



# SIERRA CLUB GLOBAL POPULATION & ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

## The Fate Of The World Is In Your Hands And In Your Pants

Each year, 80 million people are born onto a planet of more than seven billion where resources like safe drinking water and food are often scarce. At the same time, people everywhere have difficulty accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services. To achieve a sustainable future, we must address the root causes of environmental degradation—including population growth and overconsumption of natural resources—and ensure women and families can voluntarily determine the number, timing, and spacing of their children.

**The Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program addresses these challenges.** For more than 40 years, Sierra Club activists have worked to protect the environment and preserve natural resources for future generations by advancing reproductive health and sustainable development initiatives.

### HOW WE ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS

**Increase access to voluntary family planning services & comprehensive sex education.** More than 222 million women<sup>1</sup> worldwide have expressed a desire to make decisions about their childbearing but lack access to contraceptives, method of choice, or the power to make the decision for themselves.

Increased access to voluntary family planning is the most effective way to meet these needs, thus slowing population growth, improving individual and community health, and facilitating sustainable development. Women and men who choose the number and timing of their children tend to have smaller, healthier families.

**Advocate for women's and girls' basic rights, including healthcare, education, & economic opportunity.** Women make up two-thirds of the world's poorest people<sup>2</sup> and

are more likely than men to be poor, malnourished, and illiterate. Women typically have less access to medical care, property ownership, and employment. Women are also disproportionately affected by climate disruption and changes to clean water access, fuel availability, and agricultural yields.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, advancing sustainable development policies domestically and internationally, reducing global poverty, and supporting the trend toward slower population growth must start with women's empowerment and a focus on education. We must empower women to make the reproductive health decisions that are right for them, starting by ensuring quality education for girls and women—including a comprehensive approach to sexual education.

**Empower the next generation of young leaders who understand the connection between the health of people & the planet.** Almost half of the global population is under the age of 25.<sup>4</sup> The Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program offers fellowships, internships, and trainings for young people from across the country and around the world, giving participants a chance to gain information and skills to effectively link reproductive

health, family planning, climate disruption and sustainable development. These young people then return to their campuses and communities as empowered leaders and activists. After successful completion of our youth fellowship, fellows receive a stipend to implement their own campaigns to advance population, reproductive health, and environmental issues.<sup>5</sup>



### Raising public awareness of wasteful resource

**consumption.** Although the U.S. comprises only five percent of the world's population, we use 25 percent of the world's energy. The ever-accelerating human consumption of natural resources lies at the root of many of our global environmental crises.

In a world that is increasingly affected by globalization, the consequences of consumption and waste-production in the U.S. and other developed countries are far-reaching, harming environmental and human health globally. As consumers in a nation full of choices, we have an opportunity to invest in a more sustainable future.

### HOW WE DO OUR WORK

From classrooms to conferences, our program educates and activates diverse audiences nationwide. Each year, we connect with hundreds of people through presentations and events, and thousands more through social and electronic media. Many of these

individuals continue to engage with their communities by intersecting reproductive health, population, and environmental themes.

Our work is dependent on the invaluable support and leadership of our volunteers and fellows around the country. Volunteers organize film screenings, participate in community fairs, write newsletters, and work with grassroots reproductive health and environmental groups. Our youth fellows have organized TEDx events, speaking tours, art shows, Twitter chats, water walks, and more to educate and mobilize their peers.

We also work with domestic and international partners to educate policymakers, inform international processes, and influence key leaders to connect family planning and population to climate and sustainable development initiatives. We encourage decision-makers to break down silos and promote integrated development solutions that help women, communities, and the planet.

### JOIN US!

- **Tune in:** Sign up for our monthly PopNews e-newsletter for program updates, activist highlights, and to learn about upcoming events: [sierraclub.org/population](http://sierraclub.org/population)
- **Follow along:** Find us on Twitter: [twitter.com/SCpopEnviro](https://twitter.com/SCpopEnviro)
- **Plug in:** Download program resources, add yourself to our activist map, and find more ways to get involved: [sierraclub.org/population](http://sierraclub.org/population)
- **Speak up:** Send a letter to a decision-maker in your community or state. Tell them that as an environmentalist, you support family planning programs.
- **Spread the word:** Talk to your friends, family, and community, or write a letter to your local newspaper. Education is the first step toward long-term change for our families!

### ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs351/en/>
2. <http://www.globalcitizen.org/Content/Content.aspx?id=058f8fee-01f4-4508-a54d-464ff22a4716>
3. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/the-united-nations-conference-on-sustainable-development-rio-20/facts-and-figures/>
4. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html>
5. <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=52&ArticleID=52>

Sierra Club, Global Population  
& Environment Program  
50 F Street NW, Eighth Floor  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 547-1141

[sierraclub.org/population](http://sierraclub.org/population)  
[twitter.com/SCpopEnviro](https://twitter.com/SCpopEnviro)  
[population@sierraclub.org](mailto:population@sierraclub.org)

**GLOBAL POPULATION  
& ENVIRONMENT  
PROGRAM**

