

Improvement Analysis Update

ARTICLE 19

January 2016

Evidence

Our sector is often criticised for voicing good intentional language, but with few facts and figures to substantiate them. The scarcity of information on how the various policies generate positive effects in practice is a weakness in ARTICLE 19's most recent accountability report.

While we acknowledge that it is not easy to provide this evidence, we see some good efforts in other Charter Members' reports such as: (a) reporting the percentage of national entities which comply with certain standards, (b) leveraging existing surveys that provide relevant hard data, (c) thorough globally set parameters, evidenced by random national level controls or d) illustrative case studies.

Actions taken

Part of ARTICLE 19's challenge to date in this area has been in relatively unsystematic sharing of information across and between the London-based international and regional/country offices, and local variations in approach. The new project management process, ways of working and system currently under development is designed to encourage and enable improved practice in this area, prompting and supporting the sharing of key documents and information across the organisation regardless of location, and reinforce good practice and greater standardisation in documenting key elements such as stakeholder analysis, lessons learned, risks and issues, etc. This should improve both internal transparency and accountability and the development of longer-term institutional memory, knowledge management and experience sharing between teams and individual staff.

This will also enable us to more systematically identify, track and analyse the degree to which we *involve the 'people we serve'* – in ARTICLE 19's context, target groups (women and girls, media workers including journalists, bloggers and social media communicators, cartoonists and artists, human rights defenders, whistleblowers, persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons, refugees and internally displaced persons, and indigenous persons), change agents (legislators, judges, lawyers, companies, and foreign ministries including delegations), and partner institutions (civil society organisations, media, academia, companies and donors) – and better evidence the changes to which we contribute both for and through these groups.

Moreover, the processes and system itself is not just limited to management of discrete projects, but links project activities directly to the new 6-year organisational strategic outcomes and operational plans, and also the performance assessments of ARTICLE 19 staff who are respectively accountable for, responsible for, and support, their delivery. This will enable a higher degree – and better evidencing - of *impact focus*.

The project management system is planned to be shared with our partners involved in project delivery, and in the slightly longer term, access also given to our key strategic supporter and donor audiences through a 'business intelligence system' to have updates on our progress towards achieving our strategic outcomes on a more regular basis than annual narrative reports, which is currently the norm. This will enable a higher degree – and better evidencing - of *transparency, effective and independent oversight, and coordination with partners*.

In parallel with this, the introduction of a new global financial management system and supporting processes and new ways of working will also enable further continuous improvement in *sound financial management*.

Finally, as the basis to sustainably embed good project management practice as organisational habit and effectively induct new staff, in-house training and induction competencies and materials will be developed. A supporting peer learning forum/community of practice will also be established and supported. These processes will incorporate an integrated approach to project management, including communications, finance and fundraising, gender, HR and interpersonal/leadership elements, operational planning, M&E/quality and risk. Capturing the progress of this process, as well as use of the same system to plan and manage internal change initiatives, will support the development of illustrative case studies relating to our improved organisational effectiveness, as well as the programmatic 'pathway to change' evidence described in SO1 below.

Resolution of staff concerns (NGO9)

The answer given describes a comprehensive grievance procedure for staff. Nevertheless, it would be appreciated to link directly to the document in the next report. It is positively noted that staff unions or staff satisfaction working groups have fed into policy development and resulted to higher buy-in.

Whereas it can be found online, as requested in the previous feedback, ARTICLE 19 is encouraged to actively share / directly link their [code of conduct policy](#) in the next report (beyond sharing it only with the Panel).

Finally, the Panel asks for evidence demonstrating how staff concerns raised were resolved satisfactorily.

Actions taken

The grievance procedure can be made available in future as part of the planned redevelopment of the ARTICLE 19 website, along with other relevant policies noted elsewhere in the panel's feedback.

An updated version of the report now including a link to our online code of conduct policy in section 4.8 has been submitted for public sharing on the Charter website.

One example of how concerns raised by staff have been satisfactorily addressed is in relation to the management and reimbursement of intern roles. Two interns at ARTICLE 19 had highlighted a desire for stronger communication and supervision from their managers. As a result, we have implemented the following:

1. A thorough interviewing process ensuring candidates are aware of what their role will look like, how they contribute to ARTICLE 19's mission and what they could expect to learn during their internship with us,
2. A more effective induction process, ensuring interns are familiarised with ARTICLE 19's work and culture and also they are fully briefed about their role and responsibilities
3. A more systematic approach towards providing feedback to interns, as well as regular meetings with their line manager.

For law-related work, we are also in the process of establishing a fellowship programme (instead of internships) through which participants will have a great degree of choice over identifying their own research topics and can receive the benefits of guidance and support from ARTICLE 19's in-house legal experts in relation to these.

Members of staff have also raised concerns that the level of financial reimbursement for travel expenses and meals for interns may not be sufficient, and that a revision might be required. Following several meeting with staff representatives, we significantly increased the level of reimbursement within the HMRC guidelines.

Staff representatives have confirmed their satisfaction with these changes/improvements in subsequent meetings.

Assessment of the direct and indirect impact of your activities (SO1)

Whereas ARTICLE 19 did not report on this indicator in the previous report, this year's answer provides an interesting case study from Senegal which showcases the impact of their activities (i.e. access to information) on the wider community.

For future reporting, it would be useful to provide a description of how representative this case study is of the *general approach* used by ARTICLE 19 to assessing the impact of their activities. Moreover, in its 2012 report ARTICLE 19 stated its intention to assess the impact of their work on local communities; information on progress is welcomed in future reports. How does ARTICLE 19 assess the degree to which their work has made direct or indirect impact (i.e. changes in freedom of expression or enhanced access to information due to their activities)?

Actions taken

From an initial emphasis of developing more detailed case studies from four pilot projects under one of our core donor strategic grants, the wider development of case studies as good practice within ARTICLE 19 has been given additional emphasis within the past 12 months, and is increasingly representative of a general organisational approach. Given the nature of our high-level policy and advocacy work at global, regional and national levels, it can be challenging to clearly illustrate and evidence the direct impact access to information can have on the lives of individual people, but we are continuously improving our ability to do this more systematically through this developing case study approach.

The project management system will incorporate a 'pathway to change' case study template as standard into our project workflow which can be continuously reviewed and updated during each implementation stage, and will be available in a final version as part of the closure process. Whilst this will not be mandatory for every project, its incorporation should promote increased use and uptake, especially for those involving legal analysis outputs. Incorporating stakeholder identification and analysis of target groups, change agents and partner institutions, and high-level strategies for engaging with them, will also enable more systematic tracking of the direct and indirect impact of our activities, at individual project level. Implementation teams will provide regular qualitative self-assessments as to the effectiveness dimensions of project activities, as well as on progress related to timing and cost, for instance, how useful or successful a workshop was found to be, rather than simply whether it was delivered on schedule and within budget. Regular contextual - Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) - analyses encourage teams to think through the changing circumstances which may be influencing the type and level of contribution to change which project activities and outputs may be having.

At a higher aggregate level, our new 6-year organisational strategic outcomes are accompanied with carefully scoped targets, which incorporate both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, and progress towards achieving these will also be reviewed – including aspects of internal peer analysis and challenge – on at least a biannual basis. The new project management system is being specifically designed to provide much greater visibility of how the key underlying activities (in different projects) contributing towards each target are progressing, enabling a far more informed assessment and analysis of overall achievement to date.

Please also note that both our [2013](#) and [2014](#) Annual Reports have also included several additional examples of impact at the community level, for instance:

- working with protesters in Mexico and Brazil
- interfaith dialogue in Malaysia
- environmental protection in Bangladesh
- training human rights defenders and community leaders globally.

At the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), we also aim to include grassroots activists in our advocacy, for instance journalists in Turkey during the country's UPR review session in 2014.

Anti-corruption trainings for staff (SO3)

The Panel appreciates that ARTICLE 19 plans to broaden their anti-corruption trainings although their set target (coverage of just 8% of staff in 2015) still seems insufficient. Currently, only 1.6% of staff have received external trainings in this regard. Information on how these anti-corruption trainings have so far improved ARTICLE 19's resilience to fraud and bribery would be appreciated.

Finally, the Panel would welcome a link to receipt of the revised fraud and bribery policy and suggests making it available on ARTICLE 19's website.

Actions taken

The revised fraud and anti-bribery policy can be made available in future as part of the planned redevelopment of the ARTICLE 19 website. We will look at the potential for incorporating internal training on our anti-corruption policy into the new integrated induction and capacity building/learning and development processes and materials we will be producing following the introduction of our new global financial and project management systems. This will ultimately be available to all new and existing members of staff.

In 2015, we planned to conduct further anti-corruption training in at least two regional offices (Senegal and Tunisia). Training for Senegal went ahead as planned (for all five staff members and three retained consultants linked to accountancy and payroll), but unfortunately had to be cancelled in Tunisia due to political unrest. The training schedule for 2016 will be scheduled as appropriate to integrate with our roll-out plan for our new financial management system.