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**Terre des Hommes International Federation**  
**Independent Review Panel Feedback**  
Accountability Report 2018  
Review Round February 2020



# Terre des Hommes International Federation

## Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round February 2020

20 February 2020

Dear Delphine Moralis,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to 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.

Terre des Hommes International Federation's (henceforth referred to as TDH) fifth report is an interim report responding to the Panel's feedback letter on its last full-length report. Overall the Panel's questions and requests for further information have been responded to satisfactorily.

The response explaining TDH's approach to stakeholder engagement was particularly strong. The Panel is also pleased to see that dedicated complaints email addresses for child safeguarding and general concerns are now available on TDH's website.

Whilst some further detail could be provided on the gathering of feedback (apart from complaints) from stakeholders, and examples would strengthen the response on the identification of stakeholders, these points can be addressed in the next full report. The Panel would suggest that the priority of the next report be to report on the progress towards federation-wide handling of complaints, grievance and feedback processes.

Overall, this is a sound interim report. We look forward to discussing our feedback with you in a follow-up call, which the Secretariat will be in touch to schedule. This conversation will form the basis for your response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

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,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel





# Terre des Hommes International Federation's Accountability Report 2018

Review Round February 2020

## Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement from TDH's Secretary General Delphine Moralis expresses the organisation's commitment to the 12 Accountability Commitments and to improving in line with the dynamic accountability framework.

TDH's main areas of focus over the past year were the federation's role, legitimacy, and ways of working, as well as ensuring primary stakeholders are included and participate in programmes and governance. There was a review of integrity and safeguarding practices, with recommendations to be implemented in the coming years. TDH also invested in improving reporting, complaints, and feedback mechanisms, joined the FairShare campaign, and made efforts to reduce their environmental impact.

These are all positive developments, which the Panel appreciates, however we would urge a faster pace regarding instituting harmonised mechanisms for addressing complaints, grievances and feedback across the federation.

In the next report's statement, could TDH also share any key challenges faced, and how they are working to address these?

## Significant organisational developments

In March 2018, the TDHIF International Board decided to rethink the way its members work together and to scale activities through further integration. The report explains how TDHIF staff worked to develop a shared new vision and mission (these are shared), designed principles for the organisation's structure, and agreed on organisational values.

From December 2018, a Safeguarding and Integrity Coordinator was hired for a one year mandate to conduct a desk review of external standards and internal policies, and to analyse common approaches throughout the federation.

Two new dedicated complaints email addresses were set up, and these are explained further under the response to question J3.

## Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

### D. Key stakeholders are identified with great care

D1	<b>Key stakeholders and how they are identified</b>	3
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	<p>The Panel had asked for more information about how TDH identifies and prioritises its main stakeholders - children and youth. The interim report explains that while TDH does not focus on children from specific backgrounds, it works with “children whose rights are not respected as a result of inequalities and who are discriminated against wherever and whoever they may be”.</p> <p>In programmatic work, target groups are identified through participatory approaches at the community level, to ensure work is relevant to local contexts and to mitigate risks of excluding certain stakeholders. It is stated that, in TDH's international work, target groups are identified together with local partner organisations, based on the TDH member organisation's area of focus and on the vulnerabilities and capacities specific to local youth. An example in the next report would further strengthen this response.</p> <p>TDH is reviewing its process to identify and prioritise stakeholders as part of their strategic review, and we look forward to information on any changes in future reports.</p>	
<b>E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders</b>		
<b>E1</b>	<p><b>Stakeholder feedback</b></p> <p>The Panel had requested information about whether there is a dedicated feedback mechanism for stakeholders, whether feedback is sought actively, whether there are any child-friendly feedback mechanisms, and any examples of changes implemented in response to feedback.</p> <p>TDHIF now has on their <a href="#">website</a> separate email addresses for “child safeguarding” and “concerns” in addition to the general “info” address, which stakeholders can use to provide feedback (though there is currently no information on how general feedback will be addressed by TDH). More on complaints mechanisms is covered under question J3. The response also explains how TDH has made efforts to disseminate the child safeguarding email.</p> <p>TDHIF's internal feedback mechanisms are explained, including global webinars and a global survey on organisation culture and values, as well as an annual staff survey in the Secretariat. Measures have been taken to respond to the survey results, such as fostering more exchange between decentralised teams.</p>	<b>2</b>



	<p>At the country level, TDH member organisations have developed child friendly material around unacceptable behaviours and how to report concerns - examples of some posters are shared.</p> <p>An example is also given of how, in response to feedback, TDH has changed its approach to safeguarding from compliance, to having a focus on quality and accountability.</p> <p>In future reports the Panel would still like to see more information on feedback mechanisms for external stakeholders, particularly children, which are not related to safeguarding or other concerns. For example, children's thoughts on TDH's programmes.</p>	
E2	<p><b>Stakeholder engagement</b></p> <p>The Panel had asked in its last feedback letter for more details on how TDH involves children in their work, and this report provides a comprehensive response with several examples.</p> <p>As part of TDH's strategic review, an expert group has been convened to develop a vision on child and youth participation in the organisation, and a road map to this end. The Panel looks forward to updates on this in future reports.</p> <p>The TDH International Secretariat ensures child participation in global advocacy efforts by building the capacity of children to design and carry out advocacy activities, and by providing technical and logistical support. A detailed example from the Girls Advocacy Alliance is shared, explaining how youth form clubs to drive advocacy and awareness-raising at community level. At the global level, youth select their own representatives to engage in international settings, and TDH facilitates participatory discussion of the issues that will be raised.</p> <p>Within the TDH international network, the Secretariat facilitates knowledge and expertise sharing amongst member organisations, around involving youth from different backgrounds. An example from TDH Switzerland shares various participatory methods for supporting local partner organisations and young people in project work.</p> <p>Another example explains how TDH members in West Africa have developed guidance on the "protective accompaniment of children", recognising the active role of the child in the protection process, and strengthening children's capacities in this regard.</p>	4



	<p>The Panel also notes positively the <a href="#">manual on children's participation</a> from TDH Germany.</p> <p>Overall, the response demonstrates a strong approach to stakeholder engagement in TDH's work.</p>	
<b>Cluster C: Organisational Effectiveness</b>		
<b>J. Governance processes maximise accountability</b>		
J1	<p><b>Governance structure and recruitment of trustees/Board members</b></p> <p>The Panel had asked for more information about the recruitment of Board members, such as whether there is a skills evaluation, requirements for gender and geographic representation, whether the Board includes representatives outside the general assembly membership, and whether Board members are remunerated.</p> <p>The response addresses these points, clarifying that the Board is composed of member organisations rather than individuals, and that each candidate member puts forward two potential representatives to sit on the Board.</p> <p>It is stated that skills evaluations are done within the member organisations as they choose their candidates – is this an official evaluation based on a set of desired skills for new Board members, as identified in advance by the Board? Here the Panel is trying to understand whether the skillset of the Board is evaluated periodically and whether new Board members are desired to fill any gaps.</p> <p>It is also stated that geographic representation is determined by the geographic spread of TDH's member organisations.</p> <p>There is an effort to ensure gender balance, and TDH has joined the FairShare campaign for equal representation of women in leadership positions. Currently, the Board is composed of two women and four men, but the Chair is a woman and the TDH Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General, who are both women, are also ex officio Board members. This brings the Board to four men and four women.</p>	3
J3	<p><b>Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints (internal and external)</b></p> <p>When TDH's last report was reviewed, complaints to the Secretariat could still only be submitted via the general info email address, with no</p>	3



information provided about the complaints process. The Panel notes that two new dedicated email addresses are now on the [website](#) - a child safeguarding email and a general concerns email – but this does not amount to an adequate policy. The report states that the complaints policy is being finalised and will be uploaded in the near future - this will bring TDH in line with our base expectations for members' online complaints mechanisms. The report also explains how the child safeguarding email has been disseminated via a [video](#).

The panel notes that progress regarding safeguarding and integrity issues in the TDH Federation is guided by a set of recommendations stemming from its Federation-wide review and these are to be implemented over the “years to come”. While recognising that the IS doesn't necessarily have authority over its Member Organisations, we would encourage a more rapid pace towards harmonisation, with maximum coherence across the federation – with as a minimum the IS gathering Federation-wide information about all types of complaints and feedback and how these are addressed by MOs. We would also hope to see information added to the “contacts” page stating how feedback and complaints will be addressed – including stipulating who would be the “designated” international Board member referred to as responsible for handling complaints

The Panel had asked whether TDH plans to have a child-friendly version of the complaints mechanism. TDH has shared two examples of posters from national members which explain in a child-friendly way (using images) what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, and how to report issues.

The Panel had also encouraged TDH to make the internal complaints policy available online or to share a copy with the Panel. The report states that this is an internal document, as is the Secretariat's new whistleblowing policy which was adopted in 2019. The latter was shared with the Secretariat for feedback in 2019, and the Secretariat found it to be sound. Are other members of the Federation adopting this or similar whistleblowing policies, and is the IS playing a role in ensuring that all MOs treat whistleblowing and staff grievances in a suitably impartial and professional way?

The Panel's previous feedback had pointed out that there was variance amongst TDH's member organisations when it comes to publishing their external complaints mechanisms, but had noted that the new



Coordinator for Integrity Practices would support members to increase cohesion across the Federation. We look forward to an update on these efforts in the next full report.

Finally, the report shared that 14 complaints alleging child safeguarding concerns were received in 2018, of which 10 were resolved in full. In future reports, the Panel would also like to see data on other (non-safeguarding related) complaints received. In general, Accountable Now is encouraging more comprehensive reporting around complaints. The Secretariat has recently published a [paper on best practices in reporting on incidents](#), and we encourage all members to consider these points when providing an overview of incidents in future reports.