

Internal audit report 2015-2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an outcome of an annual internal audit that took place on 2nd and 3rd of June 2016 in Toulcuv Dvur, Prague and was conducted by Vasily Bashutkin (EYC, Russia). Unfortunately, Thomas Maguire (Eco-Unesco, Ireland) couldn't take part in the audit. Therefore, Vasily Bashutkin conducted the audit by himself. The auditor received all necessary documents well in advance and had sufficient time to study them. In addition, during the process of auditing, the Secretariat provided extensive support that ensured thorough evaluation of all activities subject to internal audit.

2. INTERNAL AUDIT OF YEE PROJECTS

The internal auditor decided to conduct evaluation of the following two training courses: “Give international dimension to your projects” and “How to be a green entrepreneur”.

2.1. TC “HOW TO BE A GREEN ENTERPRENEUR”

The project was held in October 12-20, 2015 in Czech Republic and aimed at encouraging young people to develop their green start-up ideas.

The project got generally very good feedback from its participants and organisers.

The project respected most of YEE’s policies, in particular the Travelling Policy since most of the participants were already in Prague or came by bus, car or train. The food and accommodation were also in accordance with YEE policy as all participants were fed with vegetarian food.

As a follow-up of the project a shared folder was created online where participants could exchange their ideas, share opportunities and support each other. Promotional materials and a website section have also been created.

Nevertheless, it has been suggested to choose another location than Toulcuv Dvur next time so that organisers don’t need to take care of so many practical issues. Also the program could be less packed in order to stimulate discussion of ideas in the participants’ free time.

2.2. TC “GIVE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION TO YOUR PROJECTS”

The training course took place on 12-17 of July in Toulcuv Dvur, Prague.

The aim of the project was to develop youth workers' competences which will allow them to transfer local youth projects to an international level; to create new partnerships on environmental projects.

The project was followed by the Annual Meeting 2015, and therefore the participants represented many of the member organisations.

According to the participants' and organisers' evaluation, the aims and objectives of the project have been reached. Project management competences have been taught to participants.

The auditor appreciates that during the training course, the trainers and participants tried to share their best local practices and worked on the international follow up of those ideas. They encouraged the participants to continue with projects in their home countries.

The auditor considers this TC as very successful and recommends working on those topics during further projects. In addition, it is recommended to prolong the duration of the training in order to extend some basic information with more details. Particularly useful was the information regarding up-to-date funding opportunities.

3. AUDIT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

3.1 Chairperson Anja Wilken

As Anja has been occupying the post of Chairperson of YEE for the third time she knew her responsibilities quite well and was aware of what should be carried out by other members of the Board and the office representatives. Anja set ambitious goals in order to contribute to YEE even more as well as to ensure simplification of work for the next generations of YEE Board members. Anja was good at organising Board meetings as well as proof reading minutes of meetings, adding summaries of tasks and deadlines at the end of each document. In addition, she tried to introduce work groups to divide work between Board members, which could improve the output of the Board's performance. Anja took part in 3 working groups. It would be great if Anja could also represent YEE at any international or regional meeting.

For means of transport, Anja always tried to use environmentally friendly ways of travelling using bus and train.

3.2 External Relations Officer Christiane Klemm

Christiane has been a Board member before (Publication and Promotion Officer) and this year she took a new position. To the auditor's point of view, that was a right choice as she already knows the organisation quite well and is located in the centre of Europe what allows travel to various locations in an eco-friendly way. Unfortunately, Christiane was ill during some period of the mandate and therefore couldn't fully participate in all the activities. Nevertheless, she took part in work groups. Christiane represented YEE at the General Assembly of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), was in contact with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) in order to form a new partnership and followed all the organisations.

As means of transport, Christiane always used eco-friendly means of transportation.

3.3 Treasurer Janis Porietis

Janis monitored the budget of YEE and together with the Secretariat set up the new draft budget for the next year. He created a draft of a letter to ask for donations and discussed that issue with the Board. Janis actively participated in Board meetings and work groups.

Janis' travel methods were a good balance between plane and land transport.

3.4 Project Officer Zaruhi Stepanyan

Zaruhi points out fruitful cooperation within the Board and the office. Her role in that process is clearly crucial. Zaruhi took this position in the Board for the first time therefore could contribute to the organisation from a different angle. She could learn more about YEE main funders (Erasmus+ and EYF), she worked a lot on project

applications. Additionally, she could improve her communications skills as she was working with different people.

Unfortunately, Zaruhi had to use environmental unfriendly transportation due to the location of her home country.

3.5 Member Organisations Officer Marieta Baričević

Marieta was one of the new Board members therefore her contribution is valuable due to fresh look on existing topics. She took an active part in virtual Board meetings, physical meetings and email communication. She contributed to communication with MOs, but still her contribution to database update could have been even more. She contributed to "Training for Trainers: Train for Future".

For transportation purposes Marieta used buses, therefore she optimized her impact on environment.

3.6 Publication and Promotion Officer Jessica Massucco

Following her European Voluntary Service experience at YEE, Jessica contributed a lot to the promotion of YEE. She represented YEE at the European Environmental Bureau's communications conference. She was also a leader for "Art for the Environment" youth exchange. Jessica also contributed to the editorial team connected to her project. Jessica contributed a lot to a work group dealing with revising and creating a new Sustainability Policy for YEE. She proofread all the materials which was particularly useful as a native speaker.

Concerning travelling for YEE, Jessica used a combination of air and land transportation means.

3.7 Summary and auditors' advice

Overall the auditor is very happy with this year's Board. Because of their experience of previous years as well as a fresh look at existing issues, the Board members quickly realised their responsibilities. It is necessary to point out that having two physical Board meetings stimulates communication, the realisation of the working plan and boosts cooperation to a new level. Of course, the role of the experienced Chairperson in that process is crucial. The communication between Board members and Board and Secretariat worked except during the time of illnesses of some Board members. It is suggested to preview the colleagues about excessive workload or health problems as soon as possible so that other members could provide assistance. Concerning the self-set work plan for the year, not all of the Board members were able to realise their aims.

It is advised to the General Assembly to clear all the Board members.

4. AUDIT OF THE SECRETARIAT

In general, the auditor got a positive impression of the Secretariat. One of the greatest impressions is that Secretariat members are cooperating well with each other as well as providing assistance when any of them need it. There is a new member in the office, Roxana, who recently took over some tasks in the office. There is an intern in the office who is also handling some tasks in the office. Such a reinforced team is a great help to Board members and member organisations. All the members of the Secretariat pointed out great work of the Board members. Gosia also supported YEE as a Consultant and made a positive effect as she significantly contributed with her knowledge and experience. The practice of employing an internal consultant can be kept in the future, especially if office members have significant workloads.

The Secretariat mentions that thanks to having more people in the office they could dedicate more time to fulfilling their tasks. Also there is a chance to delegate some tasks to other workers in the office. EVS coordinator Natalia Luchko gave very good feedback to the EVS volunteers who took their duties and tasks seriously, showed their motivation and results towards different environmental topics.

The Secretariat moved to a new office of a bigger size that in the auditor's point of view improved working conditions and therefore boosted the performance of its members.

The Secretariat worked hard to prepare project applications which are good and received high marks, nevertheless there have been too many applications for funding last year from various organisations therefore overall competition to obtain funding has increased.

5. SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT

It is crucial to carefully choose the auditors to ensure their equal and sufficient contribution to the auditing process. Apart from interviews with the office and Board members, auditors might want to contact a few project members to ask their opinion concerning the project. If a consultant is involved in any project/workgroup or similar, then there should be a separate way to evaluate his/her contribution to YEE.

6. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, 2015-2016 was a good year for YEE. Both the Secretariat and the Board had experienced and result-oriented members who drove the organisations' development further. For the first time there have been two Physical Board Meetings what let its members and the Secretariat work deeper on current issues. The Board was combined of old and new members that allowed fresh ideas while maintaining stable ground. It would be great if some Board members continue to be active in the Board to ensure a good knowledge transfer to the next Board so not all the experience will be lost after this year, nevertheless some of the current members already notified YEE that they would leave. As long as the criteria for project selection has been

practically raised, there is a recommendation to prepare project ideas and applications even more carefully.

7. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AM – Annual Meeting

BM – Board Member

COP – Conference of the Parties (Climate Change Conference)

EACEA – Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

EEB – European Environmental Bureau

ERO – External Relations Officer

ET4ET – Environmental Training for Eco-Trainers

EVS – European Voluntary Service

GA – General Assembly

MO – Member Organisation

PoR – Pool of Representatives

TC – Training Course

YE – Youth Exchange

YEE – Youth and Environment Europe

YFJ – European Youth Forum