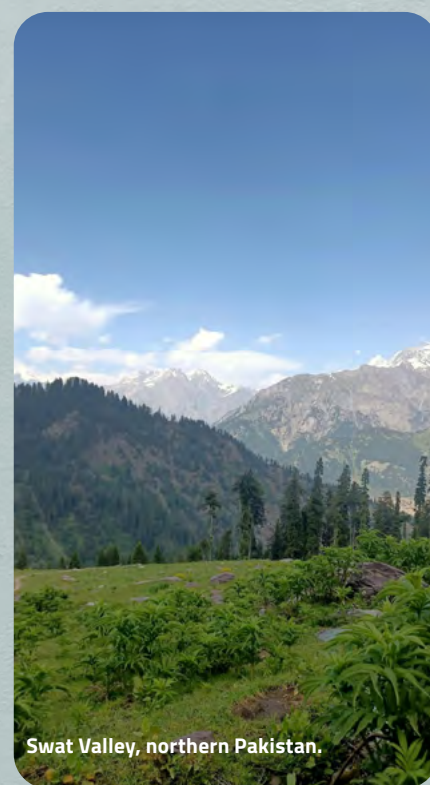
The Awakening is an organisation that strives to empower vulnerable and disenfranchised women in rural areas of Pakistan.

It achieves this by building feminist leadership, advancing women's human rights, along with advocating and mobilising for gender equality and

social justice. The organisation states: *"If we lose our rivers and forests, we lose our future. We are not separate from nature; we are part of it."*

In northern Pakistan, the stunning Swat Valley is facing growing environmental pressure – from deforestation and waste dumping to the effects of climate change – all exacerbated by a growing population.

The Awakening is working with girls, young people, and local communities to protect nature and promote environmental awareness through eco-literacy workshops, school-led river clean-ups, and reforestation campaigns.



Swat Valley, northern Pakistan.

Photo by Shahid Akbar on Unsplash.



The Awakening YOUTH LEADERS PROTECTING NATURE

Since 2023, more than 200 young people have joined their 'Empowering Youth for Climate Justice' clubs; planting trees, leading waste audits and going on clean-up drives. Their training schemes on menstrual waste and climate resilience have reached 500 girls and vastly reduced plastic usage.

The Awakening's Director, Erfaan Hussein Babak, stresses the importance of youth engagement in protecting nature, stating: *"We believe that when youth is empowered with knowledge and purpose, they become powerful agents for biodiversity. On this World Population Day, let us remember, nature can't wait, and neither can we."*

Photos courtesy of Turimiquire Foundation and The Awakening.

“The way forward must be integrated and inclusive”

PM’s recent visit to Nigeria brought policy makers, community leaders, and experts together to discuss the causes and impacts of the country’s high population growth – and how it can transform the vibrant energy of its youth into lasting prosperity.

POPULATION MATTERS has worked with the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) for the past two years to address the underlying causes and impacts of high population growth in Nigeria.

In September, our Director of Advocacy and Influence, Jameen Kaur, and Chief Research and Operations Officer, Dr Joshua Hill, travelled to the capital, Abuja, to meet with CISLAC, along with community representatives, government officials, and policy makers. Together, we called on the Nigerian government to take stronger, evidence-based action to manage the impacts of high population growth and confront the underlying root causes – principally the unmet need for family planning and lack of access to education – factors that particularly affect young girls and women.

Diverse states, one nation

Nigeria is home to 238.7 million people – almost 3% of the global population. Its population is growing rapidly, with projections indicating it will reach 400 million by 2050, making it the third most populous nation on earth. In addition, Nigeria has not completed a population census in 19 years.

Fertility rates vary widely across the six geopolitical zones that make up the country, reflecting social, economic, religious and cultural differences. According to the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, rural women have an average of 5.6 children, compared with 3.9 in urban areas. Josh comments: “These figures highlight the need for tailored, locally informed strategies that



Participants shared insights on how progress can be amplified.

recognise Nigeria’s demographic diversity. Solutions must reflect the realities and priorities of each community.”

Cultural values

Nigerian culture places great value on family. For many, children are a blessing, and a source of social security and care in old age. As a result, promoting the idea of ‘smaller families’ often clashes with cultural values that link fertility to prosperity. Jameen notes: “Family planning resonates more when it’s framed as a way of spacing pregnancies rather than limiting or avoiding them.”

Engaging boys and men to shift cultural norms and expanding opportunities for everyone to exercise reproductive choice is essential. Progress is being made. Around 12% of married women in Nigeria use modern contraceptive methods, double the rate in 1990. Yet gaps remain.

Nigeria’s youthful population means around 3.5 million people are entering the labour force every year, with a lack of employment

Challenges and opportunities for Nigeria

■ Around 15% of girls aged 15–19 in Nigeria have been pregnant, and about 44% marry before turning 18. Early pregnancies often disrupt girls’ education and reinforce cycles of inequality. About 51% of girls complete secondary school, although these numbers are lower in northern regions, where the risk of gender-based violence and negative cultural practices act as barriers to education.

■ The median age in Nigeria is 18.1. With such a youthful population comes intense pressure on schools. Integrated solutions that combine comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) education with accessible healthcare enable young people to pursue their education while making informed reproductive choices.

■ When girls are educated, the whole community thrives. Supporting girls to complete secondary school raises household incomes, builds community resilience, and drives sustainable development. Research from the World Bank shows that improving education for adolescent girls could add US\$2.4 trillion to African economies by 2040.

driving many people to emigrate. Building a sustainable future requires investment in people-centred health systems, improving Access, Availability, Affordability and Quality (AAAQ) of healthcare, expanding education, removing structural barriers that perpetuate poverty, and partnering with communities to prevent gender-based violence.

Jameen adds: “The way forward must be integrated and inclusive. Nigeria can transform the vibrant energy of its youth into lasting prosperity. The Nigerian Ministry of Health’s leadership to improve access to health through its ‘One Health’ strategy is a much-needed vital step.”



Josh Hill, Jameen Kaur and the regional workshop attendees, convened by CISLAC.

The key to bringing lasting change is women's empowerment

Strengthening women's leadership by supporting grassroots, women-led groups has a profound impact. They drive meaningful change through education, advocacy and sustainable development – and need our support now more than ever.

IN THE CURRENT political climate, the work done by grassroots organisations is more essential than ever. This became evident at the United Nations' 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held in March.

Global conversations at CSW focused on how empowered women shape global sustainability, but were overshadowed by the recent aid budget cuts in the US and the UK, which are already having a direct impact, including limiting food aid and closing health clinics. As a consequence, organisations are now examining how to restructure around domestic resources, with foreign aid playing a smaller role.

The UN event took place shortly after International Women's Day, which called for action to unlock equal rights, power and opportunities for all, and a feminist future where no one is left behind. The call was to 'Accelerate Action' and 'Support the Supporters', with the annual campaign stating: "From grassroots groups to large-scale bodies, philanthropic entities are working tirelessly to support and advance women and girls. So, let's continue to step forward in solidarity and commit to helping these groups." This provided a powerful reminder of the critical leadership of grassroots organisations in advancing women's rights and environmental sustainability.

Cuts will reverse progress

While the Trump administration is gutting US foreign aid across the board, programmes aimed at women and girls' sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) will be among those hardest hit. This will reverse progress on gender equality and reproductive rights by denying women access to vital services

that enable them to make informed decisions about their bodies and lives.

Population Matters' Empower to Plan initiative works to strengthen women's leadership by supporting grassroots, women-led groups across the globe. These groups drive meaningful change through education, advocacy and sustainable development.

Informed choices, better outcomes

Our new five-year strategy prioritises equitable partnerships with grassroots groups. We recognise that lasting change comes from the leadership of communities directly affected by the planet's most pressing issues. Time and again, we've seen that when women are able to exercise their human rights – to education, health and equality – they make informed choices about their

futures. Among these decisions are if and when they want children, and the number and spacing of the children. This leads to better health outcomes, economic stability, and reduced environmental strain. These not only improve women's lives but also benefit their families, communities, and the environment

While Empower to Plan still operates on a relatively small scale, it has a profound impact (see page 19). By working alongside grassroots organisations, we are collectively ensuring that resources reach those driving change in their own communities. We will continue strengthening these partnerships and deepening collaboration with grassroots and community-led movements, with some exciting developments coming soon.

■ Find out more and get involved by visiting populationmatters.org/empower-to-plan.



What do our Empower to Plan partners and Change Champions say?



"I believe we can achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals only if we work together.

I call upon everyone – individuals, fellow activists, CSOs, governments and all relevant stakeholders – to join and redouble efforts."

Joan Kembabazi, Founder of Gufasha Girls Foundation, Uganda



"Our goal is to continue bringing sexual and reproductive education to rural communities in more [nature reserve] buffer zones, to tackle

the climate crisis one step at a time. We aim to raise awareness of the link between the increase in population and the decrease in natural resources and habitats of threatened species, as well as the importance of women's actions in relation to the conservation of the environment."

Sara Lara, Women for Conservation, Colombia



"Government and other institutions should legalise safe abortion to allow women and girls to decide for themselves the right time

to have a baby. We must empower them with the belief that they can be leaders. Education and empowerment to enable women and girls to make choices about their bodies and how many children they have, and when, is at the heart of the real solution to all the complex issues that feed into climate change."

Nyombi Morris, Ugandan environmental and justice activist

Human impact on endangered species in 2025

In 2023, our *Vanishing Icons* report highlighted the perilous state of some of the world's most iconic species. What does their fate in 2025 reveal about our planet?



MORE THAN 47,000 SPECIES are currently threatened with extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

In 2023, our *Vanishing Icons* report highlighted the extremely vulnerable state of iconic animals that serve as vital indicators of the planet's health. Two years on, the picture remains sadly unchanged. The nature crisis has only intensified, driven by habitat destruction and the accelerated impacts of climate change. The underlying causes are unchanged: unsustainable human consumption and continued human population growth.

Vanishing Icons species inhabit diverse ecosystems, but they share a common threat: human encroachment. The global human population has now passed 8.2 billion. With it comes increased demand for land, food, water and energy, putting immense pressure on the natural world. As habitat is cleared for agriculture and our cities expand, wildlife loses the space it needs to survive. We must recognise the inextricable link between population dynamics and biodiversity. The more we consume, the less land and resources remain for wildlife and ecosystems that we as humans also depend on for our survival. Here we revisit four of the

species featured in the *Vanishing Icons* report, to see how they're faring.

TIGERS: Fragile recovery

Wild tiger numbers plummeted to fewer than 3,200 in the early 2010s. Since then, they've shown a modest recovery thanks to conservation efforts, particularly in India, Nepal and Bhutan. As of 2024, their global population stands at around 4,500, a 40% increase over the past decade, according to the IUCN. However, this progress is fragile. Habitat loss from expanding human settlements and poaching to supply the illegal wildlife trade continues to threaten these apex predators. In the Indian Sundarbans, mangrove forests – home to the endangered Bengal tiger – are under siege from climate change. Rising sea levels are further degrading vital habitat, leaving the Bengal tiger with shrinking territory to hunt and breed.

AFRICAN ELEPHANTS: Fragmented habitats

Anti-poaching campaigns and tighter enforcement have been successful in reducing the ivory trade. However, habitat loss and fragmentation have emerged as more insidious threats, as wild spaces are increasingly broken up by roads, farms and development, isolating elephant populations. Forest elephant numbers have declined by more than 86% over the last 31 years. Savanna elephant numbers have fallen by 60% in 50 years. Combined, fewer than 415,000 elephants now remain in the wild across Africa. Urbanisation, infrastructure development and agricultural expansion continue to shrink the space elephants need to roam and find food. In many global areas, human-elephant conflict is on the rise due to local communities encroaching into existing elephant ranges.



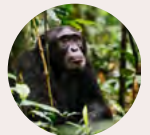
MOUNTAIN LIONS: Isolated and under pressure

Also known as cougars or pumas, mountain lions are widely distributed across the Americas. But despite their wide range, they face increasing threats due to human activity. In the US, vehicle collisions are now a leading cause of death. Expanding road networks divide their habitats, isolating them and limiting their ability to roam. In California, some groups of mountain lions are so cut off that they are suffering from a lack of genetic diversity, further compounding the pressures they face. But a landmark project offers hope. The Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing, now under construction, is designed to help mountain lions in Southern California move safely across major roads. It's a vital step towards humans coexisting with wildlife in a rapidly urbanising world.



CHIMPANZEES: A shared future under threat

In just a few decades, chimpanzee numbers have declined rapidly, with fewer than 250,000 remaining in the wild, according to WWF. The bushmeat trade, disease transmission from humans, logging, and the relentless expansion of agriculture are all placing chimpanzees under increasing pressure. Recent years have also seen a rise in zoonotic spillovers in ape populations, when diseases jump from animals to humans. This highlights both the threats to biodiversity and human health, underscoring the connections between species survival and our wellbeing.



■ We want a world where our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other. Visit populationmatters.org/what-else-can-i-do to find ways you can support us.

“If we save the sea, we save our world”

Sir David Attenborough, patron, Population Matters

Ocean – Sir David Attenborough’s new series – shows us that one of the most important ecosystems is under critical threat – from us. His latest work makes clear that protecting the world’s oceans is more critical than ever.

WE ALL OWE A DEBT to Sir David Attenborough for his tireless work to defend our planet. His new work, *Ocean*, highlights the fact that we must tackle the uncomfortable truths of the cause and effect of human population growth and our consumption of resources if we are to live sustainably and fairly with nature.

To explore these challenges further, we spoke to Daniel Cáceres Bartra, a Peruvian marine biologist and Latin America representative for the Sustainable Ocean Alliance, and Population Matters Change Champion.

According to Daniel, the rapid expansion of ocean industries such as industrial fishing, global shipping, and the emerging threat of deep-sea mining is unfolding in plain sight. He noted that this expansion continues despite a widespread lack of public awareness or political urgency: *“It’s happening right in front of us, but it’s not always visible or talked about. There is a denial and an invisibility of the threat.”*

Population growth and nature’s decline

When Sir David was born in 1926, the global population stood at 2 billion. In the intervening 99 years, it has more than quadrupled to over 8 billion people today. According to the World Wildlife Fund’s *Living Planet Report 2024*, since 1970, wildlife species have declined by 73%, principally because wildlife habitat has been broken up by urbanisation and the intensification of agriculture. This has put thousands of species on the brink of extinction.

Daniel is clear that the relationship between population growth and ocean



“The ocean needs space, time, and less pressure. Where strong protections exist, marine life has bounced back powerfully.”

Daniel Cáceres Bartra,
Sustainable Ocean Alliance

degradation is direct: *“More people means more consumption, each human requires a basic protein and nutritional demand. That translates into more ships, more coastal cities and more demand for seafood. All of it puts heavy pressure on marine ecosystems.”*

We’ve already seen wildlife species disappear on land; this could be mirrored in the oceans if demand, driven by our growing population, continues. Overfishing, mineral extraction and international shipping pose existential threats to marine ecosystems.

The hidden cost of overfishing

Ocean with David Attenborough places a spotlight on the destruction caused

by mega-trawlers bulldozing the seabed. Many viewers are likely to be deeply concerned by the loss of fish, corals and kelp forests destroyed by these mega-trawlers. But before placing the blame solely on the fishing industry, they should also recognise that these wasteful practices arise from the demands of feeding the growing global population.

According to [The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#), aquatic foods currently provide 15% of all animal proteins consumed. If the global population exceeds 10 billion by the 2080s, fish demand will rise dramatically, the UN predicts.

Oceans under pressure

As Sir David’s film makes clear, we have only just begun to understand the diversity of life that exists in our oceans. But the impacts of humanity both on land and at sea due to our overconsumption of resources, particularly in high-income countries, are plundering and poisoning our oceans and the marine species that oceans are home to.

Scientists warn that current calls for deep-sea mining to meet future resource needs would be catastrophic for marine ecosystems. On this subject, Daniel didn’t mince words. He likened the practice to *“bulldozing an ancient forest... but underwater.”* He went further, explaining: *“Unique habitats that took thousands of years to form are destroyed, and we might lose species or microbes that could hold keys to climate solutions or even medicine.”*

Marine shipping routes are making oceans noisier and more polluted.

"We are at a crossroads, with humanity draining the life from the ocean"



Despite covering 70% of the Earth's surface, less than 3% of the world's oceans are protected, leaving vast areas vulnerable to exploitation.

This reality is highlighted in *Ocean with David Attenborough*, which was released globally on 8 June 2025, for World Oceans Day.

Through spectacular sequences featuring coral reefs, kelp forests and the open ocean, Sir David shares why a healthy ocean keeps the entire planet stable and flourishing. *Ocean* showcases the wonder of life under the seas and exposes the realities and challenges facing our ocean – from destructive fishing techniques to mass coral reef bleaching. Yet the story is one of optimism, with Attenborough pointing to inspirational stories from around the world to deliver his greatest message: the ocean can recover to a glory beyond anything anyone alive has ever seen.

Sir David says: *"In this film, we share some of those wonderful discoveries, uncover why our ocean is in such poor health, and, perhaps most importantly, show how it can be restored to health. This could be the moment of change. Nearly every country on Earth has just agreed, on paper, to achieve this bare minimum and protect a third of the ocean. Together, we now face the challenge of making it happen."*

Few have had a more remarkable career than Population Matters patron Sir David Attenborough, who for more than 70 years has guided us through the wonders of the natural world – and revealed how we are driving its destruction. His new work shows us, undeniably, that one of the most important ecosystems is under critical threat – from us – and it's up to us to save it.

■ Find out more about how we're driving for real change for people and planet at populationmatters.org.

A rise in whale strandings shows how shipping and military sonar disrupt whale navigation. In the same way, it's hard for two humans to hear one another next to a busy road; noise generated by ships can mask sounds that marine mammals use to communicate, navigate, find mates and hunt for food.

This has led to marine species struggling to hunt for the few fish left for them. As referenced in our *Vanishing Icons* report, studies have shown that southern resident orcas have lost 17% of their necessary calorie requirements for six of the last 40 years. Daniel calls for: *"Clear regulations, better noise-reducing technology and more public education to make this invisible threat visible."*

Humanity's unwanted footprint

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch shows our collective impact – a plastic island estimated to be three times the size of France. This rubbish island keeps growing, with over 11 million tonnes of plastic entering the ocean every year, according to the United Nations Environment Assembly.

We now know the inert properties of plastic mean it doesn't degrade, but breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces. Microplastics now contaminate our water and soil, and scientists find them in the stomachs of birds, fish and humans. Sir David's *Blue Planet II* exposed plastic pollution to the world and inspired stronger, more coordinated action on single-use plastics.

Protecting the ocean starts with us

We hope *Ocean with David Attenborough* can spark a conversation about the human population's impact on the world's oceans. The film shows the ocean can recover faster than we expect – but only with urgent, coordinated global action. Daniel adds: *"The ocean needs space, time, and less pressure. Where strong protections exist, marine life has bounced back powerfully."*

We must reduce both population and consumption to bring human impact within sustainable limits and protect marine ecosystems. Life began in the ocean. We must act now to preserve its rich biodiversity before it's too late.

A FAIRER FUTURE FOR ALL POPULATIONS



With a record amount of matched funds pledged, we're counting on our wonderful supporters to help us reach our Christmas Challenge appeal goal this December, explains PM's Fundraising Officer **Anthony Howarth**.

WE ARE EXCITED to announce that we will be running our fifth annual **Big Give Christmas Challenge** this December. This very special fundraising event provides you, our amazing supporters, with a great opportunity to make a real and lasting impact.

What makes the Big Give Christmas Challenge so special is that it is **match-funded**. This means that **every single pound you donate is doubled** without any further cost to you.

From strength to strength

Our annual Christmas appeal has gone from strength to strength, and, for 2025, we have secured our **largest ever match-fund pot, totalling £13,725**. This means that our appeal target for December stands at almost **£27,500** – our largest Christmas appeal goal to date, but one we are sure to reach through the dedication of you – our amazing supporters.

Population Matters receives no external funding – **our work is made possible entirely by you**. This year's appeal, **A Fairer Future for All Populations**, will raise funds for our work into 2026 and beyond. This ambitious programme will include, but is not limited to:

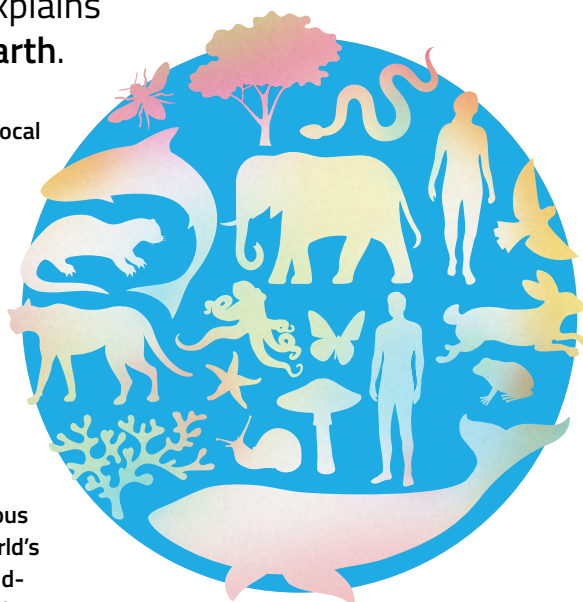
- Advocating for sustainability in global resource use, particularly in the Global North where resource use and consumption are increasingly unsustainable.

- Engaging and partnering with local healthcare professionals across different nations who provide on-the-ground support and have the potential to influence multi-government policy across borders in areas of family planning and SRHR (sexual and reproductive health), highlighting the links between population, health, and the environment.

- In Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, and predicted to be the world's third largest population by the mid-century, we will help support the first national census in 19 years. Providing guidance and monitoring during census delivery, our emerging and ambitious evidence-based research programme will be uniquely placed to analyse the results. Our partnership work in Nigeria in recent years, including in national government with the Nigerian National Population Commission, has been made possible by previous Christmas fundraising appeals and is testament to the benefits of local engagement and national policy influence.

- In East Africa, we will be working with our partner, the Critical Conversations Association (CCA). Through CCA, a Kenya-based collective of individuals, organisations, and institutions, we will launch and sustain critical conversations about exponential population growth, consumption, and sustainable resource use.

- Through our Empower to Plan (E2P) programme, we will continue to share a platform and join forces with grassroots NGOs across the world. In 2025, we considered more than 700 applications for grant support – testament to the excellent work of our E2P programme. We look forward to working with our new partners as we expand across Africa, Asia, the Middle East/North Africa, and South America.



- Through 2026 and beyond, we will continue to pursue our 2025-30 organisational strategy, **All Populations Matter**. We are excited to enter the second year of this plan.

PLEASE REGISTER TODAY

Timing is crucial – your donation can only be made during the appeal week from **2 to 9 December 2025**. As a one-week only appeal, it can be easy to miss the donation window – and miss out on the double value donation match-funding. You can take **immediate action** today by registering your donation in any of these ways:

- Online at populationmatters.org/christmas

- By emailing supporters@populationmatters.org

- By calling a member of our friendly fundraising team on **020 8123 9116**

We will then reserve your donation match-funding ahead of time and send you a reminder when the appeal opens in December. From everyone at Population Matters – **thank you**.

Our Christmas Challenge appeal is a fantastic way to mark the end of the year and get 2026 off to the best possible start. **Your support is crucial!**

Photo by Canva.



Q&A with Moses Odongo from Family Medical Point

With a mission to promote and provide equitable access to healthcare services to underserved communities in Uganda, Family Medical Point's Executive Director reveals how a PM Empower to Plan grant powered the organisation's growth.



Q: How did Family Medical Point (FMP) come to be established, and can you explain its vision and mission?

A: FMP was established out of a deep recognition of the health inequities faced by women, girls, and marginalised communities in Uganda's hard-to-reach settings, particularly fishing landing sites and urban slums. Many of these communities struggle with limited access to quality healthcare, compounded by stigma, poverty, and cultural barriers that prevent individuals from exercising their sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). FMP was created to bridge this gap by combining community-driven approaches with quality clinical services.

Our vision is "a Uganda where everyone enjoys the highest attainable health." To achieve this, our mission is to "promote and provide equitable access to healthcare services to underserved communities." This guides all of our work, from running our medical facility in Entebbe to community outreaches, musawo sessions (*safe dialogue spaces led by health workers*), peer mobilisation, and partnerships with the media. Everything we do is rooted in the belief that every person deserves the right to health and bodily autonomy.

Q: Day to day, what does FMP's work involve?

A: At our medical centre, we provide comprehensive SRHR services, including family planning, post-abortion care, HIV testing, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

Alongside clinical care, we hold community-driven health talks led by trained community peer mobilisers, where women, girls, and youth can openly discuss sensitive topics like contraception, pleasure, and safe abortion without fear or stigma. These events bridge the gap between communities and health facilities by offering information,

referrals, and accompaniment for women seeking care.

To shift harmful narratives, we partner with the media, to support positive, rights-based reporting on SRHR, including abortion and family planning. We further amplify our messages through community radio, digital platforms, and culturally rooted approaches like senga talks (*educating adolescent girls in a variety of sexual topics*). These interventions enable us to address the barriers people in these fishing communities face daily, and ensure that access to SRHR is not just a service, but a right.

Q: FMP began working with PM at the end of 2020 when it received a grant. What has this funding enabled FMP to achieve?

A: The Empower to Plan grant of £5,000 from Population Matters enabled FMP to implement a community-based campaign addressing gender-based violence (GBV) associated with family planning in fishing and slum communities. With this support, FMP recruited, trained, and equipped community peer mobilisers, including survivors, with family planning information packs translated into Luganda. These reached both men and women through non-structured dialogues, door-to-door visits, and group discussions.

The funding also supported the #HerChoiceHerRight campaign, which disseminated messages via community radio broadcasts, posters, brochures, and t-shirts, reaching an estimated 11,300 people. Volunteers worked alongside village health teams and local leaders to educate communities on family planning, debunk harmful myths, and provide information on recourse for women experiencing GBV. Women in need of further care were referred to FMP for counselling and support.

As a result, FMP observed a 20–30% increase in women seeking family planning services, and police records showed a reduction in reported cases of GBV linked to family planning in target areas. Most importantly, women expressed relief as men began engaging in conversations about the benefits of family planning and the importance of ending violence. While these results represent early stages of transformation, they highlight the potential for lasting change when communities are empowered to challenge harmful norms.

Institutionally, the Empower to Plan grant enabled FMP to access funding from the Gaia Foundation, which led to funding from the Safe Abortion Action Fund and then AmplifyChange. That £5,000 powered our growth as an organisation and opened us up to the world.



Photos courtesy of Family Medical Point.

A FAIRER FUTURE FOR ALL POPULATIONS

SAVE THE DATE
and
DOUBLE YOUR
IMPACT!

Photo by Canva.

The **Big Give Christmas Challenge** is back! From **2 to 9 December 2025**, every **donation is doubled** at no extra cost to you, thanks to the magic of match-funding. As 2025 comes to an end, pledging a donation for our annual Christmas fundraiser is a great way to make your gift go so much further and have a real and lasting impact. To avoid missing out, and to help fund our ambitious plans for 2026 and beyond, please reserve your donation with us today. We'll then send you a reminder as the appeal goes live.

You can **register your donation today** in any of these ways:

- Online at populationmatters.org/christmas – or **scan the QR CODE**
- By emailing supporters@populationmatters.org
- By calling **020 8123 9116** and speaking to our friendly fundraising team

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

Scan to
register



Open the camera app
on your phone and
point it at this image



DISCOVER MORE AT [POPULATIONMATTERS.ORG](https://populationmatters.org)

Population Matters is a UK-based charity campaigning to achieve a world where our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other.



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