

**INTERNATIONAL AID SERVICES (IAS)**

People In Aid Employee Survey Report, April 6, 2009

**AUDITOR'S STATEMENT**Date of audit meeting at People In Aid's London office: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2009

Interviewed: Beatrice Langa, HR Manager

Daniel Zetterlund, Programme Manager Sudan Field Operations

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**EXPLANATORY NOTES****Size and functional nature of the organisation**

IAS is a medium/large organisation, around 350 employees at the time of the survey, with a diffuse management structure which is almost entirely embedded in the countries where the organisation has its current operations. The biggest operations and most staff are in the Sudan, with much smaller numbers in Ethiopia, Somalia/Somaliland, Uganda and Kenya. There are about a dozen staff in offices in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany and the USA mainly involved in fundraising and administration. The HR functions are run by Beatrice Langa from her office in Kampala, Uganda.

A strategic objective in IAS in the last two years has been to encourage and support the development of local NGOs to deliver aid, relief and development. Many of these 'new' organisations have been based on IAS local teams, This has had a dramatic effect on the numbers of employees for which IAS is directly responsible, around 25% reduction between the time of the survey September 2007 and September 2008. This process is explained in the report.

**Staff survey and the audit process**

The original IAS Report was dated and sent to me on 18.09.08 and was mainly a report on the People In Aid Survey carried out by the organisation in late 2007. I provided initial feedback in December '08 which initiated a series of e-mails and telephone conversations with Beatrice Langa. Since the HR functions are based in Uganda and not in the Sweden HQ office Beatrice suggested the audit visit should take place in Kampala or Khartoum. On the basis of my analysis of the report I was reluctant to incur the time and expense such a visit would involve until a number of issues with the report were clarified. As Beatrice and one of the directors were going to be in Europe in early February '09 we eventually agreed to meet in London to review the report and decide on how the assurance would proceed.

During our meeting on 06.02.09 we were able to establish a much clearer idea of what IAS had been doing than was possible from reading the report. The report made too many assumptions about what the reader might already know and did not reflect the real significance of the different country programmes relative to one another. It also did not explain the considerable changes in organisational structure and devolvement of field operations to local groups that had occurred between the date of the original survey and the present time.

The report states (Appendix 1, page 23):

“IAS as an organization has always been very proactive in the arena of capacity building of partners and rural communities in targeted areas of operation. Although this is a greatly valuable initiative, and something IAS will continue to do; it has, in some regards, meant that less time has been devoted to the development and welfare of IAS staff. In addition to continuing to serve the partners and communities, in the last couple of years, IAS has devoted much time and effort to promoting staff development and welfare.”

Beatrice agreed to revise the report in the light of our review and to include additional evidence of how IAS was implementing the People In Aid Code. I received the revised report on 09.04.09.

### **AUDITOR'S REMIT, INDEPENDENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS**

I have been appointed by People in Aid to carry out audits of the reports submitted by member agencies on their performance against the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel. The auditor is otherwise independent of both People In Aid and the member agencies and their stakeholders.

Richard Evans, the auditor, the Director of ethics etc.... is a Member of the Institute of Social and Ethical AccountAbility. He has extensive experience of development (Intermediate Technology Development Group, Traidcraft, Christian Aid, Irish Agency for Personal Service Overseas) and has been involved in developing the AccountAbility AA1000 standards and the GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines.

### **PURPOSE OF THE AUDIT**

The main purpose of my audit is to form an opinion as to whether International Aid Service's *People In Aid Employee Survey Report, April 6, 2009*, gives an accurate and balanced view of the organisation's performance against the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel, and whether there is adequate evidence to support the claims made.

In evaluating the content of the report I am seeking to apply the three principle tests set out in AccountAbility's AA1000AS Assurance Standard. As they relate to the People in Aid Code, these are:

- **Materiality** – Is the information relevant to staff's concerns and interests and will it help them make informed judgments about IAS's performance in relation to managing and supporting their work?
- **Completeness** – Does the report provide sufficient evidence that IAS has understood and reported on all its significant social and economic impacts in relation to the seven People In Aid Code Principles?
- **Responsiveness** – Does the report demonstrate IAS's responses and commitment to improving its performance?

As well as examining and testing the claims made in the report I also evaluate the scope of the people management policies in place and the systems for implementing these policies.

### **AUDIT METHOD**

The audit of the report was limited to examining the report, reviewing supporting documentation and interviewing the HR Services Manager and Sudan Programme Manager regarding the claims made and the management systems that support staff in the various field operations. Apart from Daniel Zetterlund and Beatrice Langa, both of whom are based in the field, I did not interview any other field based staff.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Survey Method**

“The process of implementation started off in the first half of 2005 with a meeting with People In Aid to map out a plan for the implementation. Initially, the plan was to start out with only Sudan as it is the biggest country programme in IAS. Preliminary meetings took place, to sensitize the various offices in the Sudan programme with the Code. The Implementation Team soon realised that one or two sensitization meetings per office would not be sufficient. Leaders from the various IAS Sudan programme offices were brought together for a dissemination training meeting, so that they could get in-depth training and be equipped to continue with the sensitisation in their own locations on a day-to-day basis.

“On the advice of the People In Aid, the scope of the report was soon changed to include all of IAS, and not just Sudan programme as initially planned. More sensitisation meetings were held in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somaliland, Sweden and Uganda.” Records of discussions and verbatim statements by participants in these sensitization meetings have been included in the report as appendices. they provide a very honest and informative record of the knowledge and use of the People In Aid Code in IAS field operations at that time.

I believe there is ample evidence that IAS management is using this information to improve communications and implementation of the Code.

The employee survey of all staff was conducted using the generic People In Aid questionnaire. Language presented a limitation. The questionnaire was translated into Amharic in Ethiopia. In Sudan, translation for the non-English speakers was done verbally as the non-English speakers, for the most part, were also not able to read at all (even in their mother tongue).

In locations where internet is available, the staff who had access responded directly on the web-based response form. These locations include Uganda (all staff) Kenya (most of the staff, with the exclusion of non-office staff), Ethiopia (Addis office staff), Somaliland (management and office staff) and all the northern countries (Sweden, Norway, Germany, Denmark, and USA.)

Completed response forms were submitted by around half the total of all employees and the report includes notes explaining some non-responses, as well as incomplete and delayed responses. In my view, the level of response and the data from the sensitisation meetings provide a sound basis for the performance analysis that follows in the report.

#### **People management policies**

Figure 4, page 9-10, is a table of IAS's current policy alignment and performance against each of the People In Aid Code Principles. The analysis includes a summary statement of current policy status, a numerical rating and comments about future action required. This is a very honest and transparent assessment of people management policies in the organisation which, in my opinion, fairly represents the reality and ambitions of IAS HR policy.

I also welcome the statement in Section 5 page 10 of *The organisation's vision for implementing the People In Aid Code* and the strong message sent to all staff by the Chairman, Leif Zetterlund.

#### **Performance analysis and action plan.**

The detailed performance analysis, pages 13-17, have been updated in the revised report to differentiate clearly different levels of performance in different countries and regional offices. The updates also include management actions implemented or proposed since the time of the survey. I have discussed these with the HR Manager and am satisfied with the evidence that appropriate actions have been or are being taken. Actions on staff training budgets, revision of the Staff Handbook, standardising recruitment across the organisation, consultations with staff and revision of the salary structures, management training, sensitisation workshops and regional meetings and the systematising the recording of accidents and security incidents are all welcomed.

**MY OPINION**

On the basis of the report, the documents I examined and my interviews with managers of the organisation in London, I believe the report presents a *complete* and honest view of IAS's implementation of the People In Aid Code of Good Practice. The evaluation has been carried out by IAS with exemplary thoroughness and I am grateful to the management for accepting my recommendation to revise the report in the light of the review we had in London.

Further, I believe IAS has made very substantial efforts to hear and address the issues which are of concern (*material*) to employees not only as a part of the formal survey, but through other formal and informal communications, and has clearly set out how it will respond to shortcomings in its practice and to their needs.

Overall, I endorse the statement of Commitment to Staff appended by IAS to this report:

"IAS strongly believes in the importance of integrating Human Resource strategies in organizational policies and practices. In 2006 IAS launched its first policy handbook in which a substantial amount of the policy deals with internal staff issues.

"Furthermore, IAS has strived to improve management of staff through leadership training, through the introduction of a comprehensive salary structure with job descriptions/objectives, and through employment guidelines which are clearly spelled out to all staff. Organizational budgets also allow for staff development.

"This shift is largely thanks to IAS's commitment to the People in Aid code; a code IAS has strived toward implementing in the whole organization for the last few years. IAS would wish to reiterate its commitment to the welfare of its staff and underline the fact that it counts them as central to the achievement of our goals."

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Richard Evans

*ethics etc...*

Alnwick, 16th April 2009