

# Mother: Caring for 7 Billion Press Kit

Updated on 6/11/2013

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## 1. Testimonials

"Mother is a must-see film on why population growth still matters and what is hindering action to reduce it."

-Hania Zlotnik  
Director of Population Division, United Nations

"Mother is a loving, thoughtful, visually striking treatment of one of our biggest questions, both personal and planetary. It hooks you, holds you -- and leaves you genuinely hoping."

-Alan Weisman  
Author, [The World Without Us](#)

"Mother: Caring for 7 Billion, does a marvelous job of drawing the not-so-obvious connection between caring for mothers and caring for Mother Earth. It's a powerful and hopeful message..."

-Robert J. Walker  
President  
The Population Institute

"The film compellingly argues that a fair and just solution is likely to only be found in a complete refocusing of our priorities and societies. Specifically, we must value diversity, human and biological, over the gross national product and human solidarity over competition. Although Fauchere does not show us how to get to this point, Mother leaves viewers with a ray of hope that humanity has the potential to reach such a state. It will also convince them that to do so we must not be afraid to reengage with the population issue and that the time for such renewed engagement is now."

-Review: Science Magazine  
Sacha Vignieri

"Mother: Caring for 7 Billion is a beautifully crafted and unique film that dispels the myths from business leaders and government that we can grow forever, consume ever more, and that the planet is our infinite dumping ground. The film makes it clear that by ignoring the facts and continuing a course of business as usual, we are endangering our future on this planet. I am so happy to see a courageous film that deals with population in both a sober and hopeful way. Mother is a must see for anyone interested in saving our planet and humanity.

-Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich  
Professor of Population Studies, Stanford University  
Author, The Population Bomb

"Mother is an aptly named film that brings home how hopeful the connection of population and the planet really is. This movie shows, lyrically, that as we learn to move beyond the domination of women, humanity can then move beyond the domination of nature and gain a chance for long habitation on Mother Earth."

-Robert Engleman  
President: Worldwatch Institute,  
Author, More: Population, Nature, and What Women Want

"Mother is an extremely informative film. I've been studying population issues for more than a decade, but I still learned a great deal from it. It is also entertaining, and, as a false fertility crisis roils through the nation, it could not be timelier."

-Derek Hoff  
Associate Professor of History at Kansas State University,  
Author of *The State and the Stork: The Population Debate and Policy Making in US History*

"Mother is an excellent humanist film that urges humanity to work together as "one human family, connected in our challenges, connected in our solutions" to challenge oppressive systems through inter-connected social movements that demand social justice and ecological responsibility."

-Review Kayley Whalen  
American Humanist Association

"I've watched Mother several times over the past six months, and each time I feel moved to discuss the issues it brings up, because they go to the heart of our overpopulation program: considering the larger impacts of adding more and more humans to this planet."

- Amy Harwood  
Center for Biological Diversity

"I'm so glad that I got the opportunity to preview "Mother: Caring for 7 Billion"...Its a fascinating documentary. The film discusses in great detail some of the correlation between the environmental degradation that we are beginning to see across the world and population growth and it really does a nice job of showing exactly how those relationships work."

-Review: Jill Buck  
Founder, Go Green Initiative and host of the Go Green Radio Show

"Mother is an important tool for population and family planning advocacy, as it focuses less on academic ideas and statistics, and more on the human side of the issue. One of our challenges, as a grassroots population group, is to figure out a way to personalize population issues, so that the activists we engage understand for whom they're advocating, and why. The expert interviews in the film eloquently describe the impact and consequences of rapid population growth, while the stories of Beth and Zinet illustrate for the audience why they should care to do something about it. Watching the film, you feel connected to the women featured in it, and are motivated to take action."

-Rebecca Harrington,  
Population Connection

"Wonderful film...truly unique in the arena of population films. The film is compelling, current, compassionate, comprehensive...the viewer will cry tears of happiness and of sadness, sometimes over the same scene!"

-Evan Jones  
Sierra Club Motherlode Chapter, Sacramento

"Mother finds an interesting and entertaining way to talk about a critical issue that should be in everyone's agenda. The film has also a caring point of view and a constructive perspective. It inspires new thoughts about our living style and challenges us to change."

-Carolina Crerar  
World Bank (Argentina)

"The many faces of population have not been responsibly and respectfully explored...until now. 'Mother: Caring for 7 Billion' is a film that elegantly, deftly, and respectfully shows how that happens. It is a courageous effort to awaken us to the population crisis slowly suffocating Mother Earth and the individual, very personal motherhood crises facing millions of women and hundreds of societies in which girls, families, babies, and nations deal unsuccessfully with overcrowding, deprivation, birth-related illnesses and death. Mother's thesis is that education, healthcare, and respect for women and girls can rescue the planet and individual females from the indefensible burden of childhood pregnancy, endemic poverty, and stunning rates of maternal mortality."

- Ellen V. Moore  
Amnesty International USA Board Of Directors

"I thought the film was outstanding. It addressed the problems of overpopulation in terms that were plain, human and understandable."

-Dr. Albert Bartlett  
Professor Emeritus, Physics CU Boulder  
Author, Arithmetic, Population and Energy

"'Mother: Caring for 7 Billion' should be seen by everyone who doubts that we can't have an impact on continued, unsustainable population growth. Overpopulation should be part of the discussion. Rather than blaming or condemning any one group, we need to find positive solutions. It is important to empower more people to make changes, and in this case, women in poorer countries are encouraged to embrace

that power by improving their lives. As stated at the end of the film, we are all connected in challenges and we are all connected in solutions."

-Karl Brummert  
Executive Director  
Audubon Society of Greater Denver

"Incredible film...I was touched beyond words. What a powerful film and hope to see it in more theatres on this planet. I've always known that this is important issue and instinctually feel that this issue should be broadcast louder!! Educate the uniformed and schools in the country! Time to Wake Up and do something!

-Cheryl Serpanchy, viewer  
Vancouver 2011 Projecting Change Film Festival

"Seeing the film 'Mother: Caring for 7 Billion' from an Indian perspective was an interesting experience. Thanks to the efforts over the past century, use of contraceptives and benefits of small families have become common knowledge in most parts of India. It was therefore a surprise to know that there are nations in the world that do not even think about 'population' as a 'problem'. It was even more astonishing that one of those nations is the world's 'most developed' country - USA."

"The film is certainly relevant for international audiences from both type of societies - those who are aware and those who aren't. Its strengths are objectivity, boldness, and a strong positive approach. The emphatic message of how women's empowerment is the sustainable solution for the population crisis has come across very effectively, particularly through the portrayal of the heart warming story of the Ethiopian girl, and its juxtaposing with the story of the narrator."

-Dr. Priyadarshini Karve  
Project Co-ordinator, Appropriate Rural Technology Institute, India

"This film carries a very serious but much avoided message for our times, in a gracious and loving way. I am hoping that this film will help jump start the conversation we ought to be having about providing adequate support for family planning, here and around the world, as we head into times of climate unrest and resource depletion, a conversation which has been avoided for a generation now. The film carefully covers the repercussions of population growth, and carries the message with loving concern for children, women, and all people."

-Beedy Parker, screening organizer  
Camden, ME

## **2. Articles and Reviews**

[Grist-May14th, 2011](#)

This is not your father's population documentary. The new film "Mother: Caring Our Way Out of the Population Dilemma" (working title) takes a feminist/humanist view as it explores the issue of our exploding numbers. It's now showing at a handful of film festivals and events. Here's the trailer:

The film features a number of the usual eco-suspects -- Paul Ehrlich, Lester Brown -- but also some unexpected voices -- author and social scientist Riane Eisler, childfree advocate Laura S. Scott -- plus everyday folk in the U.S. and Ethiopia. The central figure is an American woman, Beth Osnes, who comes from a family of 10 kids and, through the course of the movie, comes to recognize her own role in the population crisis. Says Osnes toward the end of the film:

"I realize that it starts with people like me and [my husband] JP just sitting down together at the beginning of our families and saying, Our planet's limits have changed. How are we going to change how we're making our family?"

If the film won't be screening near you anytime soon, you can get on the mailing list to be alerted when it comes out on DVD this summer.

-Lisa Hymas

## **Science Magazine-October 28th, 2011**

This year, the global population passed the seven billion mark. By the year 2045, the world is expected to host nine billion human beings. Let me repeat that: nine billion. In the 1960s, heightened concern over the "population explosion" prompted a global focus on Earth's ability to sustain the rapidly increasing human population. Since that time, the number of people on the planet has nearly doubled, but, oddly, concern over the impact of the ever-increasing human population seems to have faded from the public's attention. When the size of the human population is mentioned these days, it is most often in the context of wondering how we will feed so many. One rarely hears other important concerns surrounding the continuing increase in our numbers—such as whether our resource use will permit the survival of other species, whether essential resources (for example, clean water) will remain available following the complete anthropogenic alteration of Earth's systems, and how our focus on consumption and economic growth amplifies human impacts above and beyond our simple requirements for survival. Most important, there appears to be a distinct avoidance of identifying the increasing human population as a potential threat to ecosystem stability.

Our choice to avoid discussion of the population issue, however, will not make the problems disappear. Christophe Fauchere's film *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion* encourages us to reengage, both publicly and personally, with the reality of what our increasing population will bring. In its examination of the history of the population concern and our current level of resource use and consumption, *Mother* does not shy away from arguing that unchecked human population growth is not sustainable. Nor, however, does the film succumb to a fatalistic viewpoint. Instead, Fauchere attempts to inspire change through interviews and stories of individual transformations. A brave Ethiopian woman—emboldened by a radio show that encourages women to think about family planning and stand up for themselves—leads viewers to see that the empowerment of women across the world could be a first step toward both limiting population growth and fighting poverty.

Other interviews with human rights and population workers in developing countries are similarly convincing and inspiring. These lead one to the hopeful conclusion that as conditions for women improve, so will their ability to manage the size of, and provide better lives for, their families.

I had hoped for an equally inspiring tale about how to tackle other aspects of the human population problem, those of consumption and an overwhelming focus on economic growth in developed countries. Here, however, the challenges are greater, and the film leaves us without concrete solutions. Fauchere marshals interviews with ecologists, economists, and sociologists to convincingly argue that developed economies are based on consumption and, further, that as developing countries improve their quality of life, they too enter into a consumption economy. All people deserve an equal quality of life, but the unfortunate truth is that Earth cannot sustain a developed-country level of consumption for billions of people. As pointed out in the film, it would take all the resources of 10 Earths to support the current global human population at the consumption level of the United States.

The question of how humanity will equalize living conditions across the globe for a growing population while still maintaining the ecological systems we depend on is monumental and overwhelming. Mother does not provide us with answers. Instead, the film suggests that the daunting nature of the solution may explain why we choose to ignore many of the harshest truths about the population problem.

The film compellingly argues that a fair and just solution is likely to only be found in a complete refocusing of our priorities and societies. Specifically, we must value diversity, human and biological, over the gross national product and human solidarity over competition. Although Fauchere does not show us how to get to this point, Mother leaves viewers with a ray of hope that humanity has the potential to reach such a state. It will also convince them that to do so we must not be afraid to reengage with the population issue and that the time for such renewed engagement is now.

-Sacha Vignieri

## **NY Times “Green” blog- November 1, 2011**

The connection between population growth and environmental degradation seems clear enough – the more people there are, the more greenhouse gases are emitted and the more resources are consumed. But as I report in Tuesday’s Times, the population issue has been conspicuously absent from the public discourse on global warming in the United States.

The filmmakers Christophe Fauchere and Joyce Johnson say that when they set out to make “Mother: Caring For Seven Billion,” a recent documentary film about population growth and climate change (a trailer is above), they found some environmental groups reluctant to address the subject for fear of alienating their supporters. One group hung up on them when they called, they recounted.

“The stigma on the population issue is so strong that people tend to shut down,” Mr. Fauchere said. Still, the global milestone announced this week – roughly around now, the world’s population is thought to be hitting the seven billion mark – is stirring some discussion.

In line with that milestone, the United Nations is highlighting the need to link the sustainability issue to fundamental problems like poverty and inequality. Currently, officials at the United Nations Foundation say, 215 million women lack access to quality reproductive health care and voluntary family planning.

And at the Aspen Institute’s annual environment forum last spring, the topic was front and center in panel discussions with titles like “What’s Good for Women Is Good for the Planet,” which delved into how educating women and giving them access to contraception leads to a drop in births.

David Monsma, the executive director of the institute’s energy and environment program, said that a discussion started there on how efforts to rein in emissions and limit climate change could relate to family planning and human rights. “It clearly is still a next step,” he said.

## Huffington Post Green Blog-May 2012

It's time that Mom gets a little more appreciation.

Ask any mother and she will tell you: It's not easy being a mother. It's not just the nine months of pregnancy or even the delivery; it's the commitment that goes with nurturing a child and providing for its future. And if the child does not return the mother's love, it becomes a thankless job. Just ask Mother Earth.

For four and a half billion years Mother Earth has been doing her best to nurture life, but it's not easy being a single mom, even when you're a planet. For the first couple billion years, conceiving was impossible. Literally. Molten temperatures and a toxic atmosphere made it pretty tough to string together the nucleic acids and conditions that would make life possible, but with a little help from water-laden comets, Mother Earth finally got the job done, and about 600 million years ago complex life forms finally emerged.

Still, it's been tough. Making plant life abundant required the slow accumulation of topsoil. For animal life to prosper, more oxygen in the atmosphere was required. Then, just when life was flourishing, a comet crashed into the Earth and caused a mass extinction. And now Mother is struggling to support 7 billion humans, the most affluent of which are rapidly depleting the Earth's resources, and the poorest of which are struggling desperately to survive.

To make matters worse, Mother Earth is having to deal with [another mass extinction](#). Climate change, loss of habitat, invasive species and other factors are hastening the loss of plant and wildlife. And caring for those 7 billion humans is not getting any easier either. Droughts, flooding, water shortages, desertification, and the continuing loss of topsoil are putting a strain on Mother's [ability to feed a growing world population](#).

And you think raising a couple of kids is hard.

There are a lot of things that we could do to make life easier for Mother Earth, such as curbing greenhouse gas emissions, preserving crucial bio-habitats, reducing pollution, and stopping the over-fishing of the oceans.

But here's a Mother's Day thought: we can also help Mother Earth by taking better care of mothers.

If we meet the UN's goal of ensuring [universal access to family planning and reproductive health](#) services, there will be fewer unintended pregnancies and projected population growth rates will fall, easing the strain on Mother Earth. The unmet need for family planning is large. Even in the U.S., [almost half of all pregnancies are unintended](#). In the developing world, the UN estimates that there are [215 million women](#) who want to avoid a pregnancy, but who are not using a modern method of contraception.

By providing women with better access to contraceptives and reproductive health services, we not only lower birth rates; we reduce maternal mortality. In sub-Saharan Africa, a woman has a [1 in 16 chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth](#), and in areas where child marriage is still prevalent, [the rate of adolescent pregnancies is actually rising](#). Even if young girls survive giving birth, they can still suffer severe medical complications.

A recent one-hour documentary, *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*, does a marvelous job of drawing the not-so-obvious connection between caring for mothers and caring for Mother Earth. It's a powerful and hopeful message, and in celebration of mothers worldwide, the producers of the film are streaming it for free from their website this Mother's Day at [www.motherthefilm.com](http://www.motherthefilm.com).

Our mothers, including Mother Earth, have done their best to nurture and care for us. It's time to return the favor.

-Robert Walker  
President, Population Institute

## **Green Teacher Magazine-Winter 2012/2013**

This is an effective, comprehensive look at the key, population-related issues in both the developed and developing worlds. Better yet, it offers hope that we can work together on common challenges and solutions – in particular to empower young women. Excellent for secondary and intermediate students.

-Alan Crook

## **Energybulletin.net-August 2012**

Last Halloween, by the U.N.'s best estimate, world population officially hit 7 billion, a milestone so frightening that it made the trappings of that already hokey holiday seem all the more specious. News reports made light of the timing (“You should expect more than ghosts, spirits and candy when Halloween arrives this year,” cracked the *Huffington Post*), but the jokes couldn't help falling flat. For the news struck too close to humankind's familiar experience with population overshoot—which is that it's a temporary condition usually resolved by the dreaded Horsemen of the Apocalypse: War, Famine, Pestilence and Death—to be the subject of such lighthearted quips.

Documentarian Christophe Fauchere, in his film *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*, seeks to instill in us the proverbial fear of God that was missing from the flip news coverage. His documentary takes a penetrating look at overpopulation, what fuels it and why the world has become complacent about the issue after making a good start in addressing it during the late '60s. The film dispels some key myths about overpopulation—chief among them the belief that it's long been solved—even if it stops short of admitting the inevitability of a world population crash as the Earth's resources deplete. And it conveys its message in an engaging, visually immersive style that finds just the right balance between hard facts and ordinary human involvement.

The documentary talks with a wide array of experts, among them scientists, authors and activists, who speak to overpopulation's toll on resources, the environment and the lives of those trapped in deplorable conditions. Featured experts include Earth Policy Institute founder Lester Brown, who has been called “the guru of the global environmental movement”; Mathis Wackernagel, co-creator of the ecological footprint concept; and renowned reproductive scientist Malcolm Potts, whose seminal studies on maternal mortality helped catalyze the worldwide Safe Motherhood Initiative. At the top of their fields and the forefront of thinking on overpopulation, these experts are highly credible and acutely chosen.



*Mother* covers all of the main aspects of the population crisis but examines some more fully than others. It does the most justice to world hunger (particularly poignant is the statistic that a person could live for a year off the grain required to fill an SUV tank with ethanol). The film also takes an in-depth look at environmental destruction, inequity, the failings of the growth imperative and barriers to contraceptive access in the developing world. Topics given short shrift include water depletion, disease pandemics and climate change.

The first issue to be tackled is the misperception that overpopulation has been solved. This myth is tempting to believe because the *rate of increase* has been nearly halved over the past 50 years as a result of concerted efforts worldwide. But these efforts haven't been enough, since a slower-growing population of 7 billion is still one grossly out of synch with its resources. In short, we've undergone "a big cultural change—but not fast enough," says Paul Ehrlich, coauthor of the influential book *The Population Bomb*. *Mother* goes on to present us with a laundry list of other crises that have escalated along with population growth since 1970, the year of the first Earth Day: a nearly 50 percent increase in trash in U.S. landfills, 20 percent more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 400 percent more endangered species and a current extinction rate of 150 to 200 species daily.

"The topic of population is also a victim of its own success," says the film's narrator, Traci Wilde, who goes on to explain that with the decreased growth rate, many countries have come to view the thinning ranks of their youth as a threat to their success. A number of countries have begun paying their citizens "bribes to have babies," in the words of population expert William Ryerson, so that there will be more people to support the aged population. Ryerson regards this as an untenable policy and says that the retirement age should be pushed higher instead, since many people who are near the current age cap could keep working for years to come.

The world's population is seven times what it was in 1800, an increase that *Mother* correctly attributes to the advent of cheap, plentiful oil. Indeed, among those who closely follow the oil predicament, it's conventional wisdom that population could never have soared so high without oil-based agricultural inputs. In the last century, crop yields have increased miraculously through what's been called the Green Revolution, which relied heavily on chemicals made from oil, such as fertilizer and pesticides. *Mother*, in its brief survey of the Green Revolution, reveals that its founder, the pioneering agronomist Norman Borlaug, never saw it as a permanent solution to the population explosion; rather, he saw it buying humankind at most another 30 years. Now that oil is in decline, it seems obvious that industrial agricultural, and along with it population, will be declining as well.

During the filming of *Mother*, the crew spent some time polling people on the streets about overpopulation. The results, shown in brief clips throughout the documentary, tell a lot about public awareness of the issue. "How many people were on the planet during the first Earth Day?" one pair of passersby is quizzed. "Maybe over a billion?" one of them says uncertainly (it was actually 3.7 billion). Asked what the third most populous country after India and China is, people variously answer Brazil, Indonesia and the United States. This last is the correct answer, with a present population of about 311 million and the fastest growth rate in the developed world.

So immediate is the population crisis that it's hard to think of plausible solutions to it. Thus, *Mother* is to be admired for not pretending to have any silver bullet; instead, it explores a set of intelligent responses and current hopeful trends. For example, it showcases the work of an organization called the Population Media Center (PMC), which specializes in "entertainment-education strategies." The organization produces TV and radio serial dramas whose characters are meant to be role models for the audience, and airs them in countries like Ethiopia, Rwanda and Niger. We hear from a young Ethiopian woman who credits listening to the radio shows for her decision to decline an arranged marriage proposal. We also learn that demand for contraceptives in Ethiopia has increased by 157 percent since the programs began airing.

*Mother* does, however, have a few gaps in reasoning that arise from not taking its premises to their logical conclusions. For instance, it puts a lot of stock in the notion that empowering women is key to addressing overpopulation—but fails to mention that this would not lower population at anything like the speed required. Also, probably to avoid seeming alarmist or kooky, the film doesn't hazard a guess as to how many humans the Earth can support in the wake of the oil age, a figure that others have put as low as one or two billion.

As the 18th-century British economist Thomas R. Malthus is infamous for pointing out, nature will ultimately succeed wherever we happen to fail in culling our numbers. *Mother* may not quite be willing to admit this, but its message is nonetheless one that deserves to be heard and heeded. For who wouldn't be in favor of at least trying to influence the course of events, that the extent of human suffering might be lessened?

-Frank Kaminski

## **Video Librarian-January/February 2012**

Recommended. *Mother* makes the argument that overpopulation is the underlying cause of most threats to the global environment, while also noting that activists have allowed the topic to fade from public consciousness since the “population explosion” movement of the 1960s. The documentary introduces Dr. Beth Osnes of the children's rights organization Mothers Acting Up, who tells her personal story of growing up in a large family (with 10 kids) and coming to terms with the idea of limiting her own. Director Christophe Fauchère follows Osnes to Ethiopia, where she meets women who've been inspired by an activist radio drama to reject arranged marriages and limit their number of offspring. Back in the U.S., several experts, including noted author and population guru Paul Ehrlich, report statistics on unsafe abortion, unintended pregnancies, and teen pregnancy rates, and look at the reasons why people have large families, including religious beliefs, social pressure, the stigma attached to being childless, and the cultural status achieved through having big families (in particular, sons). Osnes also admits that being part of a large clan can simply feel good. The important messages conveyed here are that the U.S. cannot expect other countries to address overpopulation if Americans do not do so first, and empowering women with information is the key to stemming a worldwide crisis. Combining animation, vintage film, and documentary footage interwoven with interviews, *Mother* is a sobering and thought-provoking look at the population issue, especially timely given the recent milestone of 7 billion people on Earth.

## **School Library Journal-September 22, 2011**

As the world's population reaches the seven billion mark this fall, this timely film examines the multiple causes, the disastrous current effects, and the dark future should there not be major global transformations. However, little is offered in the way of concrete propositions to solve the resulting societal and environmental problems. The producers postulate that empowering women worldwide is the first step in curbing the growth pattern and that the crisis will become more critical as the planet's resources are further taxed. The world's significant concerns about overpopulation in the last third of the 20th century were replaced by other social, military, economic, and political issues; the films producers suggest that these might be results of population growth, a concept that's difficult to refute. The program utilizes the expertise of noted population authority Paul Ehrlich (*The Population Bomb*, Buccaneer Books, 1997) and others to bring the issue to the forefront. It also follows the effort of an American mother and child-right's advocate to effect change on an individual basis in Africa. This flexible program offers English subtitles, an 18-chapter selection option, extensions of interviews, and deleted scenes.

Classroom teachers and public library programmers will especially appreciate the very well-developed curricular/instructional materials available in pdf format on the disc. With the world's population expected to reach 7 billion by the end of October 2011, this film's timeliness and excellent content will make it a popular purchase.

-Dwain Thomas, formerly Lake Park High School, Roselle, IL

### **Library Journal.com-October 15, 2011**

Our mother, Mother Earth, is at a critical point. On October 31, 2011, the world's population will reach seven billion. Overpopulation—fueled by advances in science, food production, and health care and encouraged by religious beliefs and an unquenchable desire for economic growth—is overwhelming our natural resources. The dire facts are presented in the first part of the film in a fast-paced montage that features expert interviews and historical film footage, bringing us quickly up-to-date on the issue and the need for action. The film then changes tempo, and we find ourselves along a personal journey with child-rights activist Beth, who travels to Ethiopia searching for a way to make a difference. She discovers that empowering women—the daughters, wives, and, of course, mothers—with education, choices about birth control, and a voice in the way the world works may be the answer to slowing our frantic race to a troublesome future. The film focuses on overpopulation but also addresses the very complex problems that have led us to our crowded world. Mother is a timely choice for academic libraries, middle school and up, and all viewers concerned with global affairs and our own future.

-Ellen Druda, Half Hollow Hills Community Lib., Dix Hills, NY

### **Educational Media Reviews Online (EMRO)-October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Mother: Caring for 7 Billion, addresses perhaps the most important, although frequently overlooked, environmental issue—population. In the last fifty years, world population has doubled, causing famine and civil unrest in underdeveloped nations as the strain on resources increases. But the numbers alone are not responsible. For years, the developed world's only message was “be like us.” This has created a global appetite for the American lifestyle, where consumption is synonymous with development and resources are consumed with little regard for the global impact.

Mother tells the history of the world population crisis by combining statistical analysis with a variety of visual effects and expert interviews with an emotional soundtrack. The film also follows children's rights activist Beth Osnes to Ethiopia, on her personal quest for knowledge about the impact of population on underdeveloped nations. Osnes investigates how these countries are addressing their population concerns, focusing on the relationship between female empowerment and birth rate.

The film's only flaw is trying to address all aspects of the population crisis in less than an hour. Some topics are discussed in only a few sentences and never referred to again.

This film is ideal for a classroom setting, where it is guaranteed to spark discussion.

-Samantha Quell, University at Buffalo, State University of New York

### **Booklist Review-April, 25 2012**

Global population reached seven billion in October 2011 according to UN statistics. Should this be cause for celebration? Not according to population pundits, economists, social scientists, environmental writers,

and other interviewed experts. With corroborating charts and graphs and featuring footage of overcrowded cities, starving children, environmental ravages (melting polar ice caps, drought, flooding), and more, this film delivers a stark message. The unprecedented explosion in world population has intensified competition for limited natural resources and dwindling food supplies, dramatically reducing global biodiversity and initiating harmful climatic changes. The program ends on a positive note, providing visual illustrations of change in such countries as Ethiopia, where family planning and educational opportunities have empowered women to take control of their reproductive lives. The disc includes PDF resources to help viewers understand how demographic trends, population pressures, resources, and environmental health are interconnected.

- Carol Holzberg

### 3. Academic Testimonials

*"Mother: Caring for 7 Billion is a beautifully crafted and unique film that dispels the myths from business leaders and government that we can grow forever, consume ever more, and that the planet is our infinite dumping ground. The film makes it clear that by ignoring the facts and continuing a course of business as usual, we are endangering our future on this planet. I am so happy to see a courageous film that deals with population in both a sober and hopeful way. Mother is a must see for anyone interested in saving our planet and humanity."*

-Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich  
Professor of Population Studies, Stanford University  
Author "The Population Bomb"

*"One hour of your life, and one film, could make you see your role in the world differently."*

- Dr. Scarlett McNally, [BMJ Blogger](#)  
Former Director of Medical Education for East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust,  
Member of Council of Royal College of Surgeons,  
Orthopaedic surgeon, Eastbourne District General Hospital

*"A sensitive and engaging film of the complex public health issues for a world of 7 billion, and one woman's journey to make sense of it."*

-Judith Stephenson  
Margaret Pyke Professor of Sexual & Reproductive Health at University College London;  
Director of the Women's Health Programme, UCL Partners Academic Health Science Centre

*"I thought the film was outstanding. It addressed the problems of overpopulation in terms that were plain, human and understandable."*

-Dr. Albert Bartlett  
Professor Emeritus, Physics CU Boulder  
Author of [Arithmetic, Population and Energy](#)

*"I assigned "Mother" as required viewing for an introductory biology class that uses the perspective of evolutionary ecology to consider the biology of humans and our relationship to the rest of the biosphere. Students needed no arm-twisting to watch the film, and they successfully handled questions about it on my exam. I recently spoke to a group of students at orientation. The older students were advising the younger ones to take this elective course, and I took the opportunity to poll them about "Mother." Their reaction was immediate and unanimous approval: the film was strong, and it made them confront issues about which they had been ignorant. They appreciated that the tone went beyond "doom and gloom" to consider the positive directions that emerge from education and empowerment."*

-James D. Thomson, Professor  
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department  
University of Toronto

*"The movie presents a hopeful view of the future of humanity against overwhelming odds. This is not an apocalyptic view, with the typical horsemen -- disease, famine, war. This is a focus on slowing the birth rate rather than increasing the death rate. It is a story of women from patriarchal societies standing up against tradition and gaining control of their fertility, and of women in this country making family planning decisions based on a worldview that escapes the religious pressures of their mothers. After screening the movie I asked the viewers to choose between three statements which was the most true to them. (1) Overpopulation is not a problem. (2) Overpopulation is a problem, but it can be solved. (3) Overpopulation is a problem but it cannot be solved. All of the people in the room, having just seen "Mother", chose (2). I then told them about Global Population Speak-Out and invited them to pledge. Two students have pledged so far."*

-Chris Bystroff  
Associate Prof of Biology, Computer Science  
Director, Program in Bioinformatics & Molecular Biology  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

*"We purchased Mother with Academic/PPR rights for use in our University library. The buying process was one of the easiest I've encountered: we paid through faxed purchase order and received our DVD extremely quickly. Customer service was excellent as well, with less than 24-hour turnaround. We would definitely buy from Tiroir A Films again."*

-Rick Brown  
Library Technical Assistant  
Cumberland University / Vise Library

#### **4. Film Festivals and Awards List**

- 1. Burlington Green Eco Film Fest-Burlington, ON Canada-2013**
- 2. CRiterio Ambiental Film Fest-San Jose, Costa Rica-2013**
- 3. Sebrando Cinema-Lima, Peru-2013**
- 4. Alamos International Film Festival-Alamos, Mexico-2013**
- 5. DR Enviro Film Festival-Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic-2013**
- 6. Ecofalante Environmental Film Festival-São Paulo, Brazil-2013**

7. **Environmental Film Festival Bogotá-** Bogotá, Columbia-2013
8. **United Nations Association, Orange County Chapter Film Festival-**2012
9. **Barcelona International Environmental Film Festival-**Barcelona, Spain-2012
10. **United Nations Association, Monterey Bay Chapter Film Festival-**2012
11. **Environmental Film Festival Melbourne-**Melbourne, Australia-2012
12. **filmambiente International Environmental FF-**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil-2012
13. **One Earth Film Fest 2012-**Oak Park, IL-2012
14. **Documentary Edge Film Festival-**New Zealand-2012
15. **III Ciclo de Cine Ambiental-**Argentina-2012
16. **Salt Spring Film Festival-**Canada-2012
17. **Colorado Environmental Film Festival-**2012
18. **Princeton Environmental Film Festival-**2012
19. **Population Institute's 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Media Awards-**2012
  - Best Film
14. **American Conservation Film Festival-**2011
15. **Miami & the Beaches Environmental Film Festival-**2011
16. **LA Femme Film Festival-**2011
17. **Kansas International Film Festival-**2011
18. **DocuFest Atlanta-**2011
  - Winner Best Social Issue Documentary
19. **Port Townsend Film Festival-**2011
20. **Brisbane Population Film Festival-**2011
21. **Ventura Film Festival-**2011
22. **Projecting Change Film Festival-**Vancouver-2011
23. **The Cheyenne International Film Festival (CIFF)-**2011
24. **Women & Film Voices Film Festival, Denver-**2011
25. **Boulder International Film Festival-**2011
  - Winner Best Colorado Film

## 5. University and College Library Collections

American University  
 Arizona State University  
 Austin Peay State University  
 Bard College  
 Boston College  
 Bowdoin College  
 Brandeis University  
 Brevard Community College

Carroll College  
 Champlain College  
 Chattanooga State Community College  
 Colby College  
 College of New Jersey  
 College of Charleston  
 Collin County Community College  
 Concordia College

Colgate University	SUNY Alfred
Columbia University	SUNY Buffalo
Creighton University NE	Texas A & M University
Cumberland University	Texas State University-San Marcos
Dartmouth College	Unity College
East Carolina University-Greenville	University of Alaska
Eastern Washington University	University of Arkansas-Fayetteville
Fairfield University	U. of Central Florida-Gainesville
Fort Hays State University	U of Florida
Florida Atlantic University	University of California-Davis
Gateway Community College	University of California-Santa Cruz
Gavilian College	University of Colorado-Boulder
Georgetown University	University of Colorado-Colorado Springs
George Mason University	University of Delaware
Georgia Perimeter College	University of Delaware-Sandbox
Gettysburg College	University of Evansville
Harper College	University of Florida
High Point University	University of Guelph
Iowa State University	University of Houston-Downtown
Kansas City Community College	University of Idaho-Moscow
Lewis-Clark State College	University of Maryland-College Park
Loyola Marymount University	University of Massachusetts at Boston
Macquarie University-Australia	University of Miami
Meredith College	University of Minnesota
Messiah College	University of New England
Middlebury College	University of Nevada-Las Vegas
Middle Tennessee State University	University of New Mexico
Murray State University	University of Northern Colorado
Oakland University	University of Oregon
Oberlin College	University of St. Thomas
Ohio State University-Newark	University of Tennessee-Knoxville
Oregon State University	University of Toronto
Penn State – DuBois	University of Utah
Portland Community College	University of Vermont
Providence College	University of Washington
Purdue University	University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Queens University-Canada	University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
Red River College	University of Wyoming
Renneselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of Rochester
Rio Salado College	University of Southern California
Southern Adventist University	Wake Forest University
Southern Methodist University	Western State Colorado University
St. Lawrence University	Wilfrid Laurier University
Stanford University	Worcester State University

## 6. Public Screenings

2/18/11- Boulder, CO	Boulder International Film Festival
3/13/11- Denver, CO	Women+Film Voices Film Fest
4/19/11- Boulder, CO	CU Boulder Campus, Hale 270
5/19/11- Cheyenne, WY	Cheyenne International Film Fest
5/29/11-Vancouver, Canada	Projecting Change Film Fest
5/31/11-Bryan, TX	Peach Clubhouse
6/22/11-Boulder, CO	Naral Pro Choice Colorado

7/7/11-Manitou Springs, CO	Indep. Film Society of Colorado
7/18/11-Ventura, CA	Ventura Film Festival
8/28/11-Brisbane, Australia	Brisbane Population Film Fest
9/21/11-Columbus, OH	Population Connection
9/23/11 - Golden, CO	Fundraiser for CEFF 6 p.m.
9/24-9/25/11-Port Townsend, WA	Port Townsend Film Festival
9/25/11-Atlanta, Georgia	DocuFest Atlanta 8:30 p.m.
9/27/11-Bryan, TX	Peach Clubhouse 6:30 p.m.
9/30/11-Seattle, WA	Friday Night at the Meaningful Movies 7 p.m.
10/03/11-Washington, DC	Population Institute West End Cinema
10/4/11-Kansas City, KS	Kansas International Film Festival 5:45 p.m.
10/09/11-Albany, NY	First Unitarian Universalist Society of America 11:45 a.m.
10/12/11-Sacramento, CA	Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter 6 p.m.
10/13/11-Troy, NY	Rensselaer Darrin Comm. Ctr. Rm. 330 2 p.m.
10/13/11-Boulder, CO	Boulder Public Library Canyon Theatre 6:30 p.m.
10/13/11- Missoula, MT	Peace and Justice Film Series, U.C. Theater 7 p.m.
10/14/11- Los Angeles, CA	La Femme Film Festival Davidson/Valenti Theatre 6 p.m.
10/21/11 - Miami, FL	Miami & the Beaches Environmental Film Festival 7 p.m.
10/20/11 - Colorado Springs, CO	IFSOC Cornerstone Arts Center 6pm & 8 p.m.
10/20/11-NYC, NY	UNITED NATIONS Population Fund (UNFPA) 12 p.m.
10/25/11-Burlington, VT	Population Media Center UVM Fleming Museum 7:30 p.m.
10/29/11-Boulder, CO	Colorado Bioneers CU Humanities 1B50 6:30 p.m. FREE
11/3/11-Columbus, OH	Population Connection OSU Hitchcock Hall Rm 35 5:30 p.m.
11/4/11- Shepherdstown, WV	American Conservation Film Festival 9:30 p.m.
11/6/11- Shepherdstown, WV	American Conservation Film Festival Noon
11/9/11-West Lafayette, IN	Purdue Univ. ESE program Elec. Engineering Rm.170 7 p.m.
12/1/2011-Minneapolis, MN	Population Connection U of M Twin Cities Campus
12/8/2011-Portland, OR	Population Connection PSU Smith Hall 6:30 p.m.
1/15/2012-Fresno, CA	Valley Humanists UU Fresno Church 12:30 p.m.
1/17/2012-Rockland, ME	Midcoast Peace & Justice Group Rockland UU Church 7 p.m.
1/18/2012-Belfast, ME	Midcoast Peace & Justice Group Belfast Public Library 6 p.m.
1/26/12-Coloma, CA	Sierra Club MotherLode American River Nature Ctr 6 p.m.
1/2012 - Flint, MI	Sierra Club Nepessing Mott Community College 7:30 p.m.
2/5/2012-Princeton, NJ	Princeton Environmental Film Festival 4 p.m.
2/13/2012-San Rafael, CA	California Film Institutes Enviro Youth Forum
2/14/2012-Waltham, MA	Brandeis University Wasserman Cinematheque TBA
2/20/2012-Portland, OR	Hollywood Theatre Population Connection 7:30 p.m.
2/22/2012-Modesto, CA	Sierra Club Yokuts Group contact Anita Young 7 p.m.
2/24/2012-Golden, CO	Colorado Enviro FF American Mountaineering Cntr 8 p.m.
2/27/2012-Stockton, CA	Sierra Club Delta Group 7 p.m.
3/2-4/2012-BC, CANADA	Salt Spring Film Festival TBA
3/8/2012-Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA	Ill Ciclo de Cine Ambiental 6:30 p.m.
3/21/12-Rochester, NY	Susan B. Anthony Institute, University of Rochester 7 p.m.
4/3/12-Auburn, CA	Sierra Club Mother Lode CSWP Canyon Keepers 5:30 p.m.
4/6/12-Brunswick, ME	Bowdoin College Enviro Studies Program 7 p.m.
4/18-19/12-Rocklin, CA	Sierra Club Mother Lode CSWP Sierra College 12:45 p.m.
4/20/12-Kennebunk, ME	First Parish UU Church 7 p.m.
4/22/12-Dallas, TX	Earth Day Dallas TBA
4/22/12-Portland, OR	Portland's Earth Day Celebration 11:00, 2:00, 4:30
4/23/12-Bunbury, AUSTRALIA	South West Environment Centre Bunbury City Library 6 p.m.
4/24/2012-London, UK	The Royal Society of Medicine 6:30 p.m.
4/24/12-Auburn, CA	Sierra Club Mothe Lode CSWP Placer County Library 7 p.m.
4/25/12-Athens, OH	Ohio University Walter Hall 7 p.m.
4/2612-Auckland, NEW ZEALAND	Documentary Edge Film Festival TBA
4/27/12-Sitka, AK	Benefit for Anyi Education 7 p.m.
4/28/12-Oak Park, IL	One Earth Film Fest 2012 Ahimsa Yoga Studio 2:30 p.m.
5/11/12-Portland, OR	Multnomah Meeting of Friends 7 p.m.
5/13/12-Davis, CA	Sierra Club CSWP Motherlode UC Whole Earth Fest 1p.m.
5/17/12-Wellington, NEW ZEALAND	Documentary Edge Film Festival TBA
5/24/2012-Denver, CO	Denver Jewish Community Center Wolf Theatre 7 p.m.
5/30/12-Portsmouth, NH	The Music Hall 7 p.m.
6/6/12-Sacramento, CA	Sierra Club Mother Lode CSWP 6 p.m.
6/24/12-Albany, CA	how many.org Albany Public Library 2 p.m.
7/31/12-Pasadena, CA	Population Connection Pasadena City College
8/10/12-Glendale, CA	Population Connection Glendale Library 7 p.m.
8/30/12-La Crescenta, CA	Population Connection La Crescenta Library 7 p.m.
8/31/12-Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL	filmambiente International Environmental Film Fest 8 p.m.



9/5/12-Melbourne, AUSTRALIA	Environmental Film Festival Melbourne 6 p.m.
9/15/12-Redding, CA	Sierra Club MotherLode CSWP Free Thought Central 6 p.m.
9/19/12-Port Alberni, BC CANADA	Alberni Valley Transition Town Society Char's Landing 7 p.m.
9/26/12-Oakland, CA	Humanist Hall The Fellowship of Humanity 7:30 p.m.
10/3/12-Sigtuna, SWEDEN	Sigtuna Foundation Sigtuna Foundation Library 7 p.m.
10/14/12-Orange, CA	United Nations Association Orange County Chpt Film Fest
10/16/10-London, ENGLAND	MedsinKCL(Kings College London) The Miller Pub 6pm
11/9/12-Barcelona, SPAIN	Barcelona International Environmental Film Festival TBA
11/10/12-Monterey, CA	United Nations Association Monterey Bay Chpt FF 7 p.m.
12/4/12-Denver, CO	Alliance For Sustainable Colorado 5 p.m.
12/5/12- Berkeley, CA	Sierra Club CSWP & Institute for Population Studies 7 p.m.
1/22/13-Seattle, WA	Population Connection Seattle University 6:30 p.m.
2/13/13-Placerville,CA	Sierra Club Mother Lode CSWP Cozmic Cafe
2/21/2013-Sonora, CA	Sierra Club Mother Lode CSWP Tuolumne Utilities Dist 7 p.m.
2/24/13-Boulder, CO	St. Andrew Presbyterian Church 12 p.m.
3/9/2013-Chico,CA	Sierra Club Mother Lode CSWP at CSU Chico
3/16/13-Alamos, MEXICO	Alamos International Film Festival 6 p.m.
3/16/13-Pasedena, CA	Sierra Club Global Population & Enviro 11 a.m.
4/15/13-Dublin, IRELAND	UCD Volunteers Overseas University College Dublin 6 p.m.
5/2013- São Paulo, BRAZIL	Ecofalante Environmental Film Festival TBA
5/08/2013-Mountain Lakes, NJ	Green Reels - Environmental Film Series 6:30 p.m.
5/18/13-Prague, Czech Republic	"Living Responsibly: Ethical Issues in Everyday Life" Conference
5/31-6/3/13-Central Victoria, AU	Swanpool Cinema
6/1-7/13-Lima, PERU	SEMBRANDO CINE
6/1/13-San Jose, COSTA RICA	CRiterio Ambiental Film Fest UNDP and UNESCO offices
6/26/13-Tatura, AUSTRALIA	Transition Tatura Tatura House 7 p.m.
7/5/13-Garapan, Northern Mariana Isl	First Friday Films American Memorial Park 6:30 p.m.
7/7/13-High Wycombe, UK	Population Matters Wycombe Environment Center 7:30 p.m.
8/2013-NYC,NY	American Sociological Association Annual Meeting By Registration Only
8/28-9/14/13-Mexico City, Mexico	Muestra Internacional de Cine con Perspectiva de Género
9/8/13- Santo Domingo, DR	Dominican Republic Environmental Film Fest
9/25/13-Burlington, ON,CANADA	Burlington Green Eco Film Fest
10/2013-Bogotá, COLUMBIA	Environmental Film Festival Bogotá
11/2013-Boston, MA	American Public Health Association Annual Meeting By Registration Only

## 7. Synopsis (logline)

Mother is a gentle treatment of a brutal issue that urges humanity to work together to bring about a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

### Synopsis (Short)

Mother breaks a 40-year taboo by bringing to light an issue that silently fuels our most pressing environmental, humanitarian and social crises - population growth. It is a critical time to talk about this subject because, as of 2011, the world's population has now reached seven billion. At the same time, talking about population has become politically incorrect because of the sensitivity of the issues surrounding the topic—religion, economics, family planning and gender inequality. Yet it is an issue we cannot afford to ignore as one billion people still suffer from chronic hunger.

### Synopsis (Medium)

Mother, the film, breaks a 40-year taboo by bringing to light an issue that silently fuels our most pressing environmental, humanitarian and social crises - population growth. It

is a critical time to talk about this subject because the world's population has now reached seven billion people.

In the film we meet Beth – a loving mother, a child-rights activist and a member of a very large American family of 12. After realizing her own family's impact on the planet, Beth then travels to Ethiopia to understand the developing world's crises and solutions. There she meets a young woman Zinet, living in extreme poverty, who, against all odds, found the courage to break free from thousand-year-old-cultural barriers by refusing to get married young and going to school.

Grounded in the theories of social scientist Riane Eisler, the film strives not to blame but to educate, to highlight a different path for humanity. Overpopulation is merely a symptom of an even larger problem - a "domination system" that for most of human history has glorified the domination of man over nature, man over child and man over woman. To break this pattern, the film demonstrates that we must change our conquering mindset into a nurturing one. *Mother* not only focuses on consumption and moving away from our current economic model, but it shows in a holistic manner how empowering women worldwide will help to solve the environmental, social and humanitarian crises that stem from population growth.

## **Synopsis (Long)**

*Mother*, the film, breaks a 40-year taboo by bringing to light an issue that silently fuels our most pressing environmental, humanitarian and social crises - population growth. It is a critical time to talk about this subject because for the first time, in 2011 the world population reached 7 billion; a startling seven-fold increase since the first billion occurred 200 years ago.

Population was once at the top of the international agenda, dominating the first Earth Day and the subject of best-selling books like "The Population Bomb". Since the 1960s the world population has nearly doubled, adding more than 3 billion people. At the same time, talking about population has become politically incorrect because of the sensitivity of the issues surrounding the topic– religion, economics, family planning and gender inequality. Yet it is an issue we cannot afford to ignore.

Today nearly 1 billion people still suffer from chronic hunger even though the Green Revolution that has fed billions will soon come to an end due to the diminishing availability of its main ingredients – oil and water. Compounded with our ravenous appetite for natural resources, population growth is putting an unprecedented burden on the life system we all depend on, as we refuse to face the fact that more people equals more problems.

The film illustrates both the over consumption and the inequity side of the

population issue by following Beth, a mother and a child-rights activist as she comes to discover, along with the audience, the thorny complexities of the population issue. Beth – who comes from a large American family of 12 and has adopted an African-born daughter – travels to Ethiopia where she meets Zinet, the oldest daughter of a desperately poor family of 12. Zinet has found the courage to break free from thousand-year-old-cultural barriers, and their encounter will change Beth forever.

Grounded in the theories of social scientist Riane Eisler, the film strives not to blame but to educate, to highlight a different path for humanity. Overpopulation is merely a symptom of an even larger problem - a "domination system" that for most of human history has glorified the domination of man over nature, man over child and man over woman. To break this pattern, the film demonstrates that we must change our conquering mindset into a nurturing one. And the first step is to raise the status of women worldwide.

“Mother, Caring for 7 Billion” features world- renown experts and scientists including biologist Paul Ehrlich, author of “The Population Bomb,” economist Mathis Wackernagel, the creator of the ground-breaking Footprint Network, and Eisler, whose book “The Chalice and the Blade” has been published in 23 countries.

## **8. Filmmakers’ Q&A**

### **Q: Why did you produce Mother?**

A: After producing a couple of environmental films, we realized that we couldn’t make another film on sustainability without dealing with the subject of human population. Too much is at stake to keep ignoring that issue. It’s misunderstood and highly stigmatized and we felt the need to produce a comprehensive film to help bring the issue back into the public conversation. It doesn’t have to be the elephant in the room anymore.

### **Q: Why the title “Mother”?**

A: The title “Mother” symbolizes the relationship that we have with our “Mother Earth” who has supported and provided for all of us for so long. But now we’ve entered into a new relationship with her. Our impact on the earth’s ecosystem has been so significant that we are now the major agent of change on the planet. Some scientists call this the Anthropocene era. With that new influence comes a new responsibility and we must change our user and conquering mindset into a nurturing and caring one toward the planet and our fellow human beings.

Mother also symbolizes women around the world who should be able to choose freely the number of children they want and get the support to make sure their children survive and get an education. Finally, Mothers have been nurturing all of these years and should play a greater role in helping to shape our future.

### **Q: Tell us more about the two women that you feature in the film?**

A: Population growth may be a global problem, but it is also a very personal one. To convey this, we not only brought forward the human side of the issue, but a woman's perspective. Beth in the film represents an excellent example of the demographic transition in the US. She comes from a large family of 12 and now is the mother of 2 biological children and an adopted daughter. As a child's rights activist she also embodies the caring approach that we need to take on this issue.

Zinet is the oldest daughter of a family of 12, living in poverty in central Ethiopia who refused to get married at an early age and went to school. By doing so she is helping to break the cycle of poverty by avoiding early pregnancy. As is often the case in the poorest countries, large families can't provide enough food or an education for all their children. It's particularly true with girls who often stay home doing chores and don't get to go to school. It's a pattern that is still all too common throughout the developing world.

We believed that the journey of our two characters in the film would resonate with all audiences and help them understand the personal side of this critical issue.

### **Q. Why did you choose to follow an American in this film?**

A: We wanted to create a balanced documentary so half the film focuses on population consumption issues and the other half looks at developing countries that are struggling to keep up with their rapid population growth. Because of this split focus we were also looking for someone who had three characteristics: an American, a human rights activist and someone who was not really aware of population or its implications. Beth turned out to be a great fit because of her work in international children's rights issues and was particularly eager to find out how population impacted children. By following Beth and her emotional journey we hope the audience will realize that this is a world problem that does not have borders or colors.

### **Q. Why did you choose to Film in Ethiopia?**

A: We decided to film in Ethiopia because population is a major issue fueling many of their economic and humanitarian problems Ethiopia's population is projected to triple by 2050, from 91 million to 278 million, making it one of the top 10 most populous countries in the world for the first time. The country realizes there is a problem and they are actively working to help stabilize the population. Beth travels and works on international women's and children's rights issues. We invited her to go to Ethiopia to help give the audience her perspective to what she witnesses and learns. She was also very interested in meeting and learning from people that are finding human rights based solutions to the problem.

### **Q: In your film do you tell people to have fewer children?**

A: No, having children is a basic human right. We just want people to reflect on our new responsibility towards our ecosystem, the welfare of future generations and the 1 billion people around the world that still suffer from hunger. When people think about a solution to the issue of population growth the first thing that comes to their mind is population control and coercive policies. We were looking at caring solutions that are at the other end of that spectrum and that would have a potentially significant impact.

### **Q: Reducing the population growth rate isn't the only solution highlighted in the film. Can you tell us why?**

A: The world population is estimated to stabilize in about 80 to 90 years because of population momentum and we've already reached many thresholds on the planet. We will need to produce 70% more food by 2050, oil extraction is at its maximum rate and will start to decline soon, species are

becoming extinct at an unprecedented speed and the list goes on. That's why we need to be smarter now about how we use natural resources, how we use renewable energy, how we manage our ecosystem and how we produce and distribute food.

**Q: You highlight the current economic system in the film, why?**

A: Our current economic system is based on constant growth. It has grown highly dependent on people - the consumers - and always needs more of us to sustain it. We're adding about 50 million middle class each year to the world economy mainly from India, China and Brazil. It's a triumph for progress and poverty, but a ticking bomb for our civilization. Not only are we growing in number, but we're also consuming more than ever. The world has got richer in the last 50 years but it hasn't made us particularly happier. We have to move away from that system and find an alternative economy if we want to keep prospering on this planet.

**Q: What about the concern that a decrease in population will cause even more stress on our fragile economy?**

A: Most politicians and economist see the problem backward. The problem is not a shrinking population in the developed world, but our current economic system. We can't keep counting on more and more people to sustain our economic model. It's not sustainable for the planet or healthy for us. We need to start moving away from consumerism as an economic engine and start putting values on things that actually make our lives better and happier. That's what the economy should do for us. We shouldn't bailout banks and corporations that just view the degradation of our planet and people's quality of life as collateral damage to economic growth. In the film, social scientist Riane Eisler says that we need to invest in people starting with education and basic social safety nets to help them achieve their full potential. Then we need to start seeing the human economy as part of nature and not the other way around. By doing so we can re-create millions of meaningful new jobs by simply replenishing our forest, moving to a more sustainable local organic agriculture, refurbishing our cities, retrofitting our houses and factories, re-inventing the way we travel on 2 and 4 wheels, and finally moving our energy sources from fossil fuel to renewables. Our political leaders see only as far as their re-election and they listen to economists that are invested in the same old economic model who often offer quick band-aid solutions.

**Q: Did you encounter any kind of negative reactions during production?**

A: The strong stigma attached to the issue of population growth has been a problem for scientists, journalists and filmmakers alike. We experienced it first hand during the research phase of this film when a couple of organizations shut the door on us, or when people refused to talk about the issue on camera. It's funny because we don't consider ourselves as radical militants with some kind of hidden agenda, but just as concerned world citizens.

**Q: Why is overpopulation a child's rights issue?**

A: Historically children have been viewed as an asset to take care of their parents in their old age. In the past, parents had many children in order for a few to survive into adulthood. In the last hundred years, healthcare and immunization has greatly improved and this has resulted in one of the largest and most sustained baby booms in the world's history. When a developing country has a population that is growing too quickly for its infrastructure, there are not enough schools, healthcare facilities, doctors, housing, and food. This directly affects children who are the most vulnerable in a society.

**Q: I heard the entire world population could fit into the space of Texas if everyone lived with the density of New York City or another one I hear is the entire world population can all fit standing shoulder to shoulder in the space of Los Angeles. If there is so much space in the world, why can't we just use the empty space in places like Canada and Russia?**

A: We have heard these questions before and they will come up again. The issue has never been about space. It is about resources and processing waste. People need a few acres per person for the food, water, non-food agricultural products like cotton and lumber, energy and other resources to run our daily lives. It is those resources that are now stretched to the limit. Not to mention handling waste, landfill and sewage treatment. There's plenty of room for everyone in the Sahara Desert, but no water. If people could farm in the barren areas of Canada and Russia, they would already be doing it.

**Q: I live in Serbia and we have a problem with depopulation in my country. Why should I be concerned with population growth in other places?**

A: That is a common question from people in small towns in the US and places like Eastern Europe. Increasing population in other countries and the resulting consumption is a problem for everyone and here is why:

1. According to Oxfam since 1991 rich countries with large and growing populations around the world have either bought or leased farmland around the world the size of Greenland and the size is increasing. Usually it is in developing countries but there are many farms owned by the Chinese in the US including livestock farms. I am not sure about E. Europe and their farmland but it seems just a matter of time as Africa dries with droughts that those countries will go to E. Europe. This land is no longer available for local agriculture and pushes the price up for local farmers. Local food production and choices decreases and prices increase.

2. Climate change intensifies - more consumption and more coal powered power plants, more droughts and heat waves like the one in Russia in 2010 that caused a decrease in grain exports and sparked food riots in Egypt (a major recipient of Russia's grain) more climate migration from dryer climates to developed countries. It is not fossil fuels that cause climate change; it is people using fossil fuels that cause climate change. Choices of how we live affect everyone.

3. Food prices - as the world population increases and demand continues to increase from an increasingly affluent world, the price of food will increase as the world is on a common food price index. Given fresh water resources that are depleting or are being polluted there is going to be problems with enough water to grow crops. Over 90% of Africa's crops are rain dependent. As supply stagnates then prices will go up. Also food grain as fuel (ethanol) for vehicles drives up food prices all over the world as the supply of grain on the world market is decreased. This causes things like bread and cereal prices to rise.

This is just one side of the issue and the other is the humanitarian side that includes empowering women and giving them a voice about their family size to help bring them out of poverty. This is a huge humanitarian issue that has been ignored for too long due to religious, social and political reasons. In many places in the world women are kept from going to school past a certain age and are forced to marry very young. When a family doesn't have enough to feed all their children they generally feed the boys and the girls get what is left. Likewise without enough money families typically send the boys to school

and not the girls. There are many painful examples of exploited and abused children throughout the world. Every child deserves to be wanted and cared for. By giving women and families the information and resources they need to decide on their family size, there is a much better chance that all of their children will flourish and be successful members of society.

## 9. Filmmakers

### **Christophe Fauchere**

The director, producer and editor of this project is Christophe Fauchere. He has a proven track record of taking on environmental and social issues, finding their links and connecting the dots for the audience. He creates clear and entertaining works that make multifaceted subjects understandable and entertaining.

He is an award-winning filmmaker who has been working in the film and video industry for 15 years. He founded the production company Tiroir A Films in 2001. Some of his documentaries have been broadcast on major television networks in Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, Finland, and Russia and on cable television in the U.S. Most importantly, Christophe is a concerned world citizen. This is what led him to produce and direct two acclaimed documentaries: *Energy Crossroads: A Burning need to Change Course* and *The Great Squeeze: Surviving the Human Project*. These two films were selected at over 16 film festivals on five continents and won praise, as well as three “Best Documentary” awards.

### **Joyce Johnson**

Joyce is the co-producer of the last three Tiroir A Films’ award-winning documentaries: *Mother*, *The Great Squeeze* and *Energy Crossroads*. Joyce’s responsibilities include fundraising, budgeting, researching, organizing shoots, marketing and distribution. Joyce has a degree in marketing. She also has a biology degree and a teaching license. Joyce was also a science teacher and health educator in inner city schools.

## 10. Featured Voices

### **DR. MALCOLM POTTS-University of California at Berkeley**

Malcolm Potts is a Cambridge trained obstetrician and reproductive scientist. He is the first holder of the Fred H. Bixby endowed chair in Population and Family Planning in the School of Public Health, Berkeley. As CEO of Family Health International (FHI), he launched the first large scale studies of maternal mortality, which helped start the worldwide Safe Motherhood Initiative. He has published ten books and over 200 scientific papers. His recent books include *Queen Victoria’s Gene* and *Ever Since Adam and Eve: The Evolution of Human Sexuality*. His most recent book is *Sex and War: How Biology Explains War and Terrorism and Offers a Path to a Safer World*.

### **JOHN FEENEY-Environmental writer**

John Feeney writes on ecological issues underreported in the media, with profound implications for our future. His emphases have included human carrying capacity and the roots of the global ecological crisis. His focus now is on the unsustainable nature of civilization and related pre- and post-civilization topics.

### **REV. PETER SAWTELL-Eco-Justice Ministries**

Peter Sawtell is the founder and Executive Director of Eco-Justice Ministries. Peter is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Rev. Sawtell was on the adjunct faculty of the Iliff School of Theology in 2004 for a course on "Eco-Justice and Social Transformation."

### **DR. PAUL EHRLICH-Stanford University**

President, Center for Conservation Biology, Bing Professor of Population Studies  
Paul R. Ehrlich received his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. Co-founder with Peter H. Raven of the field of co-evolution, he has pursued long-term studies of the structure, dynamics, and genetics of natural butterfly populations. He has also been a pioneer in alerting the public to the problems of overpopulation, and in raising issues of population, resources, and the environment as matters of public policy.

### **WILLIAM RYERSON-Population Media Center**

William N. Ryerson is Population Media Center's founder and President. Mr. Ryerson has a 39-year history of working in the field of reproductive health, including 20 years of experience adapting the Sabido methodology for behavior change communications to various cultural settings worldwide.

### **DR. MATHIS WACKERNAGEL-Global Footprint Network**

Mathis is president and co-creator of the Ecological Footprint and has worked on sustainability issues for government agencies, NGOs and businesses on all continents. Mathis has authored or contributed to over 50 peer-reviewed papers, numerous articles and reports and various books on sustainability that focus on the question of embracing limits and developing metrics for sustainability.

### **DR. LYUBA ZARSKY-Monterey Institute of International Studies**

Dr. Zarsky is currently a Senior Research Fellow for the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University (2002-present) and an International Research Fellow for the International Institute for Environment and Development Sustainable Markets Group in London (2006-present). Dr. Zarsky's most recent projects focus on research and consulting work to stimulate and direct global investment flows. Specifically, she is currently developing a theoretical and definitional foundation for the concept of "climate-resilient development" as well as a series of analytical and practical tools to identify the challenges and opportunities for the delivery of sustainable and accessible energy, including via new business models.

### **DR. LESTER BROWN-Earth Policy Institute**

Dr. Brown is the founder and president of Earth Policy Institute, has been described by the Washington Post as "one of the world's most influential thinkers" and as "the guru of the global environmental movement" by The Telegraph of Calcutta. The author of numerous books, including World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse, chapters, articles, etc., he helped pioneer the concept of environmentally sustainable development. His principal research areas include food, population, water, climate change, and renewable energy.

### **ESRAA BANI-Population Action International**

Esraa Bani has over five years of nonprofit and multi-lateral experience in International Health issues. Esraa earned her MPH from the University of Virginia with a concentration in Epidemiology and Research. Her interests lie in Gender-Based Violence, Global Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and HIV/AIDS prevention in Africa. Bani currently serves as American Psychological Association Program Coordinator. Prior to APA, Esraa worked part-time as the Director of Strategic Planning and Initiatives with the Diaspora African Women's Network (DAWN). Also prior to joining APA, Esraa was an Advocacy Coordinator and Co-Chair of the Young People's Working Group at Population Action International (PAI). Esraa was born in Sudan and raised in Saudi Arabia and immigrated to the United States in 1998.



### **DR. ALBERT BARTLETT-University of Colorado at Boulder**

Albert A. Bartlett is Professor Emeritus in Nuclear Physics at University of Colorado at Boulder. He has been a member of the faculty of the University of Colorado since 1950. He was President of the American Association of Physics Teachers in 1978 and in 1981 he received their Robert A. Millikan Award for his outstanding scholarly contributions to physics education.

### **ROBERT WALKER-Population Institute**

Robert Walker is the Executive Vice President of the Population Institute, where he directs the organization's advocacy and public education activities, including its work on issues related to health, economic development, sustainability and the environment. Prior to joining the Population Institute in February 2009, Mr. Walker was President of the Population Resource Center. He formerly was the Executive Director of the Common Cause Education Fund, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to promote open, honest and accountable government.

### **BRIAN DIXON-Population Connection**

As the Vice President for Media and Government Relations, Brian Dixon, represents Population Connection on Capitol Hill and to the public. He was previously Director of Government Relations at Population Connection for over a decade. In this role, he led the advocacy efforts of America's largest grassroots organization concerned with the effects of global and domestic population growth, and represented the organization at a number of international meetings leading up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 and the five year follow up events. Prior to his work at Population Connection, Brian worked on Capitol Hill as a legislative aid responsible for environmental and energy issues. He graduated from Hofstra University with a B.A. in Political Science.

### **DR. MARTHA CAMPBELL-Venture Strategies**

Martha Madison Campbell teaches as a Lecturer in the School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley. She is a political scientist and health policy specialist with interests in population, economics, issues of scale, and reproductive rights for women. In 2000 she formed Venture Strategies, to help facilitate-large scale health and reproductive health change where it is wanted in low resource countries; but also to invent a new model of nonprofit structure.

### **NEGUSSIE TEFFERA-Population Media Center**

Country Representative for Population Media Center – Ethiopia. In that capacity, he oversees production of radio serial dramas and training of media practitioners using the Sabido methodology. He was the former Director of the Ethiopian National Office of Population. In that role, he played a leading role in the writing of the country's population policy and oversaw its adoption and implementation. He was also the Chairman of the National Task Force responsible for developing the National Population and Reproductive Health Communication and Advocacy Strategy for Ethiopia. Dr. Negussie holds a Ph.D. in Communications from the University of Wales, Cardiff.

### **KATIE ELMORE-Population Media Center**

PMC's Director of Communications received a Masters in Media Studies from the New School for Social Research in New York, NY, and a B.A. in History with a minor in Sociology from the University of Vermont. She also serves on the board of The Center for Media and Democracy in Burlington, Vermont.

### **LAURA SCOTT-Author, Two Is Enough**

Laura Scott is author of Two Is Enough: A Couple's Guide to Living Childless by Choice, founder and the director of The Childless by Choice Project (a survey and documentary film at [childlessbychoiceproject.com](http://childlessbychoiceproject.com)). Scott also is an Executive and Life Coach at [180coaching.com](http://180coaching.com), specializing in reproductive decision making, transition, and Energy Leadership™ coaching.

### **RIANE EISLER-Center for Partnership Studies**

Riane Eisler is a social scientist, attorney, and author whose work on cultural transformation has inspired both scholars and social activists. Her research has impacted many fields, including history, economics, psychology, sociology, and education. She has been a leader in the movement for peace, sustainability, and economic equity, and her pioneering work in human rights has expanded the focus of international organizations to include the rights of women and children. Dr. Eisler is internationally known for her bestseller “The Chalice and The Blade: Our History, Our Future”. Her newest book, “The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics” proposes a new approach to economics that gives visibility and value to the most essential human work: the work of caring for people and planet.

### **DR. AMINATA TOURE-United Nations Population Fund(UNFPA)**

Aminata Toure is the current Chief of the Gender, Human rights and Culture Branch in UNFPA headquarters. She previously worked as Chief Technical Adviser for UNFPA in the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs in Burkina Faso, in Cote d’Ivoire as Regional Adviser for the UNFPA. Mrs. TOURE also worked at the Regional Office of UNIFEM in Dakar as Coordinator of an eight-Country Programme on Gender and HIV/AIDS; she also worked as Programs Director of the Senegalese Branch of the International Parenthood Planned Federation in charge of the management of the 8 Family planning clinics spread throughout the country.

### **SUSAN DAVIS-BRAC, USA**

Ms. Davis is a thought leader in international development and civil society innovation and co-author with David Bornstein of “Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know” published by Oxford University Press in 2010. She is the founding President & CEO of BRAC USA, a grant making affiliate of BRAC, an international development organization started in Bangladesh in 1972 and now working in Haiti and 9 countries across Africa and Asia.

### **SARA MORELLO-Catholics for Choice**

Sara Morello works closely with the President of CFC to develop and evaluate their organizational strategy, program plans and communications efforts. She leads the senior staff in developing implementation plans for the organization’s work and directs the development efforts, finance and administration of the organization. Ms. Morello’s expertise in canon law, theology, church structure and governance informs CFC’s work as well as that of its partners and colleagues. Her professional experience includes positions with the National Women’s Law Center and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Ms. Morello holds a licentiate in canon law from The Catholic University of America (Washington, DC) and a bachelor’s degree in theology and history from Creighton University (Omaha, NE).

## **11. Production Credits**

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***Featuring in Order of Appearance***

**Dr. Malcolm Potts** – University of California at Berkeley  
**John Feeney** – Environmental writer  
**Rev. Peter Sawtell** – Eco Justice Ministries  
**Dr. Paul Ehrlich** – Stanford University  
**William Ryerson** – Population Media Center  
**Dr. Mathis Wackernagel** – Global Footprint Network  
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**Esraa Bani** – Population Action International  
**Dr. Albert Bartlett** – University of Colorado  
**Robert Walker** – Population Institute  
**Beth Osnes** – Mothers Acting Up  
**Brian Dixon** – Population Connection  
**Dr. Martha Campbell** – Venture Strategies  
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