

UNGC Communication on Engagement

The Oasis School of Human Relations inspires and develops 21st century relationships for meaningful, responsible and sustainable action. We place relationship at the heart of our work, and developing the whole person as being at the core of transformative change in the world.

We operate on a not-for-profit basis out of the legal form of a company limited by guarantee. The not-for-profit status is clearly defined through our financial ethics. Our ethics are based on our values, principles and the concept of the peer principle, which encompasses individual and mutual responsibility. These ethics are outlined in our Statement of Ethics which was reviewed, amended and expanded during 2014.

As a signatory to the UN Global Compact and a founding partner of the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative we are conscious of our place in the world and our impact upon it.

We continue to support the Global Compact and are committed to the initiative and its principles.

Guiding Principles

Ethical approaches to people and communities are at the core of what we do. Our specific approach to the environment and Planet is set out in our Statement of Ethics (see appendix):

- We are committed to discovering what is possible to do more of whilst using less
- We are committed to acting with consciousness and staying awake to the consequences of our actions on our planet
- We seek to live within our resources and to act as stewards of our environment and the planet.
- We engage with our suppliers and customers to encourage alignment with the principles of the UN Global Compact.

Illustrations in Practice

Everything we do reflects our values towards people. Much of what we do also has an explicit relationship to what we call Globally Responsible Practice. For example:

- We were a founding member of the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative and have remained actively involved through the life of GRLI
- We have introduced our partners to the work of GRLI, UNGC and PRME
- We were involved in the work of 50:20 and its platform around innovation in management education at the Rio Earth Summit of 2012
- We have designed and delivered modules on Globally Responsible Practice within academic institutions, most notably at NIT in Germany, and also in the UK
- We run an open programme for the public around People Planet and Purpose and have delivered similar programmes within several partner organisations
- We continue to work with a range of our partners on bringing more social and environmental purpose to their work, for example at Bettys and Taylors Group and in Impact Housing
- We have twice run a wide-ranging research programme into the nature of the Workplace of Tomorrow if people and planet really mattered, and have disseminated the outcomes of this research.

In these ways we have worked to ensure our ethics and principles live out in the work we do in the wider world. We have also brought this approach into the everyday life of Oasis. This has been based on the fundamental principle of developing and sustaining a strong commitment to acting out of individual consciousness. As a result we have also:

1. Banked ethically by using Triodos Bank
2. Invested ethically with Triodos, Ethical Property Company and Shared Interest
3. Increasingly bought ethical supplies: teas, coffees, paper supplies etc.
4. Encouraged recycling of waste within the Oasis centre
5. Changed electricity supplier to Ecotricity - which provides 100% renewable electricity
6. Purchased certified tea and coffee supplies through Bettys and Taylors
7. Increasingly used recycled paper products
8. Implemented recycling processes within the Oasis Centre.

Over recent months we have made further changes, including:

1. We have changed waste processing supplier to Todd - a local company which has implemented a zero waste to landfill policy
2. We have changed our gas supplier to Ecotricity - which supplies environmentally friendly gas
3. We have changed our Oasis lever-arch folders to a recycled folder supplied by Duraweld
4. We have increased the use of on-line technologies including Skype meetings and the use of Dropbox as an alternative to printed course materials
5. Continued a dialogue with our food supplier regarding local sourcing
6. Started buying organic milk and other produce

Together these actions provide a firm foundation for our ethical approach both in the work we do in the wider world and the decisions we make in running our centre.

Recommendations for Future Action

To further live out our ethics the Oasis Green Group are recommending that we prototype the following actions and approaches:

Purchasing

1. As a matter of course we aim to maintain the existing patterns of buying ethical products including organic, fair trade and/or Rainforest Alliance.
2. That Oasis adopt the practice of encouraging staff to always make conscious purchasing decisions - for example buying certified and recycled products wherever possible.
3. Allied to this, where possible we will use local, ethical suppliers rather than multiples - and we will use our purchasing power to support our partner organisations where this is relevant.

Offsetting

4. We would like to launch a scheme to offset our environmental impact. This is both a practical and a symbolic act, making a statement that we are conscious of our impact on the world's environment and are working to reduce or mitigate this.
5. As a first step we propose identifying a sum to offset air miles by planting trees - possibly through a partner organisation like Brunswick Organic Nursery or the Trees for Life project at Bettys and Taylors. We will explore doing this on Earth Day (April 22) 2015 which has become a focus for tree planting around the world.

6. The offsetting sum would be identified by Directors as a heart-felt contribution in light of what Oasis has the ability and resource to find and which also does justice to our commitment to being a force for change in the world.
7. We know that this is only part of our overall impact so we will also use existing invoicing/expenses systems to track the car mileage of Directors and Associates. We will do this by measuring Directors' mileage over a trial period and assessing its impact on the Planet.

Engagement

8. That Oasis stage an annual gathering of Staff and Directors to review progress on the measures we are undertaking and to plan further commitments for the coming year.
9. This gathering would be planned by a small Green Holding Group who would meet once before the event to plan and once after to digest the outcome and if necessary make further recommendations to the Directors Group. This Holding Group would replace the existing Green Group and would be formed at the first Staff and Directors gathering.
10. That environmental awareness be included as a definite criteria for consideration in staff and Directors' SAPA, allowing conscious reflection and self-assessment each year.
11. This statement to be included in the staff Handbook and covered as part of staff induction.
12. That, once considered by Directors, this statement is taken to the Staff Meeting Take to allow the staff group to provide a rattle and shake.
13. The finalised statement and the outcomes of each year's Staff and Directors Gathering would be shared with the wider Oasis community, including at the annual Engagement Event.

The Directors Group

The Oasis School of Human Relations

March 2015

APPENDIX: STATEMENT OF ETHICS

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

Introduction

The Oasis School of Human Relations inspires and develops 21st century relationships for meaningful, responsible and sustainable action. We place relationship at the heart of our work, and developing the whole person as being at the core of transformative change in the world.

Oasis is an exciting and unfolding 20 year experiment in the practice of freedom and responsibility. We work with emergent human concerns and questions at all levels of society, integrating theory, experience and practice.

We operate on a **not-for-profit** basis out of the legal form of a company limited by guarantee. Our ethics are based on our values, principles and the concept of the peer principle, and our hopes for the kind of world we want to shape and influence. The following is our latest statement of ethics, accompanied by illustrations in practice.

1. Our Work

- a. We seek to work with individuals and organisations whose interests and commitments are aligned with public purpose, global responsibility, social justice and social change, rather than exclusively related to financial reward.
- b. We provide services and relationship for individuals who want to attend to their own development and wellbeing.
- c. Whenever possible we work with those committed to developing and applying peer based, inclusive, collaborative, creative, whole person and radical human relations approaches, including working with the transpersonal.
- d. We make explicit our areas of focus and strive to determine and progress them with the engagement of the wider Oasis community through free association, and distributed and shared leadership.
- e. We are committed to supporting the on-going development of those who have participated and engaged in the work and community of Oasis.

Illustrations in practice:

- *In 2012, 25% of the work of the school was with individuals or organisations in the not-for-profit sector, 75% of our work was with public purpose organisations – with commitments to support aspects of social, environmental or wider economic benefit – such organisations include government and responsible businesses.*
- *Oasis supports and maintains a learning network and community events for those who have developed as human relations and Whole Person Learning practitioners.*

2. Our Practice

- a. We place the needs and requirements of the learner at the heart of our practice.
- b. We offer confidentiality, integrity, autonomy of practice, freedom, and a duty of care to those we work with.
- c. We work through and out of authentic (truthful, intentional, committed and peer based) relationship.
- d. We embrace development, change and uncertainty, and shape meaningful action.
- e. Practitioners apply self and peer based approaches to ensure reflection, learning, and improving practice, as well as determining ways of working that manifest our guiding principles and the values of whole person learning.
- f. We strive to develop beyond what is known.
- g. We bring developmental perspectives in understanding and working with individuals, teams, groups, organisations and communities.
- h. We ensure we remain independent and not affiliated to any political or religious organisation.
- i. We affirm difference, and challenge traditional forms of hierarchy, power and authority.

Illustrations in practice

- *All directors, staff and core associates undertake annual self and peer assessment processes.*
- *Our longer term programmes are participative, experiential and are designed to engender collaborative decision making.*
- *Our frameworks and methodologies have a basis in humanistic psychology, postmodern and inquiry approaches.*
- *We publish our findings and emergent frameworks for wider dissemination through Oasis Press.*

3. Staff and Practitioner Development

- a. We support the on-going development, health and well-being of individuals and teams (which we term Whole Person Working) employed by Oasis.
- b. We engage in an on-going process of learning, applying to ourselves the practice and rigour we offer others.

Illustrations in practice:

- *12-day development programme for all staff – 2013/2014.*
- *One-to-one development for all staff from independent practitioners.*
- *The Core Practitioner Group has planned 21 days of reflection, inquiry and supervision in 2014.*
- *All staff have access to Peoplecare Services and Occupational Health Assessments.*
- *Low turnover and high retention gives an indication of staff satisfaction.*

4. Environment and Planet

- a. We are committed to discovering what is possible to do more of whilst using less.
- b. We are committed to acting with consciousness and staying awake to the consequences of our actions on our planet.
- c. We seek to live within our resources and to act as stewards of our environment and the planet.
- d. We are mindful of the origin of the resources and energy we consume and the destination of the waste we produce.
- e. We engage with our suppliers and customers to encourage alignment with the principles of the UN Global Compact.

Illustrations in practice:

- *We design and deliver globally responsible practice programmes in partnership with international business schools.*
- *We use local suppliers wherever we can and encourage them to uphold the same environmental and ethical standards.*
- *We have a dedicated group focused on improving our environmental handprint – making a positive difference.*

5. Financial

- a. Any surplus is re-invested into the organisation.
- b. Directors have parity of salary and do not receive bonuses.
- c. There is an employee pay ratio of no greater than 1:4.
- d. No salaries are below the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Living Wage.
- e. We donate 10% of surplus annually, up to a maximum of £10,000, to the Oasis Foundation.
- f. We are committed to supporting organisations and people, who have an intent to develop whole person approaches, where there may be limited or scarce resources.
- g. We are committed to ethical investment of any available reserves, as well as ethical banking.
- h. We are financially independent.

Illustrations in practice:

- *We have ethical investments with Ethical Property Company and Shared Interest.*
- *Since its inception in 1999 we have contributed over £50,000 to the work of the Oasis Foundation.*
- *We hold available reserves of one third of annual turnover and have no loans.*
- *The lowest salary meets the Living Wage.*
- *We bank with Triodos.*

6. Governance

- a. The work of the organisation and the directorate is founded on the application of Whole Person Learning philosophy and the peer principle.
- b. The Directors Group is open to any individual capable of sharing in overall organisational responsibilities, able to hold a full organisational role, and aligned to the values and beliefs of Oasis in practice. Joining decisions are made with the individual and the Directors Group.
- c. All decision-making is based on consensus and transparency.
- d. We are committed to implementing, engaging with, and modelling globally responsible practice as recognised through our founding partnership with the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative and our support of the UN Global Compact.

Illustrations in practice

- *Annually, the Directors Group invests the equivalent of a month together in reflection, review, learning, development and decision-making.*
- *Since 1993, the Directors Group of Oasis has varied in number from two to six and currently has three plus one non-executive director, with external mentors and guides supporting and challenging our thinking and practice.*
- *Oasis is a signatory of the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact.*

Conclusion

This Statement provides the parameters within which our judgments are made. Our ethics give an indicator of the kind of world we are aiming to shape. However, it cannot, and does not aim to provide the answer to every ethical dilemma we as practitioners may face, nor be a form of rules that others have to commit to. We will from time to time review the statement, and incorporate our emergent learning and guiding principles. We expect those who work with us to develop their own statement of ethics as self-managing practitioners and colleagues in free association.

If you have a question about the Statement and our ethics we look forward to hearing from you.

This statement was written by the Directors Group. Thanks are due to all the current staff, associates and core associates of the Oasis School who have contributed to our thinking, with particular thanks to our organisational partners and mentors who have given generously of their time and support.

The Directors Group
The Oasis School of Human Relations
Revised 2014