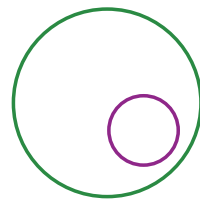


HEALTHY THINKING:

The role of family planning in environmental policy



THRIVING
TOGETHER
Healthy People · Healthy Planet

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THRIVING TOGETHER

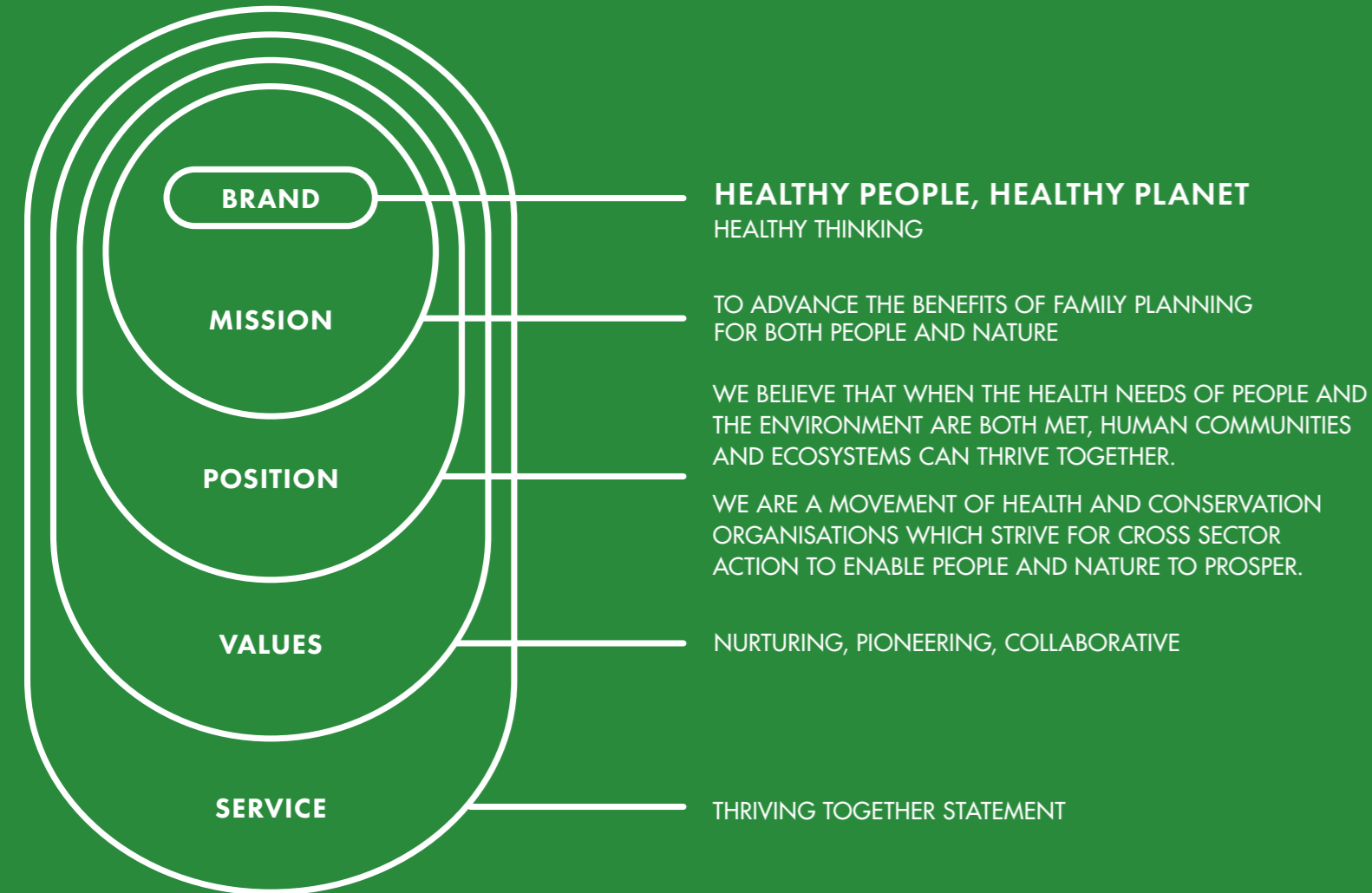
Thriving Together is a diverse alliance of over 150 organisations working in 170 countries. Whether their work has a focus on conserving endangered species, providing family planning services, restoring habitats, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights or a range of other human and environmental health issues, they all agree with the *Thriving Together* statement.

At the heart of the statement is the widespread agreement, for the first time, that removal of barriers to family planning are critically important not only for women and girls, but also for environmental conservation and biodiversity.



Photo: Shutterstock

BRAND ON A PAGE





HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY PLANET

Our planet faces many challenges. Not least amongst them are the pressures our actions place on ecosystems and natural resources, leading to biodiversity loss and climate change. We ignore this at our peril; our future health depends on the health of our planet. At the same time, millions of women and girls across the planet face an unacceptable array of hurdles preventing them from accessing contraceptive counselling and services and attaining gender equality. This also jeopardises their health and wellbeing, and that of their families. By meeting the health needs of these human communities, we can not only meet their future needs, but those of our planet's ecosystems too; by advancing reproductive health and rights, we can empower healthier communities, enabling both people and planet to thrive.

There are many barriers to reproductive health and rights, including years of sectors working in silos. We believe that a fundamental way to overcome these barriers to family planning is by working together and acting together across both health and conservation sectors. If we come together and engage in what we call, 'Healthy Thinking', we believe we can create the prosperous future for people and nature that everyone wants.

THIS IS OUR 6 POINT 'HEALTHY THINKING' MANIFESTO TO ENSURE A HEALTHY PLANET WITH HEALTHY PEOPLE:

- Healthy thinking is providing unrestricted access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- Healthy thinking is supporting reproductive health and reproductive rights, so every girl and woman can choose freely if, when and how many children to have.
- Healthy thinking is allowing girls to complete their education through the avoidance of unintended pregnancies.
- Healthy thinking is ensuring universal understanding of how important family planning is to both human and environmental health.
- Healthy thinking is integrating reproductive health actions with conservation and natural resource management actions.
- Healthy thinking is recognising that people working in human and environmental health can achieve more together.



Nursing students role play promoting family planning to different groups. This group are acting as soldiers.

HOW WE TALK



LANGUAGE AND MOVEMENT BUILDING TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO FAMILY PLANNING

Words matter. Even with the best of meaning and intention we can turn people away simply by using a word or phrase that suggests something they find unpleasant, uncomfortable, or even abhorrent.

The topic of family planning illustrates this, especially when paired with one of the most sensitive conversational topics: human population. Those who work on these issues have found ways to steer clear of language that thwarts conversation rather than encourage it. This short statement is designed to make clear what has been learned and to give guidance for use in speaking about Thriving Together. To help people and nature thrive together healthy thinking is needed. And healthy thinking requires healthy speaking.

Let's start with who we are, what we are saying, and what we mean: We are a movement of health and conservation organisations which strive for cross-sector action to enable people and nature to prosper. We believe that when the health needs of people and the environment are both met, human communities and ecosystems can thrive together. We seek to

Nursing students complete their exam on contraceptive methods.

advance the benefits of family planning for both people and nature. We aim to see the removal of all barriers to family planning as a fundamental strategy for assuring that healthy people live on a healthy planet, one with a rich, ongoing and sustainable array of species and ecosystems supporting human and all life.

Family planning is, quite simply, the use of contraception to time wanted pregnancies and to avoid unintended ones. Not all people using contraception are planning to have a family, of course, but the term is commonly used and well understood, and we apply it here.

Barriers to family planning can be anything from a lack or inaccessibility of quality services and contraceptive methods in a community to misinformation or social pressure not to use contraception. We seek to remove all such barriers and to enable a world in which effectively all pregnancies occur only when wanted by individuals and couples. By preventing unintended pregnancy, family planning enables and promotes healthier lives for women and girls, unhindered completion of schooling, greater gender equality, broader and more diverse community involvement in conservation, lower fertility, and slower growth of population.

A primary threat to Uganda's Grey Crowned Crane (Balearica regulorum) is wetland encroachment. When women and couples face barriers to family planning, and have larger families as a result, greater pressures are placed on both families and wetland ecosystems.





Slower growth of population is an all but inevitable outcome of removing barriers to family planning. But it is not the objective and it needs no emphasis, beyond provision of basic information on data related, for example, to fertility and population size and projected growth. Terms like “population control” and “overpopulation,” in particular, have no place in our conversations. There’s no way to *control* human population, and we wouldn’t want to do it even if we could. “Control” implies governments violating reproductive rights by coercing or strongly pressuring people to have fewer or more children.

The point of removing barriers to family planning is precisely the opposite: to ensure the exercise of reproductive rights by all, a right recognized for more than a half century by the world’s nations. Decisions on whether to have a child are not just *best* left to individuals and couples—they belong *solely* to individuals and couples. In acknowledging this principle and measuring policies, programs and projects by this standard, conservationists ally themselves with the broader communities promoting health, human rights and gender equality. We all thus stand on safe ground.

Our cause is the sustainable compatibility of healthy people and a healthy planet. Removal of all barriers to the use of family planning is one measure among many to ensure this compatibility. It is a catalytic one with diverse and powerful benefits. We seek to see this reality lodged permanently in the work of conservation for a world perpetually rich in health, well-being and life for all.

A Margaret Pyke Nurse presents on the range of health and non-health benefits of family planning.

STATEMENT

MORE THAN 150 ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

Thriving Together: Environmental Conservation and Family Planning

People and nature are interdependent, and health underpins both. Human communities and ecosystems best support each other when the needs of each are met in tandem.

WE KNOW THAT:

- Successful biodiversity conservation requires taking into account people, our health, and our interactions with the natural world.
- The United Nations considers it likely that the world population will rise from 7.7 billion today to 9.8 billion by 2050. Most of this growth will be in low and middle income nations.
- Poor rural communities in developing nations face the greatest barriers to use of and access to reproductive health services, including family planning. These barriers prevent women from choosing freely when and whether to have children, threaten family health, create challenges for girls who want to complete their education, and lead to higher levels of fertility and more rapid rates of population growth.
- Poor rural communities often depend most directly on natural resources for their livelihoods, food, water, shelter and cultural practices. When localised, or combined local and global human pressures on ecosystems intensify, both community health and environmental health suffer.
- There is very often an overlap of areas facing the greatest need for improved reproductive health services and for conservation.
- Family planning contributes to women's empowerment, improves family and general health, advances education and life opportunities and, by slowing population growth, eases pressures on wildlife and ecosystems. Sustaining functional, biodiverse environments becomes less plausible in some areas if population growth follows average UN projections.
- As agreed at the 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development, family planning must be grounded in human rights and reproductive intentions, the fundamental basis for collaborative cross-sector activities.
- Some conservation and reproductive health organisations have joined forces to combine activities. Project data shows this has led to increased family planning use, improved health and gender relations, and increased support for and participation in conservation. These multisector approaches can be more cost-effective, and generate more sustainable results.

WE BELIEVE THAT:

- Like education and nutrition, family planning is fundamental to human dignity and critical for human health and development.
- Population data are among the relevant evidence when considering health and conservation action.
- Increasing human pressures are among the many challenges facing planetary health. By harming ecosystems we undermine food and water security and human health, and we threaten habitats and species. Ensuring family planning is available to all who seek it is among the positive actions we must take to lessen these pressures.
- Integrating reproductive health improvements with sustainable natural resource management is a valuable development approach.

We acknowledge that the future health of our planet has never been more uncertain, and that the health of people and ecosystems are connected. The Sustainable Development Goals call for integrated solutions. We work in health, conservation and related fields and believe that by sharing information and working together on strategic projects and policies we can help human communities and their ecosystems thrive.

Encouraging men to be supportive of their partners' reproductive health choices is one of many ways to respond to barriers to family planning.



LOGO



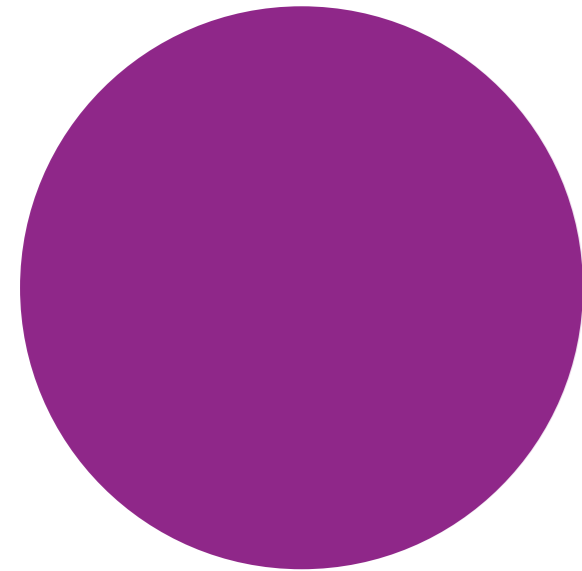
Our logo is composed of two circles. The outer circle denotes our planet, whilst the inner circle symbolises the people on the planet.

The inner circle is placed symbolically within the outer circle to represent the placement of a baby within a mother's womb.

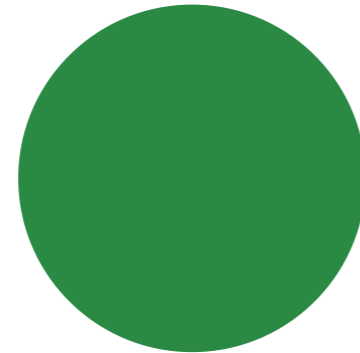


COLOUR PALETTE

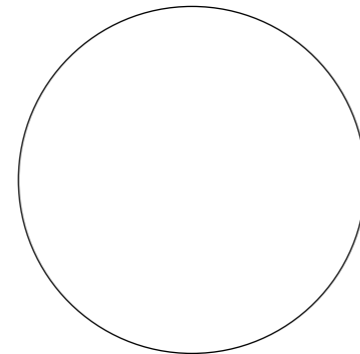
The colours of the logo, white, purple and green are a natural evolution of the original suffragette movement (white, purple and green) and the colours of reproductive health (purple and white), used by family planning organisations like the *Margaret Pyke Trust* (see page 25).



CMYK 52 100 05 00
RGB 143 39 137
HEX #8F2789



CMYK 83 22 100 08
RGB 42 138 67
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CMYK 0 0 0 0
RGB 255 255 255
HEX #FFFFFF



Photo: Robert Harding/Alamy Stock Photo

THANK YOU



Photo: UN Photo/Ray Witlin

Thriving Together is a campaign led by the Margaret Pyke Trust



committed to advancing contraception

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