

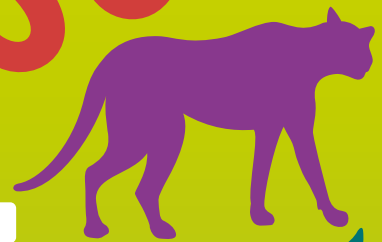
POPULATION MATTERS

Spring 2026

Issue 48



THE FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATURE



Population Matters

contributed to a historic win, which saw the IUCN recognise the crime of ecocide to protect nature

Powerful partnerships

Your support is enabling lasting change for communities directly affected by the Earth's most pressing issues

Protect our precious planet

Eight ways you can help us reach our shared goal of a sustainable world for all populations

**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 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.

Population Matters is a registered charity in England and Wales (1114109) and a company limited by guarantee in England (3019081) registered address: The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.



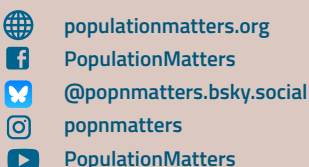
Magazine

Printed in the UK by Jamm Print & Productions using vegetable-based inks on 100% recycled paper.

Design, infographics and illustrations: Miller Design. Editor: Anna Harris

Population Matters Magazine is published twice a year. For e-versions and back copies visit populationmatters.org/members-magazine

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8,289,797,900

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“From attending global events to engaging with our grassroots partners, the Population Matters team is working tirelessly to ensure the issue of population becomes central to the debate on the future of our precious planet”

THE UNITED NATIONS’ weather agency recently warned that the Earth’s climate is further out of balance than at any time in recorded history. Prof Celeste Saulo, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization, commented: *“Human activities are increasingly disrupting the natural equilibrium, and we will live with these consequences for hundreds and thousands of years.”*

While the latest findings are sadly not surprising, they serve to underpin the urgency of the work of PM. And we’ve been taking action. Members of our team and our partners recently attended key global events to ensure the issue of population – the causes, effects and positive solutions – becomes central to the debate on the future of our precious planet.

A first for Population Matters

Our Director of Advocacy and Influence, Jameen Kaur, shares her observations from the most recent International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress (see page 10). Our attendance at this event enabled Population Matters to make essential connections to further our mission and to vote in the councillor election and motion process for the first time. In a watershed moment, Motion 061 – ‘Recognising the crime of ecocide to protect nature’ – was passed by IUCN members. We were delighted to contribute to this historic win for nature.

At the first Conference of the Parties (COP) climate meeting to be held in Brazil, our partners at Iracambi, a Brazilian environmental group, were there to ensure population dynamics had a voice in the room. While this event fell short of unlocking major progress, there were significant gains, including a breakthrough for the Climate Action Agenda (see page 17).

From attending global events to engaging with our grassroots partners, the PM team is working tirelessly to ensure the issue of population becomes central to the debate on the future of our shared planet. Our Director of Research & Learning, Dr Joshua Hill, recently visited Kenya to meet up with our partner, the Critical Conversations Association (CCA), to observe a pioneering community initiative that confronts the impact of population growth (see page 13).

Everything that we’re working on is down to you. Your commitment is having a real impact, and we hugely appreciate what you’re enabling us to achieve, together.

In addition, we’ve redesigned our Empower to Plan initiative (see page 8). Each new partnership will now run for at least two years, with a stronger focus on equity, shared ownership and local leadership, to achieve longer-lasting, sustainable change.

Controversial conversations

‘Population’ continues to be a loaded word, carrying the legacy of ‘population control’ and harmful policies which we do not agree with or support. Instead, we promote population policies that are human rights-centred and consent-based. In fact, leading up to the historic Cairo action programme, adopted in 1994, women’s health advocates promoted what they termed ‘feminist population policy’, which acknowledged population stabilisation as a positive outcome, achieved by focusing on reproductive health and rights, and women’s empowerment. Yet, ‘population’ remains a stigmatised word, and we

completely agree with our patron, Chris Packham (see page 5), who says: *“We’ve still got to have this conversation about how many people can the planet support. It’s still controversial at the moment, but unless we have those conversations in public, it will continue to be controversial.”* To move this vital conversation front and centre, we’re honouring journalists helping to normalise discourse on the causes and impacts of population growth with our new Media Awards. (See page 18).

Indeed, communicating the impact of population growth pressures on the wellbeing of people, nature and planet with greater clarity is essential to furthering our cause. To enable us to generate evidence-based research, which we will use in our advocacy to inform policies, programmes and the resource priorities of governments and civil society organisations, we’ve formed a new research team. (See page 7).

As we continue to strengthen our work – aided by our new Chair, Karin Kanewske Turner (see page 5) – we also take a moment to honour those who have shaped it. We were deeply saddened by the passing of two remarkable patrons of PM – Dame Jane Goodall and Paul Ehrlich, whose legacy we reflect on. (See page 4).

With your help, we will remain focused on honouring their legacy. Everything that we’re working on is down to you – our incredible supporters. Your commitment is having a real impact, and we hugely appreciate what you’re enabling us to achieve, together. Whatever way you can support us – we’ve a whole host of ways to inspire you to get involved on pages 14–15 – we’re profoundly grateful. You really are making a difference for people, nature and the planet. Thank you.

Amy Jankiewicz
CEO, Population Matters

Population Matters news round-up

Remembering two prominent patrons

In recent months, we have said goodbye to two remarkable patrons of Population Matters, Dame Jane Goodall and Paul Ehrlich. Like us, we know many of you will have felt a deep connection to their work, and we wanted to take a moment to reflect on their lives with warmth, respect, and gratitude.



Paul Ehrlich

Dame Jane Goodall inspired generations with her compassion, humility, and enduring sense of hope. Her ability to connect people with the natural world resonated deeply with so many in our

community. She reminded us all that every individual action matters, a belief that continues to sit at the heart of the work we do.

Paul Ehrlich was an influential thinker who helped shape global understanding of the relationship between population, consumption, and the environment. His work encouraged conversations, and many of the ideas he championed continue to inform discussions still happening today.

We will be forever grateful to both Jane and Paul for their generous support of our work. Their belief that change is possible helped strengthen a community of people, like you, who care deeply about



Dame Jane Goodall

protecting our planet and the wellbeing of the people who ultimately depend on it. As we remember them, we do so not only in recognition of their extraordinary contributions, but also in appreciation of the collective effort they helped to inspire. Their legacy lives on through the work we continue to build together. Thank you for being part of that legacy.

Photo by Stuart Clarke.

The national security warning we can't and won't ignore

A UK national security report on biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse – which was only released after a freedom of information request was demanded – has been generating significant discussion, and for good reason.

The UK government's report – *Global Biodiversity Loss, Ecosystem Collapse and National Security* – warns that “every critical ecosystem is on a pathway to collapse”, detailing how the world is already experiencing crop failures, intensified natural disasters, and infectious disease outbreaks that are only expected to worsen.

The report explicitly identifies population growth as a major indirect driver of biodiversity loss, stating: “As the global population grows, reaching 9.7 billion by 2050, the impact of food production on natural systems will intensify and it will become even more challenging to produce sufficient food sustainably”. This connection rarely surfaces in national



security discourse, and the fact that it does here is a meaningful, if still underreported, development.

In a Letter to *The Guardian*, PM's CEO Amy Jankiewicz urged for the taboo of discussing population growth to end, and for the underlying causes to be acknowledged.

She wrote: “Mass-scale expansion of agriculture driven by global population growth risks sacrificing sustainability: forests cleared for farmland, pesticides polluting waterways, and ecosystems pushed beyond recovery, accelerating biodiversity loss. It is a concern echoed by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which identified population growth and GDP per capita as the strongest drivers of carbon emissions. Biodiversity loss cannot be ignored, as it poses an existential risk to geopolitical security and any hope for a peaceful and sustainable future.”

■ Turn to page 10 for details of a landmark ruling recognising ecocide as a crime, to protect nature >>

Key points from the UK national security report

- Ecosystem degradation is occurring across all regions. Every critical ecosystem is on a pathway to collapse (irreversible loss of function beyond repair).
- All countries are exposed to the risks of ecosystem collapse within and beyond their borders.
- There is a realistic possibility that some ecosystems (such as coral reefs in South East Asia and boreal forests) will start to collapse from 2030, and others (rainforests and mangroves) will start to collapse from 2050.
- Cascading risks of ecosystem degradation are likely to include geopolitical instability, economic insecurity, conflict, migration and increased inter-state competition for resources.
- Global ecosystem degradation and collapse threaten UK national security and prosperity. The world is already experiencing impacts, including crop failures, intensified natural disasters and infectious disease outbreaks. Threats will increase with degradation and intensify with collapse. Without major intervention to reverse the current trend, this is highly likely to continue to 2050 and beyond.

Source: HM Government Global Biodiversity Loss, Ecosystem Collapse and National Security Assessment

Photo by Max Chan on Unsplash.

Our message to the UN – we must break the population taboo



Photo by Zoshua Colah on Unsplash.

At the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, 59th session (2026), held this April, PM was delighted to host a well-attended side event.

The *Breaking the Population Taboo: Evidence, Technology and the Future of the Sustainable Development Goals* brought together the Nigerian Population Commission, PHE Ethiopia Consortium and partners to examine how population trends intersect with health, environment, technology and development policy.

The discussion centred on Nigeria and Ethiopia – two countries representing nearly 25% of Africa’s population, and where census data gaps of nearly two decades are undermining national planning at a critical moment. Nigeria’s population has grown from approximately 45 million in 1960 to an estimated 238 million today. Over the same period, Ethiopia’s population has grown from 22 million to 135 million, compounding pressure on already strained health, education and housing systems, as well as driving environmental destruction.

The session made the case for bringing population discussions into mainstream policy, research and climate response planning. Speaking from the event in New York, PM’s Director of Advocacy and Influence, Jameen Kaur, said: “*This was an important discussion about the need for accurate demographic data and raising population up the policy agenda as foundational to achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.*”

Read the latest research

The first 2026 edition of the *Journal of Population and Sustainability* is now available.



This open-access, interdisciplinary journal explores the relationship between human population and environmental pressure. And, while it operates independently, it’s a publication that Population Matters is proud to support, given its value as a space for rigorous research on these connections. The latest issue covers inequality in life expectancy gains in India, how access to safe

and legal abortion shapes reproductive autonomy, and the intersection of population growth with climate policy and sustainable futures, among other topics. You can find it online at whp-journals.co.uk/JPS/index.

Welcome Karin Kanewske Turner



We are thrilled to announce the appointment of Karin Kanewske Turner as the new Chair of Population Matters and leader of our Board.

With over 25 years of experience in global health and development, spanning four continents, Karin’s career reflects her sustained commitment to public health impact and community-led change. She shares our conviction that reproductive choice is a fundamental lever for women’s empowerment, economic strength and environmental sustainability – values that sit at the heart of our mission. Committed to helping families thrive while reducing humanity’s collective footprint, Karin brings a wealth of experience on a global scale and a strategic mindset that will drive Population Matters into a new era.

The elephant in the room



PM patron Chris Packham’s new documentary, *Greenwashed*, is an urgent call to action to tackle the challenges bearing down on humans, wildlife and the planet.

In the film – made in collaboration with physician and filmmaker, Dr Sofia Pineda Ochoa – Chris warns that overpopulation of the planet is the ‘elephant in the room’ when it comes to environmental destruction. Speaking to the *Daily Express*, he said: “*It’s still one of those things where there’s a real taboo about it. We’ve got one planet, and there is only so much we can take out of the ground, out of the sea, out of the atmosphere. We’ve still got to have this conversation about how many people can the planet support. It’s still controversial at the moment, but unless we have those conversations in public, it will continue to be controversial.*” We couldn’t agree more!

■ To watch Chris and Sophia’s new documentary, visit [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) and search for *Greenwashed*.

PM on the ground

Real change starts with understanding the realities that communities face. Some of the PM team recently met up with our partners in Ethiopia and West Bengal, India, to get to grips with the challenges they're facing and the solutions they're developing.

AT THE INVITATION of the PHE Ethiopia Consortium – a network of over 100 organisations undertaking integrated PHE (Population, Health and Environment) work across Ethiopia – Population Matters attended its Annual General Meeting, held in Addis Ababa in March.

PHE is a development approach that addresses the interconnected realities of population, people's health, livelihoods, and the natural resources they depend on simultaneously, rather than in silos. The premise is simple but powerful: that human wellbeing and health, and environmental health are inseparable, and that tackling them together produces greater, more sustainable outcomes for people and planet.

However, while PHE programmes are explicitly designed to work across sectors, health, environment and livelihood programmes typically operate independently, and the interlinkages between them – the very thing PHE seeks to harness – are rarely documented in a way that shows how the pieces connect. This is something the PHE Ethiopia Consortium is keen to address.

At the AGM, PM's Jameen Kaur, Director of Advocacy and Influence, Dr Josh Hill, Director of Research and Learning, and Shweta Shirodkar, Partnerships and Impact Manager, facilitated a session that opened up an honest conversation about the lack of robust evidence on the PHE model. While the work is strong and long-standing, the evidence for it is fragmented and uncoordinated, making it difficult to demonstrate its full value to funders and policymakers.



At the PHE Ethiopia Consortium AGM.

Right now, compelling work is happening across Ethiopia – it just isn't being seen. Delegates pointed to a lack of infrastructure and expertise to collect, and measure evidence of what works. There was a shared sense that stronger programme-level monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) could help fill that gap.

Right now, compelling work is happening across Ethiopia – it just isn't being seen.

Providing better evidence is essential. It would unlock better advocacy – giving organisations a credible, collective voice to take to government and funders – and make a stronger case for investment in the communities PHE programmes serve. It would also enable shared learning across contexts and systems.

Jameen commented: *"We must build harmony in the indicators we use to assess evidence, so that we better understand what evidence is required to bring the changes we need using the PHE model – for people and planet. This will end duplication of resources and siloed ways of working. Achieving this would be the power of this network."*

That sentiment was echoed by Prof Terefe Degefa of Addis Ababa University, whose message was the same: these issues are deeply interlinked, and addressing them separately – whether in research, policy or programmes – misses the point entirely.

Together with the consortium, we are exploring how Ethiopia could be a potential trailblazer on evidence gathering, providing learnings for other countries implementing the PHE model.

A learning visit to India

Shweta also took a trip to India to visit our Empower to Plan partner – Anahat for Change Foundation – in West Bengal's Alipurduar district. This learning visit focused on building a



With Anahat and local communities in West Bengal, India.

grounded understanding of the political, structural, socio-economic and governance realities shaping these communities, and how they play out in everyday life across livelihoods, health, education and access to services.

The Alipurduar communities – predominantly Oraon tribal families – have lived and worked in the region for generations, their livelihoods entirely dependent on tea gardens. However, as climate change drives up temperatures and reduces yields, quality falls, returns shrink, and owners cut costs – including the wages of the people who pick the leaves. Several tea gardens have closed since the 1990s, leaving around 25,000 former tea workers without income.

The poverty that follows is not just economic – it shows up in every measure of human wellbeing. Across West Bengal, the school dropout rate stands at 39%. Among Oraon communities, the under-five mortality rate stands at 96.86 per 1,000 live births – well above the national average. When Anahat surveyed 300 adolescents (aged 10–18 years) before designing their programme, not a single girl could define menstruation, more than half the boys had serious misconceptions about their own bodies, and teenage pregnancy rates were high.

Anahat is doing remarkable work with these young people, building awareness on sexual and reproductive health and rights through Project Jugnu – 'fireflies' – using art and storytelling to open up a dialogue that would otherwise stay silent.

■ Turn to page 9 to discover how Population Matters is supporting Anahat.

Meet our research team

Discover how the work of our new Research Associates, **Dr Prince Asafu-Adjaye** and **Dr Anass Barrahmoune**, is helping to communicate the complex issues surrounding population with greater clarity and precision.

Q: What attracted you to working with Population Matters?

Prince: PM's commitment to sustainable coexistence between people and the natural world aligns with my intellectual curiosity about population and development. The charity's rights-based and informed choice approach to population reflects my belief in self-determination and social justice. PM is a bold organisation, manifested by its willingness to speak openly about population, a topic often avoided in mainstream development discourse. This courage to engage with one of humanity's complex questions is one of the charity's greatest strengths.

Anass: Population change has been central to my doctoral research, which explores the plausibility of a 'depopulation dividend', with Japan as a vanguard case of sustained depopulation. I was familiar with PM's work and the substantial contribution it makes to evidence-informed public debate throughout my PhD, particularly through the *Journal of Population and Sustainability* – the editorially independent, interdisciplinary journal, supported by PM. What's distinctive about PM is its courage in addressing population as a high-impact issue that remains socially and politically sensitive.

Q: What aspects of research are you involved in, and what does this entail?

Prince: I am involved in PM's work on social norms and culture, focusing on how conversations and community-level engagement shape attitudes toward population. At the moment, I am helping to design an assessment on the impact of the Population Conversation Champion Peer Education Programme (PCCPEP), run by our Kenyan partner, the Critical Conversations Association (CCA) (see page 13). Its PCCPEP initiative seeks to "develop and empower youth and a network of peer educators who can launch population-related conversations in their communities". My involvement includes developing the research proposal and designing data collection tools. I'll also

support the training of field assistants to gather data, conduct data analysis, and contribute to writing research reports based on the findings.

Anass: I'm currently focusing on how pronatalist arguments selectively use parts of the academic literature in ways that can obscure or minimise evidence on continued population growth and its interaction with environmental pressures. This entails reviewing and synthesising relevant research; assessing claims against the balance of evidence; clarifying concepts and assumptions (scale, time horizons, and system boundaries); and translating findings into usable outputs that support PM's communications and analysis.

Q: How will this feed into Population Matters' ongoing work?

Prince: Human behaviour and decision making, including fertility choices and attitudes toward the natural environment, are shaped by social norms and cultural contexts. Understanding these sociocultural factors and how they shape the way people think and talk about the connection between population and environmental sustainability, by generating empirical evidence that reflects real-world experiences and community perspectives, is essential. It's how we can move towards PM's vision of a world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other.

Anass: My work supports PM's goals by strengthening the evidentiary basis of its messaging and enabling timely, academically grounded responses to common misconceptions in public discourse. In practice, it intends to help the charity communicate complex population, environment relationships with greater clarity and precision, and provide robust and well-referenced material that can be integrated into reports, briefings, articles, and other outputs used across the organisation's ongoing advocacy and engagement work.

Q: What do you hope your academic input will help achieve?

Prince: Insights from well-grounded research can empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their lives, their wellbeing, and their futures. Through my academic contribution, I hope to generate granular insights that can support grassroots action, ensuring that evidence does not remain abstract, but translates into practical tools that communities and partners can use to drive positive and self-determined change.

Anass: Research that is analytically rigorous while directly relevant to real-world decision-making motivates me. My input will help Population Matters communicate evidence with greater confidence, navigate contested debates with methodological clarity, and contribute to constructive and solutions-oriented discussions that support a sustainable future.

Dr Prince Asafu-Adjaye is a labour market and development researcher specialising in employment and working conditions, informality, and social protection in Africa. He holds a PhD in Development Studies and his work bridges academic enquiry with applied policy, focusing on translating complex social data into insights that inform policy, advocacy and public engagement.



Dr Anass Barrahmoune is a social scientist and demographer whose work sits at the intersection of demographic, societal, and environmental change. He holds a PhD in East Asian Studies and Social Sciences, where he focused on assessing if the ongoing demographic decline in Japan has translated into measurable reductions in human pressures on socio-ecological systems.



The difference you're making for women, girls, and the natural world



Under our new five-year strategy, Empower to Plan will focus on deepening grassroots partnerships to better support the organisations driving change on the ground, explains Partnerships and Impact Manager **Shweta Shirodkar**. She also introduces our four new partners from Egypt, Sierre Leone, Brazil and India.

THANKS TO YOU, our generous supporters, we have joined forces with grassroots NGOs across the world and forged vital partnerships. One of our key initiatives – Empower to Plan – which began in 2017, has supported 22 projects, each lasting six to nine months, across Africa, Asia, and South America. These projects reached over 5,000 people and, together with the efforts of our partners, have worked to advance women's leadership, expand access to reproductive healthcare, and build environmental resilience.

Building on the success of these projects – and everything we've learnt from them – Empower to Plan has been re-shaped to nurture longer-term partnerships that have an enduring impact.

Going forward, Empower to Plan will prioritise continuity, equity, shared ownership, local leadership, mutual accountability, and co-creation. We recognise that lasting change comes from the leadership of communities directly affected by the planet's most pressing issues, and our new approach is designed to

achieve just that. This approach puts communities at the centre – from design through to delivery.

Working with those most impacted by the climate crisis

A central part of this new direction prioritises working with marginalised and underrepresented groups – the rights holders most impacted by and at risk from the climate crisis, and who face significant challenges in exercising their human rights. We will achieve this through mutual co-learning, building and sharing knowledge, and capacity building that is co-created and tailored to partners' needs.

We will also focus on enhancing their leadership, built on lived experience and insights. This will be integrated into our advocacy to expand access to resources, enabling communities to claim their rights, make informed decisions, and shape decision-making agendas that impact their lives and futures.

We have taken great care in selecting our new Empower to Plan partners. In

2024, we invited grassroots groups to submit applications for funding. We received an extraordinary response of over 800 global expressions of interest. Of these, based on our criteria, we reviewed 685 applications in detail.

These applications reflected our mission to tackle the causes and consequences of population growth: strengthening access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), advancing environmental conservation, improving gender equality, and empowering young people. From this pool, we selected four partners to deliver locally rooted, rights-based projects in and with their communities in 2025-26. You can find out more about each of them on these pages.

We're raising funds to support these vital projects via the **Learning for Life Appeal** (see page 15), which we hope you'll be able to support, as we seek to integrate insights, and strengthen partner engagement, to enable lasting, positive change for both people and the natural world.

PARTNER: Mediterranean Youth Foundation for Development (MYF)

Country/region: Egypt/Middle East and North Africa

Focus: Environmental awareness and climate change

- This project is delivering workshops combined with practical environmental action in two contrasting contexts: Cairo (urban, densely populated) and Alexandria (coastal, climate-vulnerable).
- Using insights and findings from workshops to inform advocacy and awareness efforts, with a focus on locally relevant environmental challenges.

MYF is a youth-led non-profit organisation established in 2018 to foster cultural, environmental, and social cooperation across the Euro-Mediterranean region. It focuses on empowering youth and women, especially those with limited opportunities.



Photo Instagram.

PARTNER: Supporting Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED)

Country/region: Sierra Leone/Africa

Focus: Environmental Conservation, Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Education

- This project is protecting at least 100 hectares of mangroves through local governance structures, including establishing local conservation committees and new community by-laws.
- Supporting 50 women with sustainable livelihoods, such as vegetable farming and oyster harvesting, to reduce reliance on mangrove resources.
- Establishing the Mangrove Mothers Circle to link reproductive health, environmental sustainability, and long-term community resilience.
- Delivering education and outreach via community meetings and radio shows.

Mangroves are essential for protecting coastlines, supporting marine life and filtering water supplies – but in Sierra Leone’s coastal Bonthe District, they’re being cleared at an alarming rate. In fact, 25% of Sierra Leone’s mangrove forests have been destroyed in the last 35 years. For already vulnerable communities, mangrove loss means rising seas, stronger storms and increased flooding. SEED is supporting communities across the district with mangrove protection, reproductive health education and training in sustainable alternatives to mangrove use. By supporting communities, we can reduce the pressure on these fragile ecosystems – while improving lives. This is about more than conservation. It’s about creating the conditions for people and nature to thrive together. (See page 19 for our Q&A with SEED’s founder, Mohamed Salia).



Photo courtesy of SEED.

PARTNER: Iracambi

Country/region: Brazil/South America

Focus: Environmental education

- This project is conducting workshops, technical field visits, and community missions with local schoolchildren in the Atlantic Forest region.
- Building a generation of young environmental leaders equipped to understand and respond to socio-environmental challenges in rural and ecologically sensitive contexts.
- Fostering women’s leadership and safe spaces for girls, addressing the undervaluation of women’s roles in environmental action and community decision-making.
- Grounding learning in real ecosystems and livelihoods (reforestation, agroecology, water resources), strengthening the link between theory and practice.



Photo by Igor Rodrigues on Unsplash.

Iracambi is a community of people whose vision is to see the Brazilian Atlantic Forest restored, with prosperous communities living in a flourishing landscape. Iracambi is achieving this via biodiversity conservation, (agroforestry, reforestation, medicinal plants, forest monitoring) and sustainability (community outreach and environmental education). The project emphasises active learning, dialogue, reflection, and participatory evaluation, rather than top-down instruction, to establish a lasting network of young eco-leaders who can influence communities and sustain environmental action over time. (See page 17 for Iracambi’s thoughts on COP30, Brazil).

PARTNER: Anahat for Change Foundation

Country/region: India/Asia

Focus: SRHR education with adolescents from tribal communities in tea estates, West Bengal

- This project is building awareness among adolescents on SRHR, including bodily autonomy, safe and unsafe touch, consent, teenage pregnancy, contraceptive options, and abortion rights.
- Using art, storytelling, and theatre as participatory tools to enable expression, dialogue, and community-level learning around SRHR and wellbeing.
- Developing evidence-informed, art-based advocacy materials to engage wider audiences, including policymakers and government stakeholders.



Photo Instagram.

Anahat For Change Foundation is a women-led, non-profit organisation working at the intersections of gender, health, sustainability, and culture. Partnering with vulnerable communities across India, Anahat co-creates solutions that challenge harmful norms and tackle the systemic roots of gender-based violence via a peer-driven model that builds leadership from within, enabling communities to continue driving change long after projects conclude.

- **DONATE TODAY.** Support the **Learning for Life Appeal** and help empower and educate communities on the causes and consequences of global population growth. To donate, visit populationmatters.org/learning4life.



“The wellbeing of people and nature are inseparable”

Razan Al Mubarak, President of the IUCN



Our Director of Advocacy and Influence, **Jameen Kaur**, shares her observations from the 2025 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress, which saw a landmark ruling recognising ecocide as a crime to protect nature.

EVERY FOUR YEARS, the IUCN World Conservation Congress – the world’s largest and most diverse environmental network, comprising more than 1,400 member organisations, 17,000 experts, including governments/states, government agencies, donors, civil society groups and Indigenous Peoples’ organisations from 160+ countries – meets to review and set priorities for the years ahead. The convening power of the IUCN sets it as the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

Last October, I represented Population Matters at the IUCN’s congress in Abu Dhabi to ensure population dynamics, and their links to environmental sustainability, were integral to conversations, and to scope opportunities with IUCN members to achieve shared objectives. Some standout moments from the event included:

- Meeting the Executive Director of Population Health Environment (PHE) Ethiopia Consortium, and the Ethiopian government. We discussed opportunities for collaboration, and Population Matters was invited to PHE Ethiopia’s Consortium’s AGM (see page 6), where we led a session for their 80+ members on how to gather evidence to demonstrate why PHE models work. We have also started discussions with other PHE Consortiums in the Philippines, to build a body of evidence which will be critical for the changes we seek at both national, regional and global levels.

- We built stronger linkages with IUCN UK co-chairs Stephen Grady and Chris Mahon to better understand how Population Matters can actively engage and inform the work of IUCN UK. We connected with more than 50 IUCN UK members, who highlighted a clear need for better support to address population growth and demographic



Razan Al Mubarak, President of the IUCN.

trends in their conservation and environmental work. We will build on these conversations at the next IUCN UK AGM in May.

- On returning, together with our CEO Amy Jankiewicz, we met with the newly elected IUCN Chair, Ernesto Herrera Guerra, of the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (IUCN’s global expert body). He expressed a keen interest for Population Matters to engage with them on strategising and informing their work.

- We attended a panel on women’s leadership in conservation, where a stark gap emerged – just 15% of conservation organisational leaders are women. Yet, the evidence is loud and clear – when women lead, they prioritise investment that reduces reliance on fossil fuels, achieving cleaner environments faster. We reached out to one of the panellists, Roshani Adhikari Pathak (an environmental journalist, who, at the IUCN congress, became the newly elected Regional



From left to right: Jameen with an Ethiopian government representative, Gebriel Asfaw of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and Endashaw Mogessie of the Ethiopian Population Health Environment Consortium.

“We are not separate from nature; we are part of it, and with that truth comes a responsibility to protect and restore. Only together can we heal the broken bones of people and planet.”

Dr Grethel Aguilar,
Director General of the IUCN

Councillor of the IUCN for South and South East Asia), who agreed to be a Population Matters Media Awards judge (see page 18).

A historic win for nature

Population Matters also, for the first time, voted in the councillor election and motion process – and we are pleased that Motion 061 – ‘Recognising the crime of ecocide to protect nature’ – was passed by IUCN members, which includes governments/states. This is a historic win. Motion 061 called on states to recognise ecocide as a serious crime in national and international law. It has tasked the IUCN’s World

Commission on Environmental Law to produce practical guidance on the scope and application of prosecuting ecocide, including how prosecutions can support ecosystem restoration and safeguard geodiversity, with Council support and Director General dissemination to members no later than one year before the 2029 Congress.

A big thank you to the Stop Ecocide International team for all their hard work in advocating with IUCN members includes governments, to ensure Motion 061 was passed.

A watershed moment

Jojo Mehta, CEO and co-founder of Stop Ecocide International, said: *“This vote is a watershed. IUCN brings together a singularly broad coalition of governments, civil society, Indigenous groups and scientific experts. Its support for recognising ecocide as a national and international crime sends a powerful signal to states and lawmakers worldwide. By drawing a clear boundary in criminal law, it deters reckless decisions, aligns markets with ecological limits, and affirms that communities and ecosystems are entitled to justice when damage is severe and lasting. The direction of travel is clear. Ecocide law is rapidly moving from moral imperative to shared legal priority.”*

Population Matters is well-placed to influence global policy

Our attendance at the event, made possible thanks to your continuing support, demonstrated that there are clear opportunities for Population Matters to engage scholars and policymakers at the intersection of land use, conflict sensitivity, and human and planet wellbeing.

This is where our activities, highlighting the links between the causes and effects of population growth and demographics, sustainable development, and the environment, can help close evidence gaps and influence global policy decisions.

As the President of the IUCN, Razan Al Mubarak, noted: *“The wellbeing of people and nature are inseparable. We meet at a decisive moment, at a time when multilateralism is under strain.”* Her words capture the urgency of the need for our work and our commitment to achieve the required change for a world in which our human population lives fairly and sustainably with nature and each other. All populations matter – we are interconnected, and all species rely on each other. Never has this been clearer.



The power of advocacy

In some parts of Europe, reproductive rights remain fragile, but dedicated activists and medical professionals who share our values are working tirelessly to help women exercise their right to bodily autonomy and choice.

ACROSS EUROPE, access to contraception and reproductive rights varies dramatically. While some countries lead with progressive policies, others impose severe restrictions. This is something we highlighted in our 2021 report *Welcome to Gilead*. Five years later, has anything changed?

The *Contraception Policy Atlas Europe 2026* – an annual report by the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights (EPF) – provides a timely overview. It scores and ranks 47 European countries on contraception access, counselling and government information. This year, France (97.9%) and the UK (95.8%) topped the rankings, offering free consultations, strong public funding and reliable online information. Portugal (93.8%) also performed well, by improving access to modern contraceptives and rising from a score of 82.7% in 2024.

The East-West divide

The picture in other parts of Europe looks very different. A distinct divide exists between the East and the West. Hungary (36.9%), Türkiye (37.6%), Russia (37.8%) and Poland (38.9%) scored poorly, with Slovakia the lowest-ranked country (32.2%). Restrictive policies and a lack of support for contraceptive access contributed to their poor scores, which is having an impact on women's choices. The report also highlights a rise in pronatalist (pro-birth) agendas, pseudoscientific natural family planning initiatives and widespread online misinformation, with evidence-based online resources even actively blocked or removed in some countries.

At the *Contraception Policy Atlas Europe 2026* launch event in Brussels in February, the EPF stated: “*Within the last five years, the overall context around contraception in Europe has changed significantly. The rise of pronatalist policy agendas and their reshaping of reproductive health environments is a palpable development. Especially in countries such as Russia, Slovakia, Hungary and Türkiye,*



Photo by Leonardo Basso for Unsplash.

this has come with increased restrictions on contraceptive supplies, administrative or regulatory barriers, as well as reduced access to public information.”

The Atlas is a reminder that reproductive rights require constant vigilance – and central to driving improvements is advocacy.

“The rise of pronatalist policy agendas and their reshaping of reproductive health environments is a palpable development.”

The European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights

Across Europe, activists, healthcare professionals and advocacy groups are working tirelessly to expand access to contraception, challenge misinformation and confront restrictive policies.

Dr Teresa Bombas, a gynaecologist and obstetrician at Coimbra Hospital and University Centre in Portugal, is President of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health. She advises policymakers on sexual health and has worked to improve contraception access. Dr Bombas says: “*A lot of good work has taken place, but it [the Contraception Atlas] doesn't tell the whole story. Portugal has good laws, but the government doesn't support access, and while the official information [on government websites] has been updated in the last two*

years, we have to optimise the population's access to reproductive health services.”

Challenging barriers

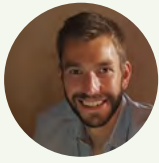
Dr Bombas notes that while Portugal has invested in contraception, abortion laws are still restrictive, with many women having to overcome challenging barriers to exercise their right to bodily autonomy and choice.

As government action stalls, grassroots organisations like ASTRA – the Central and Eastern European Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights – have stepped in. ASTRA coordinates efforts across 20 countries and 40 organisations, including the Federation for Women and Family Planning (FEDERA) in Poland, which fights restrictive abortion laws and provides legal and practical support to women.

In Hungary, Patent – the country's only legal aid organisation focused on women's issues – provides assistance to victims of violence and reproductive rights violations. In Armenia, the Women's Resource Center empowers women through advocacy, education and support.

These groups and networks provide vital support where governments have failed to deliver. FEDERA's Antonina Lewandowska, a PM partner, says: “*The provision of access to reproductive services is the policymakers' duty. Unfortunately, fundamentalists and authoritarian governments do not recognise that fact – but as women's rights activists, we are here to change that.*”

Building a better future



We recently travelled to southern Kenya to observe a pioneering peer-led community initiative that addresses the impact of population growth, reports **Dr Joshua Hill**, Director of Research & Learning.

WE'VE PARTNERED with the Critical Conversations Association (CCA) since 2022. This grassroots organisation, led by young Kenyans, uses art and performance to start conversations about population growth and what this means for environmental sustainability and community wellbeing.

Their model centres on peer education: young people from local communities facilitate 10-day workshops that integrate culturally sensitive messaging with participatory, engaging activities. These peer educators bring lived experience and deep community knowledge, understanding both the challenges their neighbours face and how to approach sensitive conversations with cultural understanding and respect. Through carefully designed programming, they invite participants to reflect on past patterns and envision how the future could be different – all within the framework of environmental stewardship and informed personal choice.

The support from Population Matters focuses on strengthening CCA's community-led model and building evidence of impact, specifically through an academically rigorous study, which is embedded into the design. This evidence will allow the work of the CCA to spread to other communities and inform policy makers and grassroots organisations alike.

Our preliminary observations

■ Participants in the workshops showed measurable shifts in thinking between pre- and post-workshop discussions, particularly regarding their intended family size. One participant told us:



“Before I came to this session, I didn't have in mind family planning, but I saw it's very beneficial and changed my mind.”

■ Following sessions, young people demonstrated an increased awareness of environmental challenges and how population dynamics influence conservation outcomes.

■ Knowledge of contraception varied, indicating opportunities for expanded health education in the programme.

What's next?

The CCA demonstrates the power of youth-led, culturally grounded approaches to complex challenges. Their work creates space for communities to explore connections between personal decisions, environmental pressures, and collective wellbeing. Sam, a CCA Peer Educator, told us: *“Other organisations don't reach the most remote communities. Because we are trained and really understand, we have an impact.”* We'll be continuing our valued partnership with the CCA, with a particular focus on:

■ **Strengthening Measurement & Evidence** We're working with the

THE CHALLENGES FACING KENYA

Population today: 58m
Population projected by 2100: 100m+

■ Research suggests around 25% of young women in Kenya lack access to family planning. Abortion is legal in Kenya, but a combination of restrictive laws and social stigma means many people cannot openly and effectively access it.

■ As the population grows, challenges for space bring humans into closer contact with wildlife. These challenges are intensified by climate change, creating an escalating cycle whereby wildlife and humans are brought into ever-closer contact, at a detriment to both.

■ Youth unemployment is estimated at around 38% and is hitting rural communities hardest.

team to develop academically robust frameworks for impact evaluation, including support for pathways to academic publication.

■ **Deepening Programme Analysis** Together, we're refining methods to assess how workshops influence participants' perspectives and decision-making over time.

■ **Expanding Reach** We will support the recruitment and training of new peer educators and facilitate partnerships with other organisations working on related issues.

Extending our approach

Our grassroots partners are a reminder that sustainable change requires locally rooted leadership paired with rigorous evaluation. Your support helps grassroots organisations like the CCA expand their reach and build the evidence base for community-led solutions and is hugely appreciated. Our aspiration is that this model and approach can be extended throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.



take action

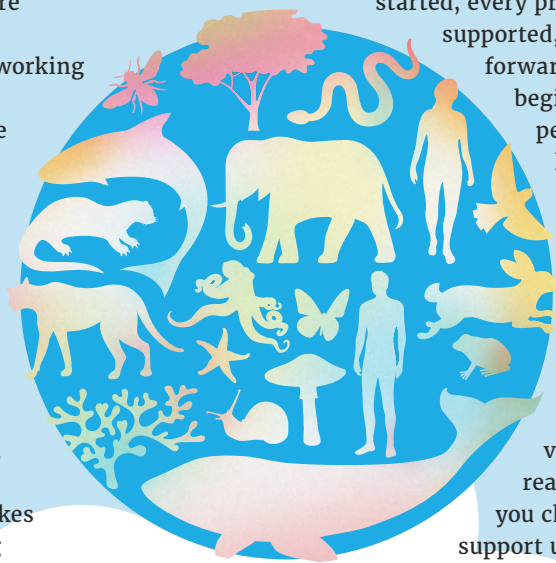
How you can help protect our precious planet



Without your continued support and generosity, we simply wouldn't exist. You enable Population Matters to push for a sustainable world for all populations – and there are lots of ways you can get involved, explains Individual Giving and Legacies Manager, **Emma Bowles**.

A FAIRER, MORE SUSTAINABLE

world isn't just a vision - it's something you are helping to build. Together, we're working towards a future where people live in balance with nature and with each other. At a time when growing pressure on the planet is driving climate change, biodiversity loss, and inequality, your support makes practical, lasting solutions possible. Because of you, we can inspire change, share knowledge, and champion ways of



living that protect both people and the natural world. Every conversation started, every project supported, every step forward and it all begins with people like you. There are many ways to get involved, and each one helps turn this shared vision into reality. However you choose to support us, you are making a real and meaningful difference. Thank you for being part of this.

SWAP TRADITIONAL CARDS FOR E-CARDS

Birthdays, special events, or to say thank you – letting someone know you're thinking of them is a very nice thing to do, but why not swap posting a traditional card for an e-card and support Population Matters?



■ Visit dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/population-matters, choose your design, write your personalised message, make your donation and share your e-card. It's as easy as that!

SHOP FOR GOOD

Did you know that you can raise money for us simply by shopping? All you need to do is sign up to EasyFundraising (for free), where more than 8,000 retailers (including John Lewis, Argos, Etsy, trainline, Dunelm and Pets at Home) donate a percentage of your online purchases to a registered charity or community group of your choice.

■ Register at easyfundraising.org.uk, select Population Matters, click through to the Easyfundraising app or website, and shop as usual. We'll then get between 0.5 to 10% of the purchase price passed to us as a donation, at no additional cost to you.



LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to Population Matters, you have the power to reflect your values and help build a thriving future for people and planet. Legacy gifts have already helped us to influence international policy through work with the UN and national governments, fund grassroots organisations delivering real change and raise public awareness of the vital links between population, sustainable development, and the natural world.

■ Whether you're ready to include Population Matters in your will or are simply exploring the idea, we're happy to answer your questions in complete confidence and without obligation.

We'd be honoured to thank you personally and keep you updated on the difference your future legacy will help make. Visit: populationmatters.org/yourlegacy, contact me at: emma.bowles@populationmatters.org or call 020 4552 5115.



Background image iStock. Photos by Vitaliy Gariiev on Unsplash.

SUPPORT THE LEARNING FOR LIFE APPEAL

Is educating people about population, biodiversity, and climate important to you? Our community-led **Empower to Plan** programme supports projects across Africa, Asia, and South America. These projects don't impose answers. Instead, they share knowledge about reproductive health, environmental protection, climate resilience, and human rights, so that people can make informed choices for themselves, their families, and their environments. (Find out more about our partners that this appeal is supporting on pages 8-9 and 17).



■ By supporting the Learning for Life Appeal, you're not just making a donation – you're helping someone learn, shaping decisions that protect nature and strengthen communities. **Donate today at populationmatters.org/learning4life or call 020 4552 5142.** Thank you for your kind support.

TAKE UP A CHALLENGE

Last October, PM supporter Marc Braddock spent a month walking nearly 800km along the Camino de Santiago – from the French side of the Pyrenees to Santiago in western Spain – to raise funds for our work. Marc says: "It seemed like a good opportunity to use my walk to connect people with an organisation that does important work.



If Sir David Attenborough supports this organisation, then maybe his contribution to our understanding of the natural world is enough to encourage people to make a donation towards my fundraising target, and/or subscribe to Population Matters."

Marc raised over £650 for PM, and you can sponsor him by visiting his page at the bottom of populationmatters.org/fundraise. We'd also like to give a shout-out to supporter Lili Edmunds, who ran the Vitality London 10k in September. Lili raised an amazing £410 – double her original fundraising target. She told us: "Population Matters' projects strongly resonate with me, tackling the causes and effects of human population growth and its impact on the natural world."

■ We're so proud of our fundraisers' achievements. Perhaps they've inspired you to take on your own challenge? Drop us an email at supporters@populationmatters.org to find out how you can get involved.

SET UP A REGULAR DONATION

Wherever you live in the world, you can set up a regular monthly or annual donation to Population Matters. Regular donations help us to plan ahead and commit to long-term projects – £20 a month really adds up over time, meaning your contribution will have a significant, sustained impact. Every single donation is hugely appreciated.



■ Visit populationmatters.org/donate to find out more, drop us an email at supporters@populationmatters.org, or call us on 020 8123 9116.

SPREAD THE WORD

People who hear and understand the facts about population and our environmental crisis are often shocked, but almost always recognise that they are true. And, when they learn about the effective, ethical and positive solutions to unsustainable population, they support them. Spreading the word to others is one of the most effective steps you can take to generate support for this cause and bring about the changes that are needed. There are lots of ways you can share vital messages to inspire others to take action.



■ **Share our Population Explorer** – This interactive online tool enables people to explore the impact of population growth using interactive maps and quizzes. Find it at explore.populationmatters.org.

■ **Share our population quiz and challenge** your friends and family to have a go. Find it at populationmatters.org/poptest.

■ **Share our graphics** – We have many eye-catching graphics that help explain the population case clearly. Download them for free at populationmatters.org/campaign-graphics and share on your social media channels.

■ **Share our social media posts** – Whether you follow us on Facebook, Bluesky, Instagram or YouTube, share the posts you think your friends might be interested in. It could spark some very interesting debates!

REGISTER FOR OUR UPCOMING APPEAL AND DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

We've another exciting fundraising appeal coming up in June to fund our future plans, and we'd love to count on your support. It's a match-funded appeal, which means that every single pound you donate is doubled, without any further cost to you.



■ You can register your donation by emailing supporters@populationmatters.org. Alternatively, call our friendly fundraising team on 020 8123 9116. We'll then reserve your donation match-funding and send you a reminder when the appeal opens in June. From everyone at Population Matters – thank you.

Tomorrow's world, today's choices: the power of giving across generations



Every supporter plays a vital role in building a fairer and more sustainable future. Whether through donations, sharing our message or talking about global challenges at home, your actions help shape the world that future generations will inherit, writes **Paula Mignucci**, Senior Philanthropy Manager.



PHILANTHROPY is not only financial. It reflects the values we pass on and the hope we hold for people and planet.

Many supporters tell us that conversations with children, grandchildren and friends spark a deeper interest in sustainability. Discussions about climate change, fairness, population pressures, or empowering women and girls nurture awareness and a shared commitment to protecting the natural world.

Why multi-generational family giving matters

Meaningful change often begins with a simple conversation at home. When families reflect together, they often discover common hopes: the empowerment of women, thriving communities living within environmental limits, and the protection of biodiversity.

Acting on these shared values strengthens family bonds and shows younger generations how they can help create positive change. Small conversations today can shape the choices that transform tomorrow.

Ways to give together

More families are making philanthropy a shared experience. Whether through personal donations, major gifts, donor-advised funds or family foundations, giving together can create lasting

impact. These discussions often begin simply: What matters most to us? What kind of future do we want to help create?

Meaningful change often begins with a simple conversation at home.

Families support Population Matters in many ways. Some choose to fund our advocacy and influence work, which helps ensure sustainability, reproductive rights and environmental protection remain central in public and political conversations. Others are inspired by our evidence-based

research, which deepens public understanding of how population trends, consumption and ecological pressures interact.

Inspiring the next generation

Multi-generational giving is built on a simple belief: a better world is possible. By sharing values and acting together, families help ensure that people and nature can thrive side by side.

■ If you would like to explore how your family can support our work, I would be delighted to have a chat with you. You can reach me at paula.mignucci@populationmatters.org.

KEY TRENDS IN GLOBAL GIVING

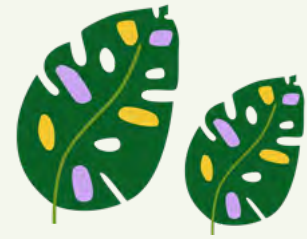
- In the UK, only around **6% of charitable donations go to environmental and conservation causes**¹. Environmental funding remains a small share of overall giving.
- The UK ranked **64th out of 101 countries for generosity in 2024**², showing that even established giving cultures have room to strengthen sustained engagement.
- **64% of adults worldwide donated money in 2024**³. Giving is widespread globally, but where funds are directed matters for long-term sustainability.
- In the USA, charitable giving reached **\$592.5 billion in 2024**, the second-highest level ever recorded⁴. Yet only a small proportion supports environmental or systemic change causes.
- Globally, **less than 2% of philanthropic funding goes to climate mitigation**⁵, and only around **8% supports gender equality and reproductive health**⁶.

The challenges shaping a fair and sustainable future remain amongst the most underfunded. Multi-generational giving offers families the opportunity to help close that gap and shape a world that future generations deserve.

“COP30 is over, but our work is not”

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

At the first Conference of the Parties (COP) climate meeting to be held in Brazil, discussions were intense, and a new Climate Action Agenda was created. But will it deliver?



THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) COP30 climate meeting, held in November 2025, aimed to move from pledges to action regarding the commitments outlined in the Paris Agreement. This legally binding international treaty, which saw 200 countries agreeing to limit global warming to well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels, was adopted back in 2015. Yet, emissions and global temperatures remain on the rise, and climate plans across the world have fallen short of the targets set. Could the discussions in Brazil turn things around?

Held in Belém, on the edge of the Amazon rainforest, delegations from more than 190 countries attended the conference, with politicians and diplomats joined by scientists and campaigners, along with more than 3,000 Indigenous leaders.

Our partners at Iracambi, a Brazilian environmental group championing climate education for young people, were on the ground, ensuring population dynamics had a voice in the room. Gabriela Soares, Iracambi’s research coordinator, and Binka Le Breton, responsible for Iracambi’s international relations, proposed an essential dialogue between women all over Brazil. The panel ‘Women for Restoration: Paths to Sustainability, Bioeconomy, and Public Policies,’

discussed the essential role of women in ecological restoration.

Nations divided

The conference was marked by intense negotiations and a divide between nations pushing for urgent action and those resisting, particularly on fossil fuels. Key highlights included:

- A coalition of over 80 countries, led by Brazil and supported by the EU, pushed for a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuels. However, the legally agreed text did not fully secure a universal commitment to phase them out.
- Negotiators agreed to triple adaptation finance (funding directed at building resilience to climate change impacts) to \$120 billion per year and adopted 59 indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation.
- An agreement was reached to enhance technical assistance, capacity-building and knowledge sharing, via a new mechanism: the Belém Action Mechanism (BAM) for a Global Just Transition to support countries in protecting workers and communities as they shift to clean energy.
- Recognising the importance of Indigenous culture and land to addressing the climate crisis, 10 new Indigenous territories have been created,

one of which encompasses over 78% of the Amazon National Park.

Commenting on COP30, Pim Valdre, Head of Climate & Nature Economy at the World Economic Forum – a global platform for cooperation between business, government, civil society and academia to shape progress – said: “While it delivered a negotiated outcome and sustained global climate collaboration, it fell short of unlocking major progress.” On a more positive note, the Forum also noted: “COP30 saw a breakthrough for the Climate Action Agenda, which rose from the margins to the forefront, now recognised as essential for catalysing solutions for real economy transformation.”

A dangerously wide gap

Closing the conference, António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, said: “I cannot pretend that COP30 has delivered everything that is needed. The gap between where we are and what science demands remains dangerously wide. COP30 is over, but our work is not.”

Iracambi’s Binka Le Breton commented: “Tens of thousands of global citizens met, made alliances, and marched for climate justice. Particularly notable was the massive presence of many sectors of the population most affected by climate change: indigenous groups, youth and women. And the outcome? Adaptation finance was a thorny issue, insufficiently resolved. The movement to phase out fossil fuels was fiercely debated by a massive delegation of lobbyists from the industry, but hope was restored by a last-minute move by Colombia and the Netherlands to continue working on the issue in Colombia in 2026. Brazil launched the Tropical Forests Forever initiative, great progress was made on including the role of the oceans in Nationally Determined Contributions, and, when negotiations stalled, the Brazilian concept of ‘mutirão’ brought fractious parties together in a spirit of collaboration. We would like to thank Population Matters for helping to facilitate Iracambi’s participation in COP30.”



Photo courtesy of Iracambi. Illustration by Emily Sandova on Unsplash.

POPULATION MATTERS MEDIA AWARDS 2026



We're honouring journalists helping to normalise discourse on the causes and impacts of population growth, explains Madeleine Hewitt, Campaigns and Media Officer.

THE POPULATION MATTERS

MEDIA AWARDS (PMMA) recognise journalistic excellence on one of the most underreported stories of our time – the causes and effects of population growth on the environment, resources, gender inequality, reproductive rights, and sustainable development.

We're celebrating journalists who highlight the connections between population, sustainable development, and the environment – while telling the memorable human stories behind the numbers. A global initiative, we have sourced submissions from media outlets around the world to be nominated for an award in one of four categories: Print, Broadcast, Audio and Digital.

Media awards that focus on population

'Population' is a loaded word. It carries the legacy of laws and policies that weren't centred on human rights, and it's often stigmatised or misunderstood. Yet evidence from around the world shows that rights-centred approaches can tackle the causes and effects of unsustainable population growth – improving outcomes for people, wildlife, and the planet.

The vital role of journalists

Journalists are vital catalysts for change. By reporting on human

stories, they help normalise the conversation around population – and only by having that conversation can we prioritise the rights-based solutions we urgently need to ensure our human population can live fairly and sustainably with each other and nature.

Submitted pieces must cover how either the underlying causes or effects of human population growth has impacted one or more of the following: the environment, climate change, biodiversity loss, reproductive rights, or sustainable development.

Our diverse judging panel includes esteemed individuals with decades of experience in media and advocacy, bringing meaningful change through impactful storytelling. Between them, they represent different global regions, showcasing the international scope of the awards, celebrating impactful journalism on population on the ground.

■ Nominations closed at the end of March, and the shortlist will be announced in June 2026. We'll announce the winners on **World Population Day – 11 July 2026**. Visit populationmatters.org/pm26 for more details and follow **#PMMA** on our social media channels for updates and a watch-along.

THE JUDGING PANEL

■ Comfort Mussa

Founder and Editor of SisterSpeak237, Cameroon, Central Africa



■ Josefina Salomón

Journalist, Editor, Director, In.Visibles, Argentina, South America



■ Makmid Kamara

Regional Director, Africa & the Middle East, International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM), Ghana, West Africa



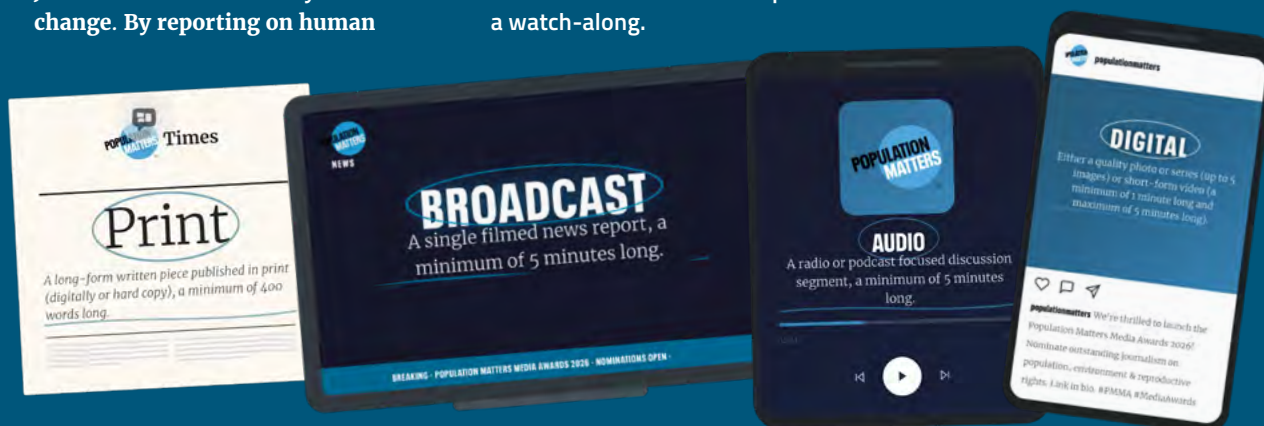
■ Rasheedat Oladotun-Iliyas

Journalist at Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, West Africa



■ Roshani Adhikari Pathak

Regional Councillor of IUCN and Environmental Journalist, Nepal, South Asia



Q&A with Mohamed Salia from SEED



Meet **Mohamed Salia**, founder of our partner SEED, which works to empower individuals and communities to build resilient livelihoods, claim their social rights, and create sustainable pathways out of poverty.

Q: How did Supporting Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED) come to be established?

A: SEED was born out of lived experience and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable populations. We envision a poverty-free world where women, children, youths and people with disabilities have the opportunity to attain their fullest potential. Our mission is to advocate, empower and improve the socio-economic status of the marginalised, and promote the social rights of women and children.

Based in Sierra Leone, a country rich in natural and mineral resources, we recognise that environmental sustainability is inseparable from human development. Poor and marginalised communities are often the most dependent on natural resources for survival and, at the same time, the most affected by environmental degradation. This creates a cycle of vulnerability that undermines livelihoods and wellbeing. SEED integrates environmental protection into all aspects of our work, with a strong focus on climate-smart agriculture, sustainable land use, and gender-responsive approaches that acknowledge the disproportionate impact of environmental challenges on women.

Q: What does SEED's work involve?

A: Our mission is rooted in grassroots action. We believe that lasting development happens when people are equipped with the skills, resources, and opportunities to drive change for themselves. Through income-generating initiatives, sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship development, education, and community engagement, SEED supports individuals to become active agents of economic and social transformation. Providing business skills training and startup capital to vulnerable women to start or expand

small enterprises. Mobilising and training communities to enforce local bylaws for mangrove conservation and environmental protection. Teaching women to produce cooking briquettes from agricultural waste, reducing mangrove cutting while creating livelihoods, and educating them on accessing sexual, reproductive health and family planning services.

Q: How did your partnership with Population Matters begin?

A: In 2025, I submitted an application on behalf of SEED for an Empower to Plan grant, as much of SEED's work aligns closely with the initiative's objectives, and with the broader mission that Population Matters is advancing globally. A few months later, we received the news that we'd been selected from hundreds of submissions from around the world. This brought great excitement to our team and the communities we serve. The grant arrived at a critical moment, enabling us to launch a project we had long been eager to begin.

Q: What has the Empower to Plan grant enabled SEED to achieve?

A: It has been a catalyst for implementing our project, 'Promoting Community-Led Mangrove Conservation and Biodiversity Protection'. The initiative integrates

sustainable mangrove conservation, livelihood improvement, and expanded access to sexual and reproductive health and family planning services.

We also established Mangrove Forest Co-Management Committees composed of local chiefs, women, youth, people with disabilities, and a representative from the local government council. These committees support the development and enforcement of community bylaws for mangrove conservation and environmental protection.

We also created Mangrove Mothers Circles (MMC), bringing together young mothers, traditional birth attendants, and health workers who discuss family planning, reproductive health, and the link between smaller family sizes, sustainable mangrove use, and long-term community resilience. Additionally, oyster harvesting groups are being formed to train women in sustainable oyster production, reducing mangrove cutting while expanding alternative livelihood opportunities. The project has also strengthened partnerships with the local council to ensure sustainability beyond the project lifespan.

Q: What are SEED's hopes for the future?

A: SEED is driven by the hope of a better world where all people can live independently in justice, good health and peace. We believe that by our activities, we can turn that hope into action.



Photos courtesy of SEED.

LEARNING FOR LIFE APPEAL

INSPIRE LEARNING. EMPOWER CHOICE. PROTECT OUR PLANET.

POPULATION MATTERS

TM

As populations grow, so does the pressure on our planet. But knowledge changes everything.

Support the Learning for Life appeal and help provide access to reproductive health, climate resilience, and environmental protection.

Be part of the change

DONATE TODAY



SCAN HERE



Populationmatters.org/learning4life



020 8123 9116

Thank you!

