

Communication  
on Progress

Article 13 Ltd.

2012

SUSTAINABILITY

*Promoting It, Living It*

*Article 13's Commitment to*

*The United Nations Global Compact*

article 13

THE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS EXPERTS

#### Statement of commitment

Sharing information is a vital component in the battle to spread sustainable business practices. However, we know from our own experiences that finding the time to read and digest the valuable lessons of others is a challenge. Therefore in this, our eighth Communication on Progress (CoP), we wanted to strip back the rhetoric that governs our approach to business and simply present our core activities. In the same way that we always strive to present solutions that meet the needs of our clients, we wanted to tell our story succinctly, in order to be as useful as possible to our peers.

We're pleased to have hit many of our 2012 targets. However, while reducing our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 10% is a laudable achievement, this year we were determined to set (and achieve) goals that were instantly relevant to our employees. As a company based in west London our office has been inspired to turn human rights discussions into actions by the local disability charity, PHAB. From volunteering our expertise to raising money, we've all got involved. In essence, we want to make sure we are using our core skills to add genuine value to this process.

*Joe Toa*

## Article 13 – at a glance

Article 13 makes things happen. We help organisations change by meeting the challenges in front of them and taking advantage of the opportunities around them. As a strategic consultancy, we use our expertise in the social, environmental and ethical arenas to create shared value for businesses and their stakeholders. We look to comply with all relevant regulation, global or otherwise, advocate our core values to everyone we work with, as well as to the wider public, and instigate sustainable behaviour change wherever possible.

## Our relationship with the United Nations Global Compact

Compliance, communication and advocacy, and behaviour change neatly encapsulate the way in which we work. Therefore, it felt natural to categorise our 2012 UNGC achievements in this manner. We want to ensure that we are living the virtues not only extolled by the UNGC's 10 principles, but also the values we encourage all of our clients to apply. We realise that the best way we can achieve this is by using our core skills. As a company with 10 office-based employees and 200 global associates, we wanted this CoP to reflect our lean, efficient style. We will continue to share our stories in an engaging, digestible manner through our new website, which is launching in 2013.

## What we learnt in 2012

Thanks to a series of lively internal meetings, held every quarter, we learned a huge amount over this last year which we've used to drive our engagement with UNGC. We realised that people lie at the heart of everything we do. As a result, we decided we needed to recalibrate our annual goals. If we wanted our team to be at the forefront of genuine, sustainable change, we needed to understand their interests and passions and then we needed to apply these to what was realistically achievable in our local communities.

For example, human rights had previously been too conceptual for many of our office staff, who live and work in London. Realising that it was a difficult issue to action, we started meeting regularly as a group to share ideas and thoughts. Everyone in the office was encouraged to participate. We moved from discussing theory to how we could apply our learnings to our local community in west London. As highlighted above, we found a gratifying match with the charity PHAB.

We have also been measuring our environmental impact over the last year. The challenge has been to keep improving our data-collection systems without increasing the amount of paper work we generate and the time our teams spend collecting data.

In addition, whilst we were gratified to find no evidence of any lack of compliance with our internal policies, we have decided to enlarge their scope so that we include our activities outside the UK.



Our activities in 2012 around  
**Human Rights**

<b>Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights</b>	<b>Businesses should ensure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.</b>
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**Compliance with our policies**

- We communicated internally and externally on our three internal policies (*Health and Safety, Staff Diversity and Equal Opportunity*) which address human rights issues.
- Our aim for 2013 is to review gaps, including our operations outside the UK.

**Communication & Advocacy**

- Human rights is one of several issues we always raise with new clients, encouraging them to assess and analyse their activities.
- We declared 24<sup>th</sup> October to be “Passionately Pink Day” to show our support for Breast Cancer Awareness. We raised money by dressing appropriately.

**Behaviour Change**

- We committed to work with PHAB, a charity that supports disabled children and adults in our local society. Two of our staff are training for the 2013 London Marathon. Others have planned to volunteer time and money.
- We held quarterly meetings to discuss what Article 13 can do to address human rights.
- We encouraged the management of a west African oil and gas operator to change their previously rigid perspective on human rights issues.



Our activities in 2012 around  
**Labour Rights**

<b>Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;</b>	<b>Businesses should support the effective abolition of child labour;</b>
<b>Businesses should support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;</b>	<b>Businesses should support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.</b>

**Compliance with our policies**

- We recommended our internal policies which are in place to uphold labour rights (*Client Engagement, Fair Commercial Terms, Integrity, Quality, Training and Development*) and plan to review gaps in 2013.
- We complied with the UK’s *Investor in People* standard.

**Communication & Advocacy**

- One of our directors presented at an Iron Ore conference in South Africa, talking about the challenges facing the sector, the importance of creating shared value for the business and the local community, as well as encouraging engagement and trust.

**Behaviour Change**

- All our work goes through an internal peer review system.
- All of our employees get a job review every 6 months.
- We host a social activity after work every Friday.
- One of our associates gave every employee a one-on-one workshop in how to keep fit and healthy in 2012.



Our activities in 2012 around  
**The environment**

**Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;**

**Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility;**

**Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies**

**Compliance with our policies**

- We tracked our monthly consumption of paper, transport and electricity – useful for comparisons and setting in-house targets, ensuring that we acted legally and responsibly thanks to our *Environmental, Supply Chain and Sustainability policies*.
- We recycled paper, printer cartridge and light bulbs.

**Communication & Advocacy**

- Radical Shift, our new blog, helped us push the agenda and share best practice.
- Blogs on sustainable cities, water, resilience and community engagement set the topics for our network of contacts.
- We used social media, our online presence and our regular newsletters to reach a large audience.

**Behaviour Change**

- One of our Directors made 3 pledges to do more for the planet in support of a colleagues' first ever half-marathon.
- We encouraged our print and design company to adopt greener practices.
- Half of our office food was organic or fair trade or both.
- We used 'track changes' to avoid unnecessary printing.



Our activities in 2012 around  
**Transparency and anti-corruption**

**Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.**

**Compliance with our policies**

- We actively maintained our full accreditation to the global ISO 9001 quality management system.
- We recommended our internal policies (Fair Commercial Terms and Integrity) which ensure that we meet all our legal and societal responsibilities.

**Communication & Advocacy**

- We encouraged a global food company client to use GRI to tell its story. Last year the company published an internal GRI Level C report and recommendations at Level B Europe.
- We have just redesigned our website so our case studies and best practice stories are more visible.

**Behaviour Change**

- We assessed whether a mining company, operating in the DRC, was adhering to the social and environmental issues in a 43101 Investors report. We measured their performance against the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).
- We attended UNGC UK network meetings to discuss Rio+20 and supply chain issues.

### Commitments for 2013

Moving forward, we are putting our core competencies and strengths as a company at the forefront of our 2013 commitments. Specifically we feel that the best way we can create shared value is by drawing upon our knowledge, expertise, associates and network of contacts using this as the foundation of our activities to deliver upon our commitments.

Two initiatives which we have already put in place demonstrate this general commitment and approach:

- *EMRC* – we will use our network of contacts to help the non-profit organisation EMRC create more business-to-business partnerships between African small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and British companies
- *PHAB* – we will continue to support and expand our partnership with the West London disability charity PHAB.

We want to continue to set the agenda and we will share what we learn from both of these projects through social media, our blog, our newsletters and our re-launched website. This will also help us to advise clients involved in similar initiatives.

The office becomes an important place when you are seeking to change your immediate environment. Next year, we will buy 90% of our food and drink from local, organic shops. We will also reduce our plastic bag usage and measure our water consumption and waste production.

Finally, we will continue to attend UNGC network meetings, so we can learn from others and share our findings, and we will work on a way to address GRI in our CoP.

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*This CoP covers our activities from December 2011 to November 2012 and will be available on [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org) and on our website as we are committed to communicating it to Article 13 employees, board members, clients, potential clients, suppliers, associates and other members of the Article 13 network as appropriate.*