

Dear Jane, John, Louise, Michael, Mihir, Nora, Rhonda and Saroeun,

Thank you very much for the feedback shared by the review panel on ARTICLE 19's 2015 Accountability Report, in your letter dated 1 June 2017. We greatly appreciate the recognition of our 'efforts to continuously strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies.'

We would like to take this opportunity to provide additional information and feedback in relation to some of the general and specific points raised in the feedback provided by the panel and the cover note.

Closing the feedback loop with stakeholders

We note the concern of the panel and recognise that whilst we have a fully functioning feedback mechanism in place, there is still more that we can do. We have set up an internal working group which will focus on how to streamline our various feedback loops to create one process that will enable us to track, record and monitor all complaints we receive as an organisation. This will encompass our complaints mechanism, whistle-blowers policy and open information policy.

Over the next six months, we will ensure that our new website provides easy and various opportunities for our website users to provide feedback and comments on any aspect of our work. As we design and launch our new website we will be integrating feedback provided in the BOND/NIDOS Transparency report following a review of how open and transparent our website is against a set of criteria covering the openness of governance, finances, programmes and results information.

Collaboration with partners, communities and networks

In relation to empowering citizens to engage and challenges to civic space, working with local organisations and building local capacity and resources of civil society is at the heart of our theory of change and engagement. Civic Space is one of our five key thematic areas where we advocate for and work with others to maintain a diverse environment for debate and various forms of participation, enabling pluralism and the engagement of individuals and communities, particularly groups at risk in public discourse and decision-making.

On a programmatic level, our 6 regional offices and 5 country offices are considered to be national partners that are locally staffed and deliver our work in the local area. A good example of how we work with local communities to build capacities and knowledge that are sustainable would be from Lebanon. Our partners and other disabled person organisations (DPOs) used knowledge gained through our training to monitor the May 2016 municipal elections for accessibility. Disability rights activists from around the country, including those who participated in the nine-month long mentoring programme, attended voting booths and checked to see how disabled voters were able to vote, including by documenting their findings with photographs and sharing them through social media. Another example on a regional level, would be extending the influence of the hate speech toolkit we developed for Tunisian youth and their teachers by developing an interactive online platform for use with audiences across the Middle East and North Africa region. With input from the region, the guide was developed with specific regional examples and context and will be available through both ARTICLE 19 and Amnesty International, as a platform of free speech. In addition, through our co-operation with the Tunisian Ministry of Education, our toolkit has been fully integrated into the school system for long term use by teachers.

Adding to what people do to improve their lives/ Managing your impact on local communities

We fully concur with the comments on the importance of impact measurement and the need to capture the improvement in peoples' lives. As an organisation that advocates for policy change and trains people on new skills and knowledge we often find it hard to measure the direct impact of our activities on the lives of individuals.

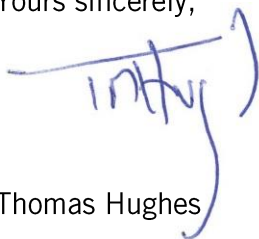
As part of our drive to gather feedback from those that we work with, we often follow up our trainings with qualitative surveys to participants. A notable example of how our work improved the life of an individual is from our work in Senegal on Right to Information and obstetric fistula. Obstetric fistula is caused by prolonged obstructed labour, creating a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder, which leaves a sufferer incontinent. Through one of our surveys, a previous participant shared a case where a young woman was able to access treatment for obstetric fistula following his advice and information which he gained from our training. In addition, many of our participants act as a resource person and trainer for their local community on how to access information on this condition and how it can be treated.

In response to the organisation-specific feedback provided by the panel:

- ARTICLE 19 would be delighted to engage with the wider Accountable Now membership to share our useful practices and lessons learnt regarding the new systems we are implementing and our approach to online platforms for policy development.
- We will ensure that we provide an update on our progress towards implementing our integrated approach to HR and project management in our next report
- Under our Open Information Policy, we will assess which policies we will publish on our redeveloped website and we will provide an update in our next report.
- Please see the example above for a case study on the impact of our work and will provide further case studies in our upcoming report.
- We recognise that the number of staff trained on anti-corruption and bribery was low in 2015 and we have made great steps to increase our numbers by carrying out training in our offices in Tunisia, Kenya and Mexico which has taken our overall percentage up to 41% by May 2017. In addition, we are planning to provide a Training of Trainers for our regional finance staff on anti-corruption and bribery who will then go on to train staff in their offices and all new recruits. We will carry out a training for our London based staff this summer which will further increase our coverage. We will provide information on how our anti-corruption trainings have improved our resilience to fraud and bribery in our next full report.

We look forward to future engagement with Accountable Now and its members in regards to sharing our lessons learnt and best practice on our project management and finance systems. In the meantime, many thanks in advance for reviewing this response to your feedback.

Yours sincerely,



Thomas Hughes
Executive Director