Population Institute Encyclopedia Article

Population Institute

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Contents

Population Institute Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Population Institute.....3

Population Institute

Despite the fact they work with an annual budget of less than $2 million, the Population Institute, an information, education, and communication organization that spreads the word on population control, has been able to reach 172 countries, principally in the developing world. Based on the philosophy that overpopulation affects all social, economic, and political issues, the Institute's goal is to bring world population into balance with available environmental resources. To do this, the organization disseminates information via a World Population News Service which is picked up in developing countries in newspaper articles, editorial pieces, and radio and television broadcasts. In addition to making people aware of the perils of overpopulation, the Institute encourages birth control, without emphasizing any particular method.

Once a year the Institute funds an international journalism award, the Global Media Award in Population Reporting. The winner spends about one week touring a country with a successful population control program, visiting family planning clinics, and talking with government and private officials. Governmental leaders within the country usually present the award. The Institute benefits by keeping in contact not only with leaders and people at the grassroots level, but with local journalists.

Begun in 1969 by a Methodist minister with a strong conviction that overpopulation was a major cause of human misery, the Population Institute was one of the first groups organized specifically around population control. No longer connected to the Methodist church, the Institute is supported by grants from foundations, private individuals, and the sale of its bimonthly newsletter, *Popline*. In 1980 its domestic component split and formed the Center for Population Options, also headquartered in Washington, D.C.

If contraceptive use is a valid indicator, things are looking up for population control. Between 1970 and 2000, contraceptive use rose from 9–64%. If use can be increased to 72% within the next few years, World Bank statistics predict that world population can be stabilized at 8.5–11 billion.

Resources

Organizations

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