

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel Review Round June 2015

Berlin, 06 July 2015

Dear Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda,

Many thanks for submitting your accountability report to the INGO Accountability Charter. Before providing specific feedback on your organisation's report, let us highlight three areas of general concern that occurred in most of the 18 reports submitted for the fall 2014 and spring 2015 review round:

1.) Be clear on why accountability is important for your organisation

For Charter reports to be meaningful, it is important to start with a clear description of the organisation's *specific* understanding of accountability and how this shapes strategic decision-making and operations in regard to governance, finance, programme, fundraising, campaigning, HR etc. Be clear about whom you are most accountable to and how communication with them improves achieving your strategic goals. Find [here](#) on our website the Charter's currently used definition. Throughout the report, let us know how you use accountability to continuously add value to your organisation.

2.) Moving from "GAP Analysis Table" to "Improvement Analysis"

It is the key aim of the INGO Accountability Charter to support continuous organisational improvements. Against this background the GAP Analysis Table was introduced to showcase at a glance where progress has been achieved and which areas need to be further addressed. We observed that this worked quite well for some, but not for all organisations. One difficulty being that it became overloaded with information without differentiating important and much less important issues. We therefore suggest that organisations for which this instrument has worked well, keep it as a very good internal document to follow up on progress. For the purpose of the reporting and vetting exercise, however, we suggest having a much more succinct "Improvement Analysis", capturing only the most relevant issues that need to be addressed. The Panel has tried to summarise these areas for your organisation at the end of this Feedback Letter. If this does not reflect your own priorities, please let us know. The "Improvement Analysis" is also considered to be the basis for the very brief interim reports of those organisations moving to biannual reporting.

3.) Level of Evidence

Our sector is often criticised for having very good intentional language, but few facts and figures to prove its claims. It is against this background that the Panel asks for compliance to be proven on three levels: (i) having a written policy, (ii) providing evidence that the policy is known and applied by staff and (iii) assurance that it leads to positive management response and helps improving effectiveness in achieving your organisation's goals. While much progress has been made at the policy level, evidence for application in practice and better impact is still relatively low. While we do acknowledge that it is not an easy task to provide this evidence for very large, international organisations, we have also seen some very good attempts. Some examples include: (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.

Please ensure that all the three points listed above are taken into consideration when collecting data for the next INGO Charter report.

Organisation-specific feedback to World YWCA

World YWCA's fourth accountability report against Charter commitments is good and complete. Whereas the report has improved from previous years, it is noted that much substantial Panel feedback was *not* incorporated into this report (e.g. linking to policies, outlining exit strategies in NGO5, providing information complaints in regard to fundraising breaches in PR6 etc.). At the same time, the Committee recommendations to the World YWCA Board on the previous Panel's feedback are greatly noted. However, it is also important to show that these actions are also put into practice and reported on.

In general, the Panel questions World YWCA's credible commitment to the INGO Accountability Charter. The report was unfortunately submitted two months late (on 04 March 2015 although the date in the report says 23 January 2015). In addition, the membership fee for 2015 was paid 3 ½ months after the deadline had passed. If the Panel does not see any improvements made in the next report, it will have to discuss World YWCA's membership status with the Charter Board.

The opening statement gives a good account on why accountability is important to the World YWCA, how they understand accountability, the different accountabilities that World YWCA is facing, and on how YWCA member associations comply with Standards of Good Management and Accountability (SGMA). The Charter's accountability definition can be found on its [website](#). It is, however, as previously notified by the Panel seen as a slight lack of **institutional commitment to accountability** that neither a name nor a signature of the most senior decision-maker is displayed underneath the statement.

Other **weaknesses** include the areas of reporting for YWCA associations (3.8), environmental sustainability (EN16, EN18 and EN26), assessing World YWCA's impact on communities (SO1) and ethical fundraising (PR6). In terms of priorities, it is suggested to elaborate on the highly qualitative performance indicators while shortening the profile disclosures in the next report.

The Panel offers **bilateral meetings** around their face-to-face meeting on 19/20 November 2015 in London. Alternatively, any other convenient time at the end of the year via Skype would be possible for such a conversation. The Charter Secretariat will be happy to arrange a meeting with World YWCA's CEO or the senior leadership team – please do get in touch if you are interested.

World YWCA has a [subpage](#) that informs about its membership in the INGO Accountability Charter and links to the website and to the revised Charter commitments. However, all Full Charter Members are asked to put the **Charter logo** prominently on their website. Only if key stakeholders know of the organisation's **accountability commitments**, can they hold it to account accordingly.

As explained in the generic part of this feedback letter, the Panel decided to replace the old format of the GAP Analysis Table with a more succinct overview of identified **"Improvement Analysis"**. Based on this report's assessment, we have written this for you and you find it attached to this letter. From now on we will use this format serving as a baseline for you to summarise the most important progress made in these areas and covered in more detail in the full report.

Our intention is that this letter, and any response you may wish to provide, is made publicly available on the Charter website along with your report. You can find the reports that were previously reviewed on our [website](#). 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 these comments or amendments by 06 August 2015.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Charter Secretariat. We look forward to hearing your views.

Yours sincerely,

					
Louise James	Michael Röska	Jane Kiragu	Rhonda Chapman	John Clark	Saroeun Soeung

**Review Round June 2015
Cover Note on Accountability Report**

World YWCA

Reporting period: Calendar year 2013

PROFILE DISCLOSURES	
I. Strategy and Analysis	
1.1	<p>Statement from the most senior decision-maker <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The statement gives a good account on why accountability is important to the organisation, how they understand accountability (e.g. checks and balances, internal controls etc. to ensure organisational effectiveness), the different accountabilities that World YWCA is facing, and on how YWCA member associations comply with Standards of Good Management and Accountability (SGMA) approved by the World YWCA. The problem is that these standards are only agreed by 47 % of YWCA Members so far and the approval rate is only estimated to lie at 70% in 2019. The Panel asked for an explanation on this in the <u>last report</u>; however, no answer is given.</p> <p>It is, <u>as previously notified by the Independent Review Panel</u>, seen as a slight lack of institutional commitment to accountability that neither a name nor a signature of the most senior decision-maker is displayed underneath the statement. World YWCA is strongly encouraged to amend this in the future in order to highlight its commitment to accountability as a leadership vision.</p> <p>It is additionally noted that a substantial part of the statement is copied from last year's accountability report, without taking notice of the Panel's feedback to include more information on how exactly accountability critically shapes the organisation's own strategy and management decisions. World YWCA is encouraged to give more concrete evidence in this regard in the future.</p>
II. Organisational Profile	
2.1	<p>Name of the organisation <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
2.2	<p>Primary Activities <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The answer provides relevant information on World YWCA's primary activities and how these support the organisation's strategic goals. World YWCA have followed up on previous Panel feedback and shortened this passage. Nevertheless, the response would profit from being even more succinct.</p>
2.3 – 2.7	<p>Operational structure / Headquarter location / Number of countries / Nature of ownership / Target audience <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
2.8	<p>Scale of the organisation <i>Partially addressed</i></p>

	World YWCA provides an interesting overview of their scale, including numbers of volunteers and activities provided. However, <u>last year's Panel's remark to this indicator is still valid</u> and information on the annual budget (in particular the expenditure side) is necessary. Is "net revenue" the upper limit or is the annual budget increased by a draw on "fund balances"? How do the latter relate to "assets and liabilities"? Moreover, there is no indication about the financial extent of the activities of the 108 associations.
2.9	Significant changes of the organisation <i>Fully addressed</i> The Panel looks forward to the results of the compensation review process.
2.10	Awards received <i>Fully addressed</i>
III. Report Parameters	
3.1 – 3.4	Reporting period / Previous report / Reporting cycle / Contact person <i>Fully addressed</i>
3.5	Reporting Process <i>Partially addressed</i> The answer provides a good account on how the report is being consolidated by a small staff team. It is commendable that an internal task team with representatives from all departments was created to administer the implementation of the Charter in the future. The Panel looks forward to reported progress in this regard. Moreover, the Panel would greatly appreciate some information on how Panel and stakeholder feedback is reflected on, possibly including evidence on how Charter engagement has informed decision-making within World YWCA. Finally, it is important to widely share the accountability report internally and externally to ensure stakeholders know what World YWCA commits to and how it has progressed against these commitments. World YWCA is further encouraged to enclose information on which specific stakeholders are expected to use the report in which way.
3.6 – 3.7	Boundary and specific limitations <i>Fully addressed</i> This report only covers the World Office in Geneva and not the member associations of World YWCA. While this was clear from the beginning of World YWCA's Charter membership, the Panel encourages the organisation to explore of stronger involvement of the associations on accountability matters (see also 3.8).
3.8	Basis for reporting (on national entities) <i>Fully addressed</i> All member associations are encouraged to apply the organisation's Standards of Good Management and Accountability (SGMA) which is available upon request. Currently, 47% have completed these standards and by 2019, 70% of all members are expected to do so. What would happen if members do not comply with these minimum accountability standards at all?

	<p>The World YWCA office conducts a four-year questionnaire on a quadrennial basis, the next one being in 2015. This is very commendable and the Panel looks forward to information of member associations' compliance with World YWCA's conditions of affiliation, including SGMA and measures taken to maintain associations' engagement.</p> <p>In light of stronger consistency, the Panel strongly supports the organisation's idea to review the SGMA developments against developments in Charter commitments and appreciates an update in the coming year. The Panel offers bilateral conversations around their meeting on 19/20 November in London and could support work around the organisation's SGMA against the Charter. The Charter Secretariat will be happy to set up a meeting with World YWCA's leadership team if this is of any interest.</p> <p>The Panel understands that World YWCA was explicit about reporting only for their international office in Geneva. However, it is also true that the YWCA associations act in the name of World YWCA and bear their logo. Moreover, as we look at what accountability really means and how to demonstrate this, it becomes increasingly hard to really judge that when only considering the World Office. Against this background, the Panel urges World YWCA, just like all other Charter Members, to use whichever process is most applicable in the circumstances to ensure adherence to the Charter Commitments also at the national level. It is suggested to show the public that World YWCA is pushing accountability practice even if they are not able to command anything from their members. One way of doing so would be to include the topic in the next World Council' agenda. The Panel looks forward to progress and increasing references / examples as to how accountability is embedded in 108 member associations.</p>
3.10 – 3.12	<p><i>Changes in reporting parameters / Reference table</i> <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
<p>IV. Mission, Values, Governance, and Stakeholder Engagement</p>	
4.1	<p><i>Governance structure</i> <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>Similarly to last year's report, the governance structure described is very well laid out; however, the answer omits to clarify how this structure optimally supports the achievement of the organisation's mission. It would be also appreciated if World YWCA includes information on its risk management system ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.</p>
4.2 – 4.3	<p><i>Division of power between the governance body and management / Number of members of the highest governance body</i> <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
4.4	<p><i>Internal stakeholder feedback</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>A good overview of the mechanisms for internal stakeholder feedback in place is given. The World Council is held every four years and in the meantime recommendations can be provided via consultations, surveys, roundtables etc. In the next report the Panel would like to see evidence that this engagement is indeed meaningful, truly two-way and that it has led to positive changes in the decision-making.</p>

4.5	<p>Compensation for members of highest governance body and senior management <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel would be interested in the outcome of World YWCA's commendable compensation review from 2013. Moreover, a link to the salary scale, Personnel Policies and any outcome of a potential revision of the latter will be welcome in the next report.</p>
4.6	<p>Conflicts of interests <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>A link to the "World YWCA Ethical Guidelines" would have been appreciated at this place as well as evidence that this document is well known among decision makers and an assurance that it helps identifying and managing possible conflicts of interest. Why are Board members' potential conflicts of interest <i>undisclosed</i>?</p>
4.10	<p>Process to support highest governance body's own performance <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>It would have been interesting to hear more about the World Board's evaluation process for Board meetings and of Board quadrennium objectives at this place.</p>
4.12	<p>Principles or other initiatives to which the organisation subscribes <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
4.14, 4.15	<p>List of stakeholders / Criteria for stakeholder selection <i>Fully addressed</i></p>

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

I. Programme Effectiveness

NGO1	<p>Involvement of affected stakeholder groups <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>Regarded as their main stakeholders, YWCA associations are able to meaningfully influence decision making and strategic perspectives every four years at the World Council. In the meantime, these stakeholders can provide feedback via informal formats such as evaluations or project reports. More evidence on how e.g. policies were reshaped after stakeholder feedback should be provided in the next report.</p>
NGO2	<p>Mechanisms for feedback and complaints <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>As it currently stands, there is no specific form or email address publicly available for feedback or complaints, but rather the general "contact us" email to be used for this matter. World YWCA has developed a General Complaints Policy which was submitted for Board approval in March 2015. The procedure applies to all the key stakeholders of the World YWCA including its member associations, individual members, volunteers, staff, beneficiaries, collaborating partners, donors and the public in general. The Panel looks forward to an update in this regard in the next report. Moreover, World YWCA is also encouraged to provide data on the number and category of complaints that were received and if they could all be settled.</p>

	Internal work force feedback and the mentioned Grievances and Appeal Policy for staff should be reported under NGO9.
NGO3	<p>Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>As mentioned in the <u>previous Panel feedback</u>, additional information on the actual methodologies and systems (the “how”) used for programme monitoring and evaluation should be given in the next report. This report only contains very broad generalisations on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Systems. World YWCA is furthermore encouraged to provide evidence that the monitoring and evaluation processes have led to positive management response, internal learning processes and possible adjustments.</p>
NGO4	<p>Gender and diversity <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>Gender and diversity are in the values of World YWCA’s Strategic Plan. The organisation’s non-discrimination policy addresses diversity issues such as sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, and disability besides its focus on gender. <u>As requested last year</u>, a link to this policy is highly necessary. Furthermore, it would be interesting to know how this policy informs planning, implementation and evaluation of their work and if World YWCA has set any improvement targets.</p> <p>Information on gender and diversity of World YWCA’s workforce should be provided under LA13. Moreover, actual evidence for girl-centered gendered programme design would be welcome in the next report.</p>
NGO5	<p>Advocacy positions and public awareness campaigns <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA’s Policy on Global Advocacy considers criteria of (partner) involvement, implementing positions, due diligence provisions and ensuring legal compliance. A link to this policy as well as information on what kind of campaigning World YWCA is actually involved in and how corrective action or exits are taken would be helpful. This has already been requested in the <u>last Panel feedback</u>.</p>
NGO6	<p>Coordination with other actors <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The report stresses the importance of coordination with like-minded organisations and lists actions under the Women’s Rights programme. However, relevant information is missing on the identification of opportunities of partnerships and potential duplication of the efforts of other actors as well as on processes that promote learning from the work of partners. Furthermore, more evidence if the systems in place work well, if they have led to positive management response and how partners adhere to the same level of accountability commitment is welcome in the next report.</p>
II. Financial Management	
NGO7	<p>Resource allocation <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>All World YWCA transactions are recorded in accounts and annually audited. However, a publicly available link to these audited financial figures will be crucial in the next report. Moreover, the financial statement in World YWCA’s annual report does not say that these are <i>audited</i> figures.</p>

	World YWCA can be commended for their robust control mechanisms and are encouraged to demonstrate that the resource allocation process optimally supports the achievement of strategic priorities.
NGO8	<p>Sources of Funding <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The examples of biggest contributors (total of CHF 2.2 million) are highly informative, but would have benefitted from additional information on their share in covering the annual expenditure 2013 (cf. 2.8).</p>
III. Environmental Management	
EN16	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions of operations <i>Addressed</i></p> <p><u>As in the previous report</u>, it is stated that World YWCA does not record any data on greenhouse gas emissions and does not plan to do so. However, climate change poses a fundamental and cross cutting threat to equitable and sustainable development which is also reflected in the post-2015 debates. Only if CSOs have convincing practices in place to limit their own environmental impact, can they credibly demand progress from others. World YWCA is therefore highly requested to collect data (and compare this over time) – bearing in mind that the larger environmental impact depends on the 108 affiliations. The Charter Secretariat would be happy to connect the organisation with other (smaller) Members which found ways of doing this – please get in touch.</p>
EN18	<p>Initiatives to reduce emissions of operations <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The organisation has a policy in the staff handbook which outlines several environmental-friendly initiatives and suggestions. How is this approach guided by senior management oversight and regular assessment? Has World YWCA set any emission reduction targets?</p>
EN26	<p>Initiatives to mitigate environmental impacts of activities and services <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA is encouraged to start with identifying their main environmental impacts. From there, the organisation can commence conducting environmental assessments prior to carrying out activities and try to minimise their environmental impacts.</p> <p>EN27 is no longer mandatory for the Charter reporting.</p>
IV. Human Resource Management	
LA1	<p>Size and composition of workforce <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The report provides detailed information on the World Office's 20 staff members, 16 volunteers, 6 interns – including geographical background and responsibility levels. Information on the Board composition should be provided under LA13.</p>
EC7	<p>Procedure for local hiring <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA states that it does not have a policy on local hiring but operates in line with Swiss employment framework that encourages hiring local staff. Details provided under LA1 show that World YWCA has a diverse geographical</p>

	background represented in its workforce. Given the independence of the 108 national affiliations, there is a presumption in favour of local hiring. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to know how YWCA associates act in this regard.
LA10	<p>Workforce training <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA provides bimonthly meetings for all staff members. However, these meetings are not regarded as “real” trainings in the sense of organisational development. Why did no trainings take place in 2013 or any other year? Workforce training is essential to develop staff in a fast changing world to be able to deliver the quality of work World YWCA have set themselves to deliver. Please identify training needs and show how much World YWCA aims to invest into training of its workforce (as percentage of the overall administrative budget).</p>
LA12	<p>Global talent management <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA states that there is an annual performance appraisal process. More details are highly welcome – e.g. how many employees have actually received an appraisal, are there any indicators of successful developments from these appraisals, and how are future HR trends identified?</p>
LA13	<p>Diversity of workforce and governance bodies <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>Supported by sound policies, the report (see also NGO4 and LA1) shows a great deal of regional and age diversity in the World Office Secretariat and Board – with a slight bias towards European representation. Furthermore, more information on the underlying philosophy on why the organisation does not involve more men in strengthening women’s rights would be interesting in the report.</p>
NGO9	<p>Mechanisms to raise grievances <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA is commended for following last year’s Panel feedback and for having developed a Grievance and Appeals Policy that was sent to the Board for approval in March 2015. The Panel looks forward to being informed how this policy is applied in practice and if concerns raised could be resolved satisfactorily.</p>
V. Responsible Management of Impacts on Society	
SO1	<p>Managing the organisation’s impact on local communities <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>SO1 asks for the impacts of World YWCA’s operations on local communities prior, during and after these operations. How does the organisation responsibly assess and manage their activities’ impact? What kind of feedback does World YWCA receive from communities? Are there clear exit strategies? The Panel suggests having a look at the Charter’s Good Practice collection which can be found on its website.</p> <p>The only information given is on anti-corruption and child protection policies of which the former should be placed under SO3. Moreover, a link to the mentioned child protection policy would be welcome in next year’s report.</p>
SO3	<p>Anti-corruption practices <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel looks forward to the mentioned Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy which is</p>

	<p>currently under discussion and review. SO1 further mentions other anti-corruption policies in place and it would be good to have links to these in the next report as well as evidence that these processes work well in practice. Are there any other risk analyses in place? Are these procedures known by staff?</p> <p>Finally, World YWCA considered in the previous report to set up training in anti-corruption policies in the future. What happened to this plan?</p>
SO4	<p><i>Actions taken in response of incidents of corruption</i> <i>Partially addressed</i> World YWCA states that no incidents of corruption were reported in 2013. The Panel would generally like to know how the organisation would record / publish those incidents if they were to occur at any point in the future.</p>
VI. Ethical Fundraising	
PR6	<p><i>Ethical fundraising and marketing communications</i> <i>Partially addressed</i> World YWCA <u>is again asked</u> to provide links to the mentioned policies in place so that it is easier to understand which particular sources or gifts are / are not acceptable, how partners comply fully with the written agreements etc. Furthermore, information on the number of complaints and breaches of standards for fundraising and subsequent actions taken is missing.</p>