

Integrating Global Operations across ARTICLE 19

The organisation

ARTICLE 19's strategy is to challenge urgent threats to freedom of expression and increase the impact of a growing movement of highly specialised and innovative 'niche NGOs' delivering transparency initiatives on the ground. The agenda includes growth, impact, and collaboration for freedom in the virtual world, in nascent democracies and in settings of conflict. ARTICLE 19 has an international office in London with regional offices in Bangladesh, Brazil, Kenya, Mexico and Senegal, working in collaboration with 90 partners across the world. There are over 75 staff, around a third of whom work in the international office in London, plus a number of volunteers and other valued contributors.

The need

ARTICLE 19 is successful at attracting increasing funding and has seen significant growth since embarking on its first change process, focusing on the establishment of regional offices and a theory of social change, placing greater emphasis on national and regional delivery. The executive wished to create a more fit-for-purpose leadership and management structure, and organisation of work, to increase regional participation in the global management of the organisation, strengthen its global voice and better support the implementation of its strategy. ARTICLE 19 therefore embarked upon a change programme to create a more globally integrated organisation by:

- Increasing participation of regional office directors in the overall management of the organisation
- Improving support between regional offices and the international office, recognising the different areas of expertise in the different offices, and building on these through improved cross-team working
- Improving the effectiveness of the international senior management team and international office in delivering central support services
- Enabling the global management functions to work more coherently and collaboratively across offices
- Strengthening understanding of what protecting and consolidating the ARTICLE 19 brand means in practice.

What we did

Through ACEVO, ARTICLE 19 commissioned Jacqueline of J Hill Associates to work with them to conduct a consultation with Regional Directors and other key staff. Jacqueline used structured interviews with a range of stakeholders to identify the ways in which ARTICLE 19 was working well, what was getting in the way of greater global integration and regional impact, and provide a report of these findings. The report included recommendations on:

- Organisational structure
- Leadership team purpose and structure
- Performance management
- Internal communications
- Operational support/co-ordination.

Jacqueline also provided advice on managing the significant changes these recommendations implied. In addition, work had been carried out over the previous 3 years

to establish proposals for a Regional Development Framework. The key findings and recommendations from the consultation provide further support for the Regional Framework proposals, so that these could be consolidated and used as a foundation for the change plans.

ARTICLE 19 subsequently engaged Jacqueline to support the implementation of the recommendations, including the development of leadership role descriptions, global networks, and the global management team. Jacqueline also provided advice and mentoring on change management.

Benefits

At the time of writing, ARTICLE 19 is still in the process of implementation and Jacqueline continues to support that process. The outcomes and benefits to date include:

- A clear set of recommendations, aligned with ARTICLE 19 strategy and the Regional development Framework
- A participative process much appreciated by the Regional Directors that increased their motivation to work towards a common vision and goals, and create greater global integration
- An opportunity for stakeholders to be open and discuss potentially difficult issues with an independent external consultant
- The establishment of a global management team focused on strategic direction, policy and brand protection decisions thus increasing participation of regional office directors in the overall management of the organisation
- A catalyst for developing the detailed implementation plans for the Regional Development Framework, including addressing governance issues and agreeing clear relationships and expectations between offices
- Initiation of the development of global teams of finance and communications and advocacy specialists to improve support between regional offices and the international office, and draw on the different areas of expertise through improved cross-team working
- An integrated framework and set of design criteria for roles within the organisation, leading to greater clarity of purpose for the international leadership team and a focus on the effectiveness of the international office in delivering central support services
- A set of leadership role descriptions from which to revise existing roles and recruit into new or vacant roles
- A greater understanding across the organisation of the work of colleagues working in different offices, including the difficulties they may face; greater cooperation and coordination
- Increasing understanding of the importance of ARTICLE 19 global voice across regional specificities and needs
- Transfer of knowledge and expertise from the external consultant to senior managers in ARTICLE 19.

Comments from Article 19

“We had a vision of what we wanted to do and achieve. Jacqueline brought an invaluable insight into operationalising this vision, unpacking it, detailing the steps to be taken, the risks to be avoiding, and the outputs to be delivered. She made the vision and objectives realistic

and possible; she distilled them to all levels of the organisation and to all components of the change process. We are still working on the basis of the work plan she developed; the short and mid-term outcomes she identified. The Global Integration Project has been so far a successful undertaking and no doubt much is owed to Jacqueline's input and work."

Dr Agnes Callamard, Director of Article 19 commented: