

25 November 2021

Dear Independent Review Panel,

We thank you for your feedback letter and for the time you have devoted to the review of our 2019 report. We thank you also to have acknowledge that our 2019 report concerned the International Secretariat of the Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF) as was the case for the past six years and for your recommendation for a different member model which we will consider in depth with all the concerned members of the TDHIF before being able to feedback to you.

The TDHIF International Secretariat is also extremely grateful to the Independent Review Panel for our long term collaboration and for all your recommendations which we have followed with care and which have enabled many improvements in our functioning.

As requested by Accountable Now please find in Annex our responses regarding the questions of the Independent Review Panel contained in the Improvement Analysis for the Terre des Hommes International Federation 2019 Report.

We are always available to provide further information and we thank you once again for your constant support to develop our accountability towards our stakeholders.

Yours Respectfully

Eylah Kadjar-Hamouda
Secretary-General ad Interim

Annex

Evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address & Stakeholders support your advocacy work and value changes achieved (F1 & F2)

The panel would appreciate an explanation of how advocacy issues are chosen and prioritized, as well as an example of how consultations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of campaigns take place.

The Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF) is a programme based network acting in very close collaboration with its internal and external stakeholders and notably children and youth. The TDHIF International Secretariat (hereafter TDHIS) represents the voice of the TDHIF at global level and its advocacy work is always firmly rooted in the field work of its member organisations. The main advocacy priorities of the TDHIS are reflected in the TDHIF Strategic Plan.

Advocacy issues of TDHIS come from the field work of member organisations. This is realised in the main framework of implementing a child rights-based approach which includes listening to the voice of children and building spaces for children and youth to participate in decisions that affect their lives and being key actors in their own development.

Other factors such as the difference Terre des Hommes can make for the children we work with, our ability and expertise to advance a theme from the local to the global level and the possibility of working in partnership with other networks also come into play. As the TDHIF is a network of independent organisations, one of the factors for choosing joint advocacy issues is also how widely this theme is shared throughout the network.

The main current campaigning focus of the TDHIS is organised through “Destination Unknown – championing the rights of children on the move” (please see more information [here](#)), a campaigning network which started in 2014 and has been implemented through several cycles. The Campaigning network succeeded the previous campaign of the TDHIS which was to stop child trafficking. The transformation of the campaign itself was determined through listening to the voice of children and other stakeholders who told us that taking a broader approach of children on the move can better protect them. The current campaign focuses are on a) ensuring the rights of children on the move to access psychosocial and mental health support, b) ensuring meaningful participation of children and youth, including with experience of mobility, and c) changing the narrative around children and youth on the move. These themes were identified through consultation with members, partners and young people.

With regards to consultation **in planning**, we identify issues and prioritise in a participative way, consulting members, partners and children and young people, for example:

- We developed 2 global campaigns in a participatory way with Destination Unknown members and partners – one on child and youth participation and one on access to psycho-social support.
- In different regions where Destination Unknown is present, we have worked with members, partners and children and young people to identify campaign focuses. In East Africa in particular: after a participatory consultation process, DU has developed a regional campaign to expose the risk of sexual exploitation for children and youth on the move. The consultation included discussions with and written input from Terre des Hommes country teams in East Africa, Terre des Hommes partners in the region, as well as key informant interviews with key INGOs. Importantly, the consultation process also included focus group discussions and interviews with children and young people in East Africa, who shared their feedback on the key issues to tackle.

With regards to consultation in **implementation**:

- Destination Unknown, led by an advisory board including youth, developed an initiative on changing narratives about children on the move. This involved research in [Malta](#) and [South Africa](#) to test the messaging and led to the publication of [communications guidelines](#) which we shared widely to influence more hopeful and positive narrative.
- Through a participative process and consultations with children, we drew out expertise of members and children to develop guidance on participation of children on the move. This guidance will soon be launched and will be an important guide for our members as well as an advocacy tool as we campaign decision-makers to make space for safe and effective child participation.
- We carried out research, including first-hand research with children on the move, to understand the motivations, risks and protections for children on the move south from East and Horn of Africa leading to concrete recommendations to inform our campaigning.
- For research into the access of children on the move to psychosocial support in India and South Africa, we consulted with children and young people, and established advisory groups including members for the research.

A recent **evaluation** of Destination Unknown took place in 2021. Primary research for this evaluation was conducted via semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured format allowed for more open-ended questions, prompting a broader discussion with respondents in order to capture positive, negative, expected and unexpected outcomes. The combination of interviewing steering committee members, staff, regional coordinators, partners and young people enabled information shared to be triangulated. When talking to young people with experience of being on the move, the welfare of the young people themselves was the overriding consideration. Interactions with children and young people were wholly unstructured to avoid the interview being harmful and questions that may be triggering. After explaining the purpose of the evaluation and interaction young people themselves were encouraged to raise and talk about any issues, with the evaluator engaged in active listening.

Recruitment and employment is fair and transparent (H1)

The panel would like to know whether there is a policy or documented practices guiding fair recruitment and employment.

The TDHIS is currently a small structure which composition has varied from nine to three staff persons in the past years (not including consultants, interns and volunteers). Our commitment to diversity is reflected in our recruitment practices which clearly state that the TDHIS is an equal opportunity employer and in the composition of the Secretariat as presented in our 2019 report.

The main policies guiding fair employment are contained in the staff rules, the code of conduct, the complaint procedure and the whistle blowing policy. An Annual Appraisal is conducted for every staff along a participatory model and enables employees of the TDHIS to raise any concerns they may have. The Secretary-General also conducts regular bilateral calls with the employees of the TDHIS and great care is devoted to monitor the workload, compensate hours when needed and ensure work-life balance.

Safe working environment (H3)

The panel has the following questions for future reports: Do all staff receive staff rules, including information on how to raise a grievance? How are all staff informed of the whistleblowing policy? Is there a specific policy addressing harassment in the workplace that is available publicly and reminded?

Staff rules are annexed to the contract of employees. They include provisions on the duties of supervisors ¹ and how to raise a grievance. Further information on how to raise grievance are contained in the whistleblowing policy of the TDHIS which is part of the handbook that every staff receive and is made aware of during the induction process. In addition, each employee signs a Code of Conduct which is also an integral part of the contract. All the policy documents are also stored on a sharepoint accessible to all the staff of the TDHIS.

The policy addressing harassment in the workplace is contained in a five page section of the staff rules drafted in French and in conformity with Belgian law and which include inter alia :

- Definition of violence and harassment in the workplace
- Preventive measures
- Remedies (voies d'action)
- Internal procedures
- External contact point
- Complaint and judicial procedures
- Psychological support
- Protection against termination of contract and unilateral modification of contract
- Register of complaints (registre des plaintes)
- Sanctions against abusers

Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints - external (J3)

The panel appreciates the expressed organizational commitment to sound complaints procedure. It looks forward to receiving the finalized complaints policy, in particular, to understand how complaints are dealt with effectively, the protection afforded to complainants and the fairness of the procedure.

The complaint procedure has been revised and made more user friendly and is available [here](#). There is now one single address for all complaints (concern@terredeshommes.org). In order to ensure more transparency, the presentation of the complaint procedure is now such that complainants have easy access to the whole complaint procedure before filing a complaint. In particular it is more clearly stated that complaints will be directed by the TDHIS to the concerned TDH organisation whenever applicable.

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¹ Droits et devoirs du personnel de surveillance

Les personnes chargées de la direction ou de la surveillance sont tenues d'observer vis-à-vis des travailleurs les règles de justice, de moralité, de civilité et de respect.

² "As the Terre des Hommes is a network of nine organisations, if you are referring to a specific project please make sure to specify what is the Terre des Hommes member running the project you are referring to..... We will direct your mail to the Terre des Hommes organisation referred to."

Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints - internal (J4)

The panel would like to understand how the internal complaints mechanism is aligned with the complaints mechanism under J3 and the whistleblowing policy. How is staff awareness raised about the existence of the complaint mechanism and its procedure so that staff feel empowered and safe using it?

The internal and external complaint mechanisms are complementary and form the core of the policy of the TDHIS and how it refers to the TDHIF.

The internal whistleblowing policy has been established, with the guidance and support of Accountable Now, posteriorly to the internal complaint mechanism as contained in the staff rules. It develops some aspects particularly regarding empowerment and safety of complainant. The whistleblowing policy is also common to all employees of the TDHIS whereas the staff rules contain core principles and a core part for all the staff and also a part that is specifically established in accordance with the legislation of Switzerland or Belgium where the offices of the TDHIS are located.

The whistleblowing policy is part of the Handbook which is given to all the employees during the induction process and is also available on the sharepoint of the TDHIS.

The wellbeing of the staff is a constant preoccupation of the TDHIS and includes the complaint mechanism as described above but also an active policy of prevention in a setting marked by financial constraints as well as an early warning component enabling to put supportive measures in place as soon as appropriate. The intention is to create an enabling environment where staff are encouraged to early report concerns which are taken into serious consideration and addressed.

The governing body and management are held accountable for fulfilling strategic promises (K1)

The panel would like to learn how management performance is assessed beyond reporting to the board. For instance, are there management performance reviews or 360 assessments? How is the performance of the International Board itself assessed? Moreover, how is management performance assessed across the federation or other stakeholders?

The TDHIF is an association registered under Swiss law and this form or organisation contains its own monitoring mechanism through the General Assembly which is the supreme body of the association and gives a yearly discharge to the International Board. The Board also has its own mechanism of monitoring through a file tracking implementation of decisions and reviewed at each Board meeting.

In 2019, the International Board held a workshop facilitated by an external consultant:

- to explore key functions of a governing body in a global organisation
- discuss the role of the International Board in the light of the TDHIF design principles (accountability and sustained impact, agility, unity and inclusion)
- identify how to incrementally enhance practices.

The new TDHIF Strategic Plan that shall come in effect in 2022 contains an objective for a review of the TDHIF governance and a commitment to increased diversity.

Management performances are monitored at each Board meeting by Board members and at the General Assembly by member organisations. 360 assessment is a well-known method which may be considered for the future. The TDHIS is a small structure with a predominantly coordination and representation function, so it operates in very close collaboration with internal stakeholders, the member organisations, who are thus closely monitoring the management work.