



## World YWCA Independent Review Panel Feedback

Accountability Report 2016 Review Round June 2018



# World YWCA Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

**Review Round June 2018** 

11 July 2018

Dear Malayah Harper,

We would like to thank World YWCA for submitting its accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to continuously strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

World YWCA's seventh accountability report is reflective of the disruptions caused by the transition in leadership in 2016. While the importance of accountability and transparency is expressed in the opening statement, there were no details about how accountability drives decision making. The transition is cited as the reason no progress was made on accountability processes and indeed the majority of the Panel's recommendations were not addressed. The Panel would however have expected information on how World YWCA plans to take these processes forward in the future, particularly on key issues such as complaints, environmental impact, and workforce development. The Panel recommends that World YWCA ensures the organisation's work and development continues even in times of disruptive change, especially when it comes to accountability. **Institutional commitment** to accountability was overall not as evident as in previous reports.

There was also little **evidence and examples** to demonstrate how policies and processes are working in practice, and links to several policies as well as descriptions of some processes were missing. Even if these have been provided in the past, they should continue to be included in subsequent reports so that readers are able to locate the relevant information, and so that the most up-to-date version of the documents is provided. The Panel encourages World YWCA to make key policies available on its website and highlights Restless Development's <u>radical transparency</u> approach of making most policies available online as a good practice.

The Panel commends World YWCA for **progress made** on programme monitoring and evaluation (NGO3), though more information on the practical details and implementation of the framework would be appreciated in the next report. The panel also commends that some progress has started to be made on reporting on affiliates through the annual progress questionnaire. World YWCA's approach to incorporating feedback from its members (4.4) is identified as **good practice**.

Areas for improvement remain feedback and complaints mechanisms (NGO2 and NGO9), environmental management (EN16-20), coordination with other actors



(NGO6), workforce training (LA10), and anti-corruption policy and training (SO3 and SO4). The Panel urges World YWCA to focus on improving in these areas and particularly stresses the importance of a functioning complaints mechanism, as the minimum requirement for Accountable Now membership. The Panel will notify the Accountable Now Board of this lack of progress, having highlighted this important gap three times before.

The Panel acknowledges that submission of this 2016 report in May 2018 means that progress may have been made in some of the areas mentioned above in 2017 and the first half of 2018. This reinforces the importance of timely submission and review of these accountability reports. The Panel notes that this is a challenge for several Accountable Now members and the Secretariat is currently discussing with all members how to improve the timeliness of the reporting process. The Panel hopes that future reports can be submitted within 6 months of the end of the reporting period so that its feedback can shape planning for the following year.

The Panel also encourages World YWCA to mention its membership of Accountable Now on their website and to highlight its annual accountability reports. By making its commitment to accountability more visible, World YWCA can encourage more discussion on these issues, particularly with its stakeholders.

Given the overall lack of progress and the continued lack of a functioning complaints mechanism, World YWCA will remain on an annual reporting cycle rather than moving to a two-year cycle.

Our intention is that this feedback letter, and any response you may wish to provide, is made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report – as it is the case with all previously reviewed reports. However, should there be errors of fact in the feedback above or in the note below; we would of course wish to correct these before publication. Please share any comments or amendments by <u>8 August</u> 2018.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Mihir Bhatt

John Clark

Louise James

Jane Kiragu

Saroeun Soeuna



## **World YWCA's Accountability Report 2016**

**Review Round June 2018** 

## PROFILE DISCLOSURES

## I. Strategy and Analysis

## 1.1 Statement from the most senior decision-maker

Fully addressed

The opening statement by Fabrice Sa'a, World YWCA's Head of Finance and Operations, presents the continuing challenges in achieving gender equality and equity, as well as the organisation's ambitious goal 2035.

The importance of accountability and transparency is flagged, and World YWCA is committed to ensuring these issues are embedded into all their work. However, there were no specific details about how accountability drives decision-making in the organisation.

The statement points out that 2016 was a year of transition, with World YWCA's General Secretary leaving, and the recruitment of a successor taking ten months. World YWCA did not make any changes to its accountability processes or framework in this time – highlighting the need for accountability to be embedded throughout an organisation as the processes should have been able to be advanced without the GS.

Given this lack of progress, particularly in relation to complaints mechanisms, World YWCA remains on an annual reporting schedule rather than moving to the interim cycle. The Panel appreciates that World YWCA will continue reviewing its accountability policies and processes moving forward, and looks forward to reading about its progress in the next full report.

Finally, the Panel would like to flag that the opening statement should be from the organisation's most senior decision maker, in this case the General Secretary, and hopes that Malayah Harper is able to write the statement in the next report.



I. Organisational Profile		
2.1 – 2.8	Name of organisation / Primary activities/ Operational structure / Headquarter location / Number of countries / Nature of ownership / Target audience / Scale of organisation  Fully addressed	
2.9	Significant changes Fully addressed In 2016, World YWCA'S General Secretary left the organisation, and recruitment of a new GS took place, with Malayah Harper joining the organisation in December 2016.	
2.10	Awards received Fully addressed	
III. Report Parameters		
3.1 – 3.4	Reporting period / Date of most recent report / Reporting Cycle / Contact person	
	Fully addressed	
3.5	Reporting process  Addressed  The reporting process was led by one staff member, with the collaboration of the full team and guidance from the leadership team. The Panel appreciates that the report as well as the Panel's feedback is shared with the leadership team, staff, board members, and the Global Governance and Constitution Committee. The Panel assumes that the Board is also concerned about the lack of progress on key areas of accountability, such as complaints handling. We would expect that the Board is taking an active role in monitoring this.	
	More details on how this works in practice, and what action is taken in response to the Panel's feedback, is requested in the next report. The Panel highlights Restless Development's (page 6) approach as an example of good practice – particularly how they use the Panel's feedback to set targets and activities for the coming year.  The response notes the importance of meaningfully involving the entire team in the reporting process to strengthen accountability, but mentions that progress was hindered by staff changes. The Panel would nonetheless encourage World YWCA to develop a plan for future improvement. Restless Development is again a good reference	



	point here, with a task team of staff leading on different areas of the report, and a consultative reporting writing and review process.
3.6 – 3.7	Report boundary / Specific limitations
	Fully addressed
	The report covers the World Office in Geneva, the World Board and Council, with some information provided on World YWCA's affiliated Member Associations based on the results of an annual progress questionnaire. The Panel would like to see a copy of the questionnaire with the submission of the next report. Are there quality control mechanisms to sanction Member Associations that don't adhere to YWCA's global standards?
3.8 – 3.11	Basis for reporting / Changes in reporting parameters
	Addressed
	In 2016, World YWCA introduced a monitoring and evaluation framework for the entire movement, including a Yearly Progress Questionnaire which promotes impact measurement and learning. The Panel requests more information on what issues or indicators specifically have been included in World YWCA's accountability report. Are there topics where movement-wide reporting is now possible and any significant areas of challenge that have been identified?
3.12	Reference table
	Fully addressed
IV. Mission, Values, Governance, and Stakeholder Engagement	
4.1	Governance structure
	Fully addressed
	The World Council is the supreme authority, meeting at least every four years, and the World Board is the main decision making body between World Council meetings. There are a number of committees working on governance and policy issues, and risk management is based on input from lawyers and auditors.
	In 2016, a Sustainability and Affiliation Fee Task Force was established to review and make recommendations on sustainability and affiliation issues.
4.2 - 4.3	Division of power between the governance body and management / Number and independence of Board Directors



#### Fully addressed

World YWCA's Board and Council govern by adopting policies and setting strategy objectives. The General Secretary implements these policies, drives the organisation's future vision, and represents the World YWCA externally.

World YWCA's Board Members, except for the General Secretary, are all volunteers and are only reimbursed for relevant expenses. In response to the Panel's last feedback letter, a comprehensive explanation of how World YWCA defines volunteers is provided – this encapsulates both higher level positions such as Board Directors, as well as those working on programmatic or administrative tasks.

#### 4.4 Feedback from internal stakeholders

Fully addressed

The report outlines the ways in which Member Associations as well as individual staff members are able to participate in decision-making processes and provide feedback.

A helpful illustrative example is provided, outlining how MAs, staff, and partner organisations provided input on the development of World YWCA's Goal 2035. The Panel notes positively the efforts to obtain input from a diverse membership base and to gather feedback in several rounds of consultations over several years.

Another example explains how a Sustainability and Affiliation Fee Task Force consulted with member associations through various means to gain input on their movement consultation.

The Panel suggests that World YWCA highlight specific decisions that were taken or changes that were made as a result of these consultations, to provide a full picture of how internal feedback is taken on board.

Overall, World YWCA's approach is identified as good practice.

## 4.5 Compensation for members of highest governance body

Partially addressed

In 2016, World YWCA reviewed its personnel policies and regulations to update them and bring them in line with local regulations. Revised versions were planned to be presented to the World Board for approval in 2017 – the Panel looks forward to an update on any key changes in the next report.



World YWCA's salaries are based on the 2013 salary scale which was annexed to their 2014 Accountability Report (page 42). The salary of the General Secretary is determined separately by the Board, and the Panel repeats its previous question as to why the salary is not part of the salary scale and why it is not disclosed.

#### 4.6 **Conflicts of interest**

#### Addressed

World YWCA Board members receive an induction on core governance and accountability policies at the beginning of their terms, and sign the World YWCA Ethical Guidelines (available at Appendix 1 in the 2015 accountability report; the Panel suggests making this document publicly available on the World YWCA website). In the last report, it was stated that while the Ethical Guidelines cover conflict of interest situations, there is no conflict disclosure process. This was planned for development in the future, and the Panel encourages World YWCA to focus on implementing such a process. As it is currently, World YWCA's approach to conflicts of interest doesn't seem to be robust.

## 4.10 Process to support highest governance body's own performance

Fully addressed

The World Board reports to the World Council after four years in office. However, it is not clear whether there is ongoing evaluation of the Board's performance – how are potential issues identified between the four-year reports? The Board's Global Governance and Constitution Committee has a mandate to oversee implementation of an evaluation process for Board meetings and objectives. Board members have identified timeliness and time management as areas for improvement, and the Panel hopes to see an update on actions taken in response to these findings in World YWCA's next report. Have there been any findings or recommendations about the Board's performance related to achieving objectives?

## 4.12, 4.14 Social charters, principles or other initiatives to which the organisation subscribes / List of stakeholders

Fully addressed

In 2016, World YWCA joined the ACT Alliance which works to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people.



	The Panel notes that reference to financial stakeholders in 2015 actually covers 2016.
4.15	Basis for identification of stakeholders
	Addressed
	The World YWCA's key stakeholders are affiliated Member
	Associations, and girls, young women, and women with prioritisation
	of those who are most marginalised. How does World YWCA define

guidance as approved by the World Council and Board.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

## I. Programme Effectiveness

## NGO1 Involvement of affected stakeholder groups

Addressed

Member Associations are able to influence decision-making on policies, strategy and budget at World Council meetings every four years. Examples are provided of two resolutions raised by MAs, which were passed at the 2015 WC meeting. The Panel repeats its previous question about how MAs are involved between WC meetings.

the most marginalised? These groups are determined and prioritised based on the World YWCA Constitution and policy/programmatic

Internal as well as external stakeholders are engaged in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes through regular consultations and working groups. More detailed examples would help illustrate how this works in practice. It is mentioned that stakeholders were engaged through a movement-wide consultation on Sustainability and Affiliation Fees, with recommendations presented to the World Board – were any of these adopted? Has there been follow-up with the stakeholders to monitor whether they are happy with how their suggestions have been implemented?

## NGO2 | Mechanisms for feedback and complaints

Partially addressed

This remains an area of major **weakness** and the Panel reminds World YWCA that having a functional complaints mechanism is the minimum membership criterion for Accountable Now. Internal and external stakeholders can of course submit feedback and complaints via the Contact Us section on the World YWCA's website, but are not explicitly invited to do so and there is no information about the complaints policy



or process available on the website. The Panel will notify the Accountable Now Board of this, given it has flagged this issue at least three times previously.

The complaints policy was shared in Appendix 3 of World YWCA's 2015 accountability report, but should be linked in future reports as well for ease of reading.

The Panel again urges World YWCA to create a dedicated feedback and complaints page, or at the very least link the complaints policy in the Contact section of the website, as otherwise stakeholders will not know about the process and what they can expect. While the transition of the General Secretary was cited in the opening statement as the reason no changes were made to World YWCA's accountability processes in 2016, an update on plans to properly implement the complaints policy as soon as possible would have been expected in the report, and the Panel requests a response from World YWCA on this point.

One complaint was received in 2016 and it is stated that the general complaint procedure was followed. Was the case resolved?

## NGO3 | Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning

Addressed

In 2016, World YWCA developed a Monitoring, Evaluation and Research framework which promotes impact measurement and learning. The framework is based on evaluative evidence, with lessons learned informing future decisions, in turn leading to greater accountability. The World YWCA Office also developed M&E tools to support member associations. The Panel commends these effort, as this was previously an area of weakness for World YWCA.

A Yearly Progress Questionnaire was mentioned earlier in the report. More information on this is also requested, including whether there are satisfactory completion rates among Member Associations, and how the findings are followed up on.

#### NGO4 | Gender and diversity

Fully addressed

World YWCA's Gender Policy was shared in Appendix 5 to their 2015 report – the Panel requests that this continue to be linked in future reports, and ideally be included on the World YWCA website.

The policy commits to a gender analysis which identifies and helps act upon gender inequalities, and this is reflected in YWCA's programme design – empowerment of women is placed at the centre of their work,



and attention is payed to diversity, non-discrimination, and intergenerational and shared leadership.

In 2015 World YWCA adopted a comprehensive resolution on non-discrimination (also included in the 2015 report; again, a link would be helpful). The impact of low socio-economic status and lack of education is also recognised and informs World YWCA's advocacy work. The Panel repeats their previous question about how these principles and values are integrated into the work of Member Associations.

The Panel notes positively World YWCA's efforts to bring diverse and marginalised voices to policy platforms and into decision-making spaces, as well as their approach of partnering with different organisations to ensure increased diversity.

## NGO5 | Advocacy positions and public awareness campaigns

Addressed

World YWCA's advocacy positions are developed in line with the organisation's constitutional purpose, as well as decisions of the World Council. The Global Advocacy Policy which defines the process for adopting positions and involving partners and other parties was provided in the 2015 report (Appendix 7) and again the Panel requests a link to this in future reports.

Advocacy positions are created in consultation with Member Associations and communications plans are developed with key objectives in line with the organisation's strategic framework.

The report refers to World YWCA hosting a Youth Forum ahead of the UN Human Rights Council meeting in 2016, with 120 young people participating to discuss issues of importance and influence decision-makers. Additional information on whether and how young people, including young women, were involved in the creation of this campaign would have been welcome.

The report states that the World YWCA has not needed to correct a campaign or advocacy position, but that these issues will be considered in a new Advocacy and Communications Strategy. Is there a timeline for this?

#### NGO6 Coordination with other actors

Partially addressed

While the Panel notes the strong sentiments about the importance of partnerships which are effective, sustainable, and mutually beneficial, information about how partnerships work in practice is not provided. The



Partnership Guidelines provided in Appendix 9 of the 2015 report are not linked or mentioned in this report (are they still being used?), and while it is mentioned that building effective partnerships is a key action for 2016-2019, there are no details about how this will be achieved. In the next report, the Panel would like to see information about how partnerships are developed and carried out in practice. For the time being, this remains an area for improvement.

## II. Financial Management

#### NGO7 Resource allocation

Addressed

The World Council approves a multi-year budget framework which is reviewed and adjusted annually by the Board. Accounts are audited annually and project/event managers are responsible for budgeting and financial reporting. A double-signature system is in place for all payments. World YWCA's financial statements are available on their website together with their annual report - are these the audited figures, and is the auditor's report also published?

In 2016, a manual on accounting policies and processes was developed. The Panel encourages World YWCA to make this available on their website. Is there full compliance by relevant staff on these policies and processes?

#### NGO8 **Sources of Funding**

Fully addressed

Information is provided about sources of restricted and unrestricted funding, and details are in the financial statements. Is World YWCA able to disclose the five largest donors and the type of donor (e.g. foundation, government, individual)? The Panel notes that World YWCA's deficit in 2016 was almost double the deficit in 2015 – does this reflect an agreed policy to reduce the organisation's reserves?

## III. Environmental Management

EN16/ Greenhouse gas emissions of operations / Initiatives to reduce emissions EN18 / of operations / Initiatives to mitigate environmental impact of activities

**EN26** 

and services

Not addressed



There has been no progress on these areas in 2016. World YWCA does not track its greenhouse emissions or have any initiatives in place to reduce emissions or otherwise mitigate negative environmental impacts.

World YWCA's Policy on Sustainable Development is provided, as requested by the Panel in previous feedback. This refers to the organisation's advocacy and programmatic efforts; the Panel would like to highlight the importance of "walking the talk" in this regard and implementing mechanisms to ensure the organisation itself operates in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.

The previous report had mentioned a draft Environmental Policy. The Panel requests an update on the envisaged timeline for approving and implementing this policy, and considers World YWCA's performance on these issues as a major area of weakness as long as there is no plan for progress.

## IV. Human Resource Management

## LA1 Size and composition of workforce

Fully addressed

The report provides information on the World Office's 22 staff members, interns, and consultants including position and geographical background/nationality (this was not entirely clear). The Panel assumes that all staff are located in the Geneva office. Volunteers were not mentioned and the Panel requests information on this, including diversity factors, in the next report.

## EC7 **Procedure for local hiring**

Fully addressed

Despite not having a specific policy, local hiring is encouraged at World YWCA. There are efforts to ensure geographical cultural and linguistic diversity at the World YWCA office, but this is increasingly difficult due to Swiss laws requiring Swiss or European citizens to be prioritised. The report states that Member Associations usually hire locally.

## LA10 Workforce training

Not addressed

For the third year in a row, World YWCA reports no progress in this area, this time due to the transition in leadership. As mentioned in previous sections, the Panel would have expected an update on plans to address this point in future. The Panel urges progress on this area of weakness, as



training is crucial for the development staff as World YWCA works towards its 2035 Vision.

## LA12 Global talent management

#### Addressed

All staff take place in an annual performance appraisal process, including individual and team performance evaluations. The process is explained in more detail in the 2014 report (please note the link provided in the report directs to Accountable Now's old website and is no longer functioning).

There was again no progress on implementing career development plans in 2016. Given that World YWCA noted the importance of such plans in their last report, the Panel would expect there to be at least a plan or timeline for this.

An external review of World YWCA's Human Resources Policies was conducted in 2016 and revised Personnel Polices were planned to be presented to the Board for approval in 2017. The Panel would like to know what the key changes were.

## LA13 Diversity of workforce and governance bodies

Fully addressed

World YWCA is an all-female organisation with a focus on young women and girls; a policy requires at least 25% of all decision-making spaces to be occupied by women aged 30 or younger. Currently, 60% of the World Board's members are 30 or younger. In the Member Associations, over 25% of board positions and over 36% of leadership positions are occupied by women ages 30 and below. The Panel again commends these results.

The World Board also has geographical diversity, with at least two members from each region. Does World YWCA consider other aspects of diversity/inclusion such as disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc?

The Panel repeats its previous question about how World YWCA engages men and boys in their work, given their equally important role in working towards gender equality and equity, and empowerment of women.

## NGO9 Mechanisms to raise grievances

Partially addressed

The report states that no disputes or complaints were received in 2016. Information about the Grievance and Appeal Policy and Code of Conduct for staff (Appendices 9-10 in the 2015 report) would have been



appreciated, and should be included in the next report. How does World YWCA ensure these policies and processes are known by staff? Is there evidence that they are working effectively? The Grievance Policy also includes reference to a Whistleblowing Policy which should be used for complaints related to staff conduct – the Panel requests more information on this policy in the next report.

## V. Responsible Management of Impacts on Society

#### SO1 Managing your impact on local communities

Addressed

The World YWCA and all Member Associations are guided by a rights-based approach. World YWCA may be interested to look at the Impact Principles that Restless Development has which guide how they ensure impact in their programming, and Programme Principles which include sustainability, implementation plans and exit strategies (see more in their 2015/16 report, page 24).

Information on impact at the community level is collected through the four-year questionnaire as well as the yearly progress questionnaire. The Panel congratulates World YWCA on the implementation of the yearly questionnaire, allowing more timely and ongoing collection of information. The Panel would like to see information about the findings of these questionnaires in future reports, including successes and areas for improvement, and how they have been followed up on.

The Panel also repeats its question about feedback from local communities – what feedback has been received and how has it been followed up on?

## SO3 Anti-corruption policies and procedures

Partially addressed

The report refers to a manual on accounting policies and processes. There is no anti-corruption policy but "other internal controls" help combat corruption. Details would be appreciated in the next report – what are the actual processes and control in place to minimise the risk of corruption or misuse of funds? Do they appear to be working well?

A draft whistle-blowing, corruption and anti-fraud policy was presented to the World Board in 2015, and no progress was made on this in 2016. Again, the Panel would like to know what the expected timeline is for approval and implementation of this policy.



## SO4 Actions taken in response to corruption incidents

Partially addressed

World YWCA reports that no incidents of corruption were reported in 2016. However, the Panel notes this in the context of a lack of clear policies and reporting mechanisms. How would World YWCA respond to and report on incidents of corruption if they were to occur? The Panel continues to considers this an area for improvement.

## VI. Ethical Fundraising

## PR6 Ethical fundraising and marketing communications

Fully addressed

World YWCA has guidelines and policies including on fundraising, investment, sponsorship and gift processing, as well as a photo and video release form and a section in the Child Protection Policy on the use of photos and information about children. Third party contractors are required to comply with the organisation's fundraising policy and ethical standards. No complaints or breaches were reported in 2016.