

Accountable Now

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST



World YWCA Independent Review Panel Feedback

**Accountability Report 2015
Review Round April 2017**



World YWCA

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round April 2017

02 June 2017

Dear Malayah Harper,

Thank you for submitting your 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. Before we share this with you, however, we want to highlight a few issues of concern that we found throughout most of the nine reports assessed in the last review round.

Closing the feedback loop with stakeholders (NGO2, NGO9)

A [recent study](#) on 40 international civil society organisations' (CSOs') accountability practices - conducted by the *direct impact group* on behalf of Accountable Now - revealed that only three out of these 40 CSOs responded with an appropriate answer to a complaint test within three weeks.

This is alarming. All Members of Accountable Now should have a fully functioning feedback mechanisms in place. However, when checking your reports we found a consistent lack of reporting filed complaints per type, quantity, and region as well as a total lack of information on how they were resolved. We believe this is not an acceptable level of accountability. CSOs should not only have a mechanism in place but should first be capturing complaints with the appropriate level of detail and then monitoring their resolution and agreeing what actions need to be taken to ensure the same issues do not arise.

[Feedback Labs](#), with whom Accountable Now collaborated on the [People-Powered Accountability project](#), also serve as a valuable source of information on how to close feedback loops.

Collaboration with partners, communities and networks (NGO6, EC7 & SO1)

As part of the [10 Accountability Commitments](#), Accountable Now Members commit to working in genuine partnership with local communities and partners. With increased globalisation of information, more empowered citizens engage and civic space is challenged, it becomes ever more important to help local communities and



partners to thrive. However, we found that coordination with local communities is still an overall weakness area among the Accountability Reports we received. Some “common” ICSO practices can have intended or unintended consequences on local communities. We would thus like to particularly highlight a lack of contributions to building local capacity and resources. Do you take into account local market conditions and think about working alongside local organisations building their capacity? We suggest that ICSOs should start to consider their impact on the sustainability and independence of local civil society in all their work (such as planning, budgeting, economic impact, etc.).

Adding to what people do to improve their lives (NGO3)

To state the obvious, impact measurement is important. However, many evaluations mentioned in received Accountability Reports focus on collecting relatively large amounts of data on people reached, however, this does not tell us much about the improvement in their lives. Moreover, we should critically ask ourselves: What is the ICSO’s credit in this improvement and what positive impact is actually due to the people and beneficiaries themselves?

While we are of course aware that resources are limited, there is clearly no substitute for a robust and honest impact evaluation of our programmes and activities.

Organisation-specific feedback to World YWCA:

World YWCA’s sixth Accountability Report is considered good and comprehensive overall, and has greatly improved from previous years – now presenting more links, figures, policies (see Appendix of report), as well as some examples and evidence throughout the report. In terms of **institutional commitment**, the opening statement by Sara Llorc, Interim General Secretary of the World YWCA, highlights how accountability is embedded into their mission and their Strategic Framework 2016-2019. The Panel acknowledges the good call between Accountable Now’s Secretariat and Malayah Harper, World YWCA’s new Secretary General, and looks forward to working with her on enhancing World YWCA’s accountability.

The Panel praises World YWCA for taking the Panel’s **previous feedback** seriously and for following-up on previous requests to share more information, evidence and policies on: scale of organisation (2.8), governance structure (4.1), division of power (4.2), conflicts of interests (4.6), gender and diversity (NGO4), resource allocation (NGO7), size and composition of workforce (LA1), mechanisms to raise grievances (NGO9), and managing impact on local communities (SO1). World YWCA demonstrates **Good Practice** in basis for reporting (3.8) as well as diversity of workforce and governance bodies (LA13).



Unfortunately little progress was made to address World YWCA's **weakness areas** which continue to be: mechanisms for feedback and complaints (NGO2), programme monitoring, evaluation and learning (NGO3), coordination with other actors (NGO6), workforce training (LA10), and actions taken in response of corruption incidents (SO4). Unfortunately, World YWCA's **membership in Accountable Now** is not mentioned on their website under the [governance and accountability page](#). The Panel strongly recommends publicising World YWCA's membership (including the new logo) and uploading their Accountability Reports to their website, something that the majority of Accountable Now Members have already done. Public communication of accountability is essential to generate trust and will be seen as an invitation by World YWCA's stakeholders to hold them to account.

Since this is the sixth Accountability Report, World YWCA could be eligible for a two-year cycle reporting interval. Nevertheless, the Panel has decided that World YWCA will continue on an annual reporting because: (i) World YWCA does not have so far a functioning complaints mechanism which is a minimum Membership requirement in Accountable Now and (ii) World YWCA showed little progress with regards to their improvement areas as outlined in the 2014 report. If these issues are addressed in the next Accountability Report, World YWCA would be moved to a two-year cycle reporting interval.

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 these comments or amendments by 2 July 2017.

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

Rhonda Chapman

John Clark

Louise James

Jane Kiragu

Nora Lester Murad

Michael
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Cover Note on World YWCA's Accountability Report 2015

Review Round April 2017

PROFILE DISCLOSURES	
I. Strategy and Analysis	
1.1	<p>Statement from the most senior decision-maker</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The opening statement by Sara Llor, Interim General Secretary of the World YWCA, highlights how accountability is embedded into their mission of realising the rights of women, young women and girls around the world. By focusing on young women's leadership, human's rights and sustainability, World YWCA's strategic framework contributes to the SDGs and opens new arenas for strengthening accountability. The statement highlights how accountability is becoming more relevant within a context with increasing demands for professionalisation and impact.</p>
II. Organisational Profile	
2.1 – 2.7	<p>Name of organisation / Primary activities/ Operational structure / Headquarter location / Number of countries / Nature of ownership / Target audience</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p>
2.8	<p>Scale of organisation</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA provides a very good overview of the scale of their Secretariat and their Affiliated Member Associations. The Panel commends following up on their request of last year by providing information on their 2015 budget which amounted to an estimate of 70 million USD – according to their four year questionnaire survey.</p>
2.9	<p>Significant changes</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The World YWCA Council Meeting took place in 2015. Despite staff turnover, a full leadership team was finally recruited. After</p>



	<p>reviewing the conditions of affiliation, the World Council decided to dis-affiliate YWCA Tonga and to affiliate YWCA Armenia (as a full member) and YWCA Burkina Faso (as an associate member). The Panel would request World YWCA to always explain how the significant changes contribute to enhancing their accountability.</p>
2.10	<p>Awards received <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
<p>III. Report Parameters</p>	
3.1 – 3.4	<p>Reporting period / Date of most recent report / Reporting Cycle / Contact person <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
3.5	<p>Reporting process <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>One World YWCA staff led the preparation of this report in collaboration with other staff members including the senior management. The Panel praises sharing their feedback with the World Board and particularly their Global Governance and Constitution Committee. What are the key decisions that were catalysed by the Panel feedback? This will help the Panel understand how to tailor their feedback better to each organisation and would highlight the impact of World YWCA's membership in Accountable Now.</p> <p>Although this is understandable given the organisational changes, the Panel reiterates their question: How can the organisation ensure cross-departmental ownership on accountability issues? The Panel refers World YWCA to good practice (pages 11-21) on how ActionAid, Amnesty International, CARE, CBM and Educo have used the reporting process to cultivate a culture of organisational accountability.</p>
3.6 – 3.7	<p>Report boundary / Specific limitations <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>This report only covers the World Office in Geneva and also includes information on the World YWCA affiliated Member Associations based on the results of the four-year questionnaire undertaken in 2015. The Panel praises World YWCA's interest in the piloting suggestion by the Panel and their identification of some</p>



	<p>interested Member Associations. Unfortunately, Accountable Now cannot provide financial support but the Secretariat can facilitate knowledge exchange, and potentially technical support, between World YWCA and other Accountable Now Members who demonstrate good practice in reporting on behalf of their federations. The initiative for this exchange should come from World YWCA.</p>
3.8	<p>Basis for reporting</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>Through their four-year questionnaire, World YWCA was able to assess global progress made towards the implementation of the World YWCA 2012-2015 Strategic Framework. The questionnaire also addresses key issues and trends affecting the World YWCA movement, including compliance with the Conditions of Affiliation. Does the report submitted as Appendix 4 contain the findings of the questionnaire or is it only based on the external evaluation?</p> <p>The Panel praises the steps taken to align World YWCA's internal accountability policies with the Accountability Commitments - as clarified under Significant Changes (2.9) - and to focus on "building an effective, well governed, accountable and sustainable movement". A key action under Objective 3 in the World YWCA's Strategic Framework 2016-2019 is to "implement the accountability framework for the World YWCA, including a formalised monitoring and evaluation strategy, processes and the International Accountability Charter (INGO)" which the Panel considers as Good Practice.</p>
3.10 – 3.12	<p>Changes in reporting parameters / Reference table</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>There is an error in the numbering of indicators 3.6 – 3.11 as they should read 3.5 – 3.10.</p>
<p>IV. Mission, Values, Governance, and Stakeholder Engagement</p>	
4.1	<p>Governance structure</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The governance structure of World YWCA is composed mainly of the World Council, as the supreme authority that meets every four</p>



	<p>years, and the World Board which is the main decision making body elected by the Board. World YWCA followed up on the Panel's feedback and highlights that the Constitution and Governance Committee is part of the Board but is served by staff. Risk management is done with input from lawyers and auditors and is coordinated by the leadership team.</p>
4.2 - 4.3	<p><i>Division of power between the governance body and management / Number and independence of Board Directors</i> <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA adopts the Carver's policy governance model which clearly draws lines between governance and management. The different responsibilities of the General Secretary is outlined. The World YWCA followed up on last year's feedback by clarifying that the President conducts the annual performance evaluation of the General Secretary in accordance with the Personnel Policies. World YWCA's Board Members, except for the General Secretary, are all volunteers and are only reimbursed for relevant expenses. The Panel would like to understand World YWCA's definition of volunteers and whether Board Members are not compensated for the work they do for World YWCA even by their Member Associations.</p>
4.4	<p><i>Feedback from internal stakeholders</i> <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>Member Associations, via the World Council in 2015, were able to provide recommendations and strategic directions. Between World Council's meetings, several offline and online means are used to provide feedback. The adoption of the Vision 2035 is one good example that saw the engagement of internal stakeholders. The Panel would appreciate more information on the process leading to the Vision 2035 and how the feedback from World YWCA's stakeholders, helped altering or shaping its content.</p>
4.5	<p><i>Compensation for members of highest governance body</i> <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>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 excluded from the salary scale as it is determined by the Board. In 2016, the Staff Policies and Regulations will be aligned with the new salary scale. The Panel</p>



	would like to know why the salary of the Secretary General is not part of the salary scale and why it is not disclosed.
4.6	<p>Conflicts of interests</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>At the beginning of their term of four years, World YWCA Board members receive orientation on the core governance and accountability policies and guidance documents and sign the World YWCA Ethical Guidelines, which cover conflict of interest situations. The Panel would be interested to understand how Board Members disclose conflicts of interests as they occur. World YWCA followed up on the Panel's request and added the Ethical Guidelines as Appendix 1 to the report. Board Members also sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct and the Social Media Policy – added as Appendix 2.</p>
4.10	<p>Process to support highest governance body's own performance</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA has a comprehensive process to ensure evaluation of the World Board's performance during the four years via the Governance and Constitution Committee. No insights from the Board's evaluations are shared in the report and the Panel would appreciate more information on identified areas for improvement as identified during the World Council meeting in 2015 and the annual Board evaluations.</p>
4.12, 4.14	<p>Social charters, principles or other initiatives to which the organisation subscribes / List of stakeholders</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p>
4.15	<p>Basis for identification of stakeholders</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The World YWCA's Constitution and policy/programmatic guidance documents outline the bases for identifying stakeholders. The answer provided though is very thin and the Panel would appreciate more information for instance on what guides the affiliation process.</p>



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

I. Programme Effectiveness

NGO1	<p><i>Involvement of affected stakeholder groups</i></p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The World Council is the main forum for engagement with and between Member Associations where they propose recommendations and resolutions, which if approved, are adopted as policies. The Panel is further interested in how Member Associations are kept engaged between World Council meetings and how other stakeholders (beyond Member Associations) are engaged by World YWCA. The Panel would appreciate examples on suggested resolutions by Members that became policies during the 2015 World Council and the outcome of the work of the two Global Ambassadors who worked between 2012 and 2015 – one on leadership and the other on envisioning 2035. Member Associations are also involved in strategy formulation processes every four years. The World YWCA Secretariat submits annual plans and forecasts to the Board which plays a supervisory role.</p>
NGO2	<p><i>Mechanisms for feedback and complaints</i></p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>This is a major weakness and the Panel strongly flags that having a functional complaints mechanism is the minimum Membership criterion in Accountable Now. Internal and external stakeholders are still only invited to submit feedback and complaints via the Contact Us section on the World YWCA's website. World YWCA says that no complaints were recorded in 2015 but the Panel is of the view that complaints are not encouraged by World YWCA since this is not mentioned anywhere on the website. The World Board approved a complaints policy – added as Appendix 3 to their report. The complaints policy adopts an escalated approach to resolve complaints, if not satisfactorily resolved at each level, starting with the Secretary General, the Board and finally with an independent complaints body. The Panel would appreciate adding the complaints policy to the World YWCA website since a policy would not be in effect until being known by the relevant stakeholders.</p>



<p>NGO3</p>	<p>Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel flags this a major weakness but appreciates World YWCA's openness regards their lack of a proper system for monitoring and evaluation, which they will bridge by hiring M&E staff in 2016. The Panel commends World YWCA for sharing the findings of their external evaluation of the Strategic Framework 2012-2015 which highlights both achievement and challenges. Findings on Good Governance and Accountability show that only 75% of Member Associations completed the four-year questionnaire, with the highest gaps in the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific. The Panel strongly encourages World YWCA to ensure a 100% completion rate give that this exercise takes place every four years.</p> <p>The evaluation rightly captures the need to enhance the role of the Board to advise and guide on the implementation of the change of status and the suspension policy. The Panel would like to understand if there are any consequences for not completing the questionnaire.</p>
<p>NGO4</p>	<p>Gender and diversity</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The World YWCA followed-up on the request of the Panel and shared their Gender Policy – added as Appendix 5 to their report. The policy highlights how gender is mainstreamed in programmes, organisational culture, public profiles and membership. The YWCA Movement 4 year Report 2012 – 2015 highlights some positive reflections about how programming in all of the key focus areas, build women and young women's leadership and is considered innovative and responsive. The Panel is generally interested in understanding how gender analysis informs programming.</p> <p>In 2015, World YWCA adopted a resolution on non-discrimination (added as Appendix 5 in their Accountability Report) in which they commit to work to eliminate discrimination of all bases including religion via direct support, solidarity, advocacy and engaging with communities. The Panel requests World YWCA to clarify how the resolution on non-discrimination would be rolled out with their Member Associations. The Power to Change Fund mechanism demonstrates how their commitment to diversity works in practice as project appraisal committee members ensure that project proposals and</p>



	reports include human rights principles and approaches. The Safe Space for Women and Girls: A Global Model for Change is another example on how diversity is addressed in World YWCA's programmes.
NGO5	<p>Advocacy positions and public awareness campaigns</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>Advocacy positions are formulated by the World Council, World Board and World YWCA Office. The Policy on Global Advocacy (added as Annex 7 to their Accountability Report) frames the process for developing and implementing advocacy positions. In 2015, The World Council adopted a Resolution on a World YWCA Advocacy Plan and Training, which identified key advocacy outcomes for each four years, making use of the global and national expertise across World YWCA. Similar to last year's feedback, the Panel is interested to understand any corrective actions or exist strategies that are part of the global advocacy plan. The Panel refers World YWCA to good practice (pages 69-73) from Amnesty International, CIVICUS and Sightsavers.</p>
NGO6	<p>Coordination with other actors</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>Partnership is essential for World YWCA, as appears from their Member Associations Partnership Guidelines (added as Appendix 9 in their Accountability Report). The Guidelines outline the values and principles of partnership, the role of the World YWCA Office, and highlight recommended elements for partnership agreements. Also, the World YWCA uses the Partnering Toolbook and will consider the Partnership Principles, developed jointly by CIVICUS and the International Civil Society Centre, based on the Panel's previous recommendation. Despite this commitment to partnership, the Panel considers this a weakness area as evidence is still missing with regards to how such Guidelines are implemented in practice and to what extent they guide partners' accountability beyond contractual obligations. The Panel refers World YWCA to good practice (pages 74-79) from CARE, CBM, Educo, and SOS Children's Villages.</p>
II. Financial Management	
NGO7	<p>Resource allocation</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The World Council approves a multi-year financial framework, which is reviewed and adjusted by the Board to ensure contribution to</p>



	<p>strategic objectives. The World YWCA has strong financial control oversight including board approval, audits and recording of all transactions. Following-up on the Panel's request, the World YWCA shared their financial statements which are added to their Annual Report 2014 in addition to separate financial notes here. The Panel requests World YWCA to elaborate on the manual on accounting policies and processes.</p>
NGO8	<p>Sources of Funding <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The largest funding sources are: ecumenical partners followed by government funding and affiliation fees and member association's contributions (either via affiliation fees payments or donations). More details can be found in their financial statements.</p>
<p>III. Environmental Management</p>	
EN16	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions of operations <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA does not record greenhouse emissions but hopes to start doing that in the coming years following the footsteps of other Accountable Now Members.</p>
EN18	<p>Initiatives to reduce emissions of operations <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The staff handbook includes a draft Environmental Policy that outlines purchasing of energy-efficient equipment, recycling measures and energy-conservative facility use. The Board is expected to approve this policy as part of a comprehensive review of staff policies – World YWCA did not however provide a timeline for the review process.</p>
EN26	<p>Initiatives to mitigate environmental impact of activities and services <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA does not carry out studies to assess and therefore mitigate their environmental impact. Unfortunately, a link the policy on sustainable development is not shared as requested by the Panel last year.</p>



IV. Human Resource Management	
LA1	<p>Size and composition of workforce</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The report provides detailed information on the World Office's 22 staff members, interns, volunteers and consultants including geographical background, responsibility levels and an organigram. Following up on the Panel's request, also comparable figures for 2014 are provided.</p>
EC7	<p>Procedure for local hiring</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>Despite not having a policy on local hiring, staff at World YWCA Office come from a diverse geographical background with European staff representing around half of the work force. No figures are available for Member Associations who are reported to "normally" hire local people.</p>
LA10	<p>Workforce training</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>For the second year in a row, World YWCA reports no progress in this area and the Panel considers this a weakness area. The Panel highlights that this area is important and a huge enabler to the 2035 Vision. The Panel requests more speedy progress in this area.</p>
LA12	<p>Global talent management</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>A performance appraisal process is in place for each staff member, which includes individual and group performance evaluations. No career development plans were developed in 2015 but the Panel praises World YWCA for their critical self-reflection on this area. In 2016, World YWCA envisages this to improve as part of an external review of their HR policies.</p>
LA13	<p>Diversity of workforce and governance bodies</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA is an all-female organisation with a focus on young women and girls within a human rights framework. Their policy requires women aged 30 or below to form at least 25% of all decision making spaces, which they meet since 60% of their current World Board members are 30 or below. The YWCA Movement 4 year Report 2012 – 2015 highlights some positive findings from across the movement in this regard: (i) more than half (59%) of Member Associations have at least</p>



	<p>25% young women aged 30 years or under participating in their governing bodies and (ii) 25% of their Governing Body members are women aged 30 or younger. The Panel considers these positive findings as Good Practice and looks forward to more progress.</p> <p>Their World Board has also a geographical diversity with two members coming from each geographical region. While the focus on young women and girls is praised, the Panel is interested to understand how World YWCA engages men and boys given their equally important role to achieve women empowerment. In addition, does World YWCA collect data on other inclusion dimensions such as religion, disability or other minority groups?</p>
NGO9	<p>Mechanisms to raise grievances</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>No disputes and/or complaints were received during the reporting period. In addition, the World YWCA Board approved a Grievance and Appeal Policy (added as Appendix 10 to their Accountability Report) and Code of Conduct for Staff (added as Appendix 11 to their Accountability Report). The Panel looks forward to evidence that both the policy and code of conduct are working.</p>
<p>V. Responsible Management of Impacts on Society</p>	
SO1	<p>Managing your impact on local communities</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA and all Member Associations are guided by a rights-based approach. Through their four-year questionnaire, World YWCA collects information on the impact of their Member Associations on the local level. Impact is also managed by their Power to Change Fund reporting mechanism in addition to evaluations of some programmes. Following up on the Panel's request, the four-year report on the work of World YWCA between 2012 and 2015, which is annexed to their Accountability Report, highlights the positive impact made on local communities. The Panel looks forward to progress in terms of establishing more timely means to collect information on their impact on local communities beyond the four-year questionnaire.</p>
SO3	<p>Anti-corruption practices</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA has a number of controls in place to address anti-corruption. A draft whistle-blowing, corruption and anti-fraud policy</p>



	<p>was presented to the World Board in 2015 which will be further revised. The Panel recommends that World YWCA gets in touch with Accountable Now's Secretariat to explore mutual learning from other Members who demonstrate good practice in this area. Also, the Panel refers World YWCA to Jeremy Sandbrook's blog post which outlines the significant role of leadership in fighting corruption in the sector.</p>
SO4	<p>Actions taken in response of corruption incidents <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA reports that no incidents of corruption were reported. Still, the Panel would like to know if there were instances of bad practices that occurred and how the organisation would record / publish those incidents in theory if they were to occur at any point in the near future. The Panel considers this area a weakness area and refers World YWCA to good practice (pages 120-123) from Sightsavers and World Vision who transparently report on their corruption incidents.</p>
<p>VI. Ethical Fundraising</p>	
PR6	<p>Ethical fundraising and marketing communications <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>World YWCA is guided by a number of guidelines and policies including on investment, sponsorship and gift processing in addition to the gifts policy in the Staff Handbook. The Panel would like to understand whether these guidelines and policies also address the ethical use of photos. Also, third party contractors are required to fully comply with the organisation's fundraising policy and ethical standards.</p>