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COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

INTERCULTURA COSTA RICA
2016

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LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDING DIRECTORS

Intercultura Costa Rica Language and Cultural Center is pleased to continue to support the United Nations Global Compact. We are proud to have furthered efforts to improve our company and community through the Ten Principles of the Global Compact, as they relate to human rights, labor rights, environmental protection, and anti-corruption.

We continue to make the Global Compact and its principles part of the strategy, culture, and day-to-day operations of our company, sharing the principles with our employees, partners, clients, and the public. We continue to implement processes to help us monitor our progress in achieving the goals set forth in the Ten Principles and have pledged to challenge ourselves and everyone around us – suppliers, customers, competitors, and neighboring businesses – to improve our global community.

In our annual Communication on Progress, we describe our latest actions to improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Laura Ellington & Adelita Jiménez

Founding Directors

Human Rights Report

Intercultura provides our employees with safe and healthy working conditions, employee training and incentives, protection of employee privacy, viable grievance mechanisms to express legal, personal and professional concerns, equal gender rights, published policy against sexual harassment in the workplace, and encouragement of employee diversity and hiring practices that promote ethnic and GLBT diversity and presence in the workplace. The following list provides an overview of our actions in support of human rights through our providing of:

- Free English classes, meals and childcare for single mothers and their children at-risk communities in Heredia.
- Logistical and financial support for the non-profit CREAR children's association at our Sámará campus, which offers free supplemental in the arts, sports, technology and languages to local children from disadvantaged communities.
- Cultural activities, offered free to community and staff, including yoga, dance and cooking.
- Non-discriminatory hiring practices and supporting for those from the GLBT community who join our staff. We have 3 openly gay teachers at our Heredia campus, who sponsor outings and cultural activities within and outside the Costa Rican GLBT community.
- A variety of ethnicities and minorities in our staff: our upper-level managerial staff is comprised of 1 African American woman, 3 Latina women, 1 European woman, and 2 gay Costa Rican men.
- Gender equality: we have a higher percentage of female employees than male (70% - 30%).
- Diversity in age, with employees ranging from 21 to 73 years of age.
- Intercultura is committed to helping further international proclaimed human rights in our communities in all possible ways:
- We offer need-based scholarships to foreign teen students for our Teen Spanish Immersion in Costa Rica program; in 2016 we will help 8% of students with costs.
- As a commitment to our communities we provide nonprofit coordination of foreign volunteer programs and encourage students to get involved in the communities. Last year we had a total of 480 volunteers. On average, 50% of volunteers are involved in social programs (daycares, orphanages, child-protection, elderly homes), 30% worked in teaching programs, 10% were involved in animal care, 8% in environment, and 2% in medical programs. The Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education Program requested our help in sending them volunteer teachers for help in the public school systems.
- We support all social placements with a donation of \$30-\$50 per volunteer, in addition to their fees and lodging costs.
- We conduct activities with students to educate and inform them of current events associated with Human Rights issues in Latin America. An example is the recent approval of the application of IVF through private and state-funded medical facilities. The procedure had been banned for 16 years in Costa Rica, the only country in Latin American that had prohibited IVF. The International Human Rights Court finally overturned national legislation and hundreds of Costa Rican women may now access the procedure.

Labour report

Intercultura abides by all aspects of Costa Rican Labor Laws, which includes the grievance mechanisms set up by the Labor Ministry. To date we have had an official complaint filed against the company through the Labor Ministry or any other governmental organization. The following are some of the processes that indicate our philosophy in this regard:

- 100% of employees receive the 13th month Aguinaldo pay as mandated by Costa Rican Labor Law, equal to one month's extra salary.
- We invested \$6,300 in total last year in training, education and free-time incentives for employees.
- We have grievance mechanisms set in place with trained administrative employees who handle complaints. Periodically, certified psychologists and other labour specialists lead our employees in workshops including a review of anonymous comments regarding their employment and evaluation of staff and school directors.
- We have yearly team-building workshops offered by outside companies which offer a further avenue for expressing employee concerns in a safe environment.
- We have an Occupational Health Policy Manual and an Emergency Procedures Manual as guides for employees regarding health and safety requirements in the workplace. We provide employees with a safe working environment by ensuring all cleaning and working materials are safe and nontoxic; we address fire prevention and emergency procedures in case of fire, earthquake or tsunami; we provide a guide for our committee to prevent possible accidents and investigate any that do occur, and to ensure the Health Manual guidelines are followed and that periodic inspections of all workplaces and employees are carried out to prevent illnesses and mishaps.
- All employees are insured both with the state health insurance system and with the private INS work-place accident coverage.
- We value the individual skills of employees. We believe they are our strongest asset and strive to help them improve wherever possible by continuing personal and professional development. This includes workshops for teachers and administrative staff, second or third language courses (Portuguese, English, German, French), conferences and higher education programs.
- We offer incentives beyond what is legally required, for example company social gatherings and/or outings for staff and homestay mothers, including meals, music, gifts and raffle prizes.
- 100% of employees are eligible for additional incentives (monetary, emergency assistance, interest-free loans, study-sponsorship, flexible scheduling and other).
- Every employee is aware of the terms and conditions of their employment, the voluntary nature of their employment and their freedom to leave. Each employee knows his or her job description and employees are kept current, up to date, and involved in the decision process on any changes that may occur to their positions. Intercultura has never been charged with, indicated for, or in any way whatsoever involved in forced labor.
- There exist no false promises or threats, and we do not engage in withholding wages under any circumstance. Everyone in the company works with full knowledge of their pay rates, overtime rates, and time off policies. This information is readily available to all employees. Employees

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conduct both their regular work and overtime hours of their own free will, and are reimbursed for any overtime.

- Management maintains current, annual research to confirm fair wages including living costs and wage rates for similar jobs in the industry to ensure our employees are receiving the highest salary they deserve and that the company can afford to pay. We consistently pay above the country-wide minimum and average wages for each position.
- We continue to distribute a Welcome Pack for our new employees, a manual with our company's policy for the teachers and administrative staff, safety issues, contingency plan and more.
- We have implemented a yearly company evaluation called "Help Us to Improve", so our staff members can evaluate the company in general, colleagues, environment, and more.
- English Department sends teachers links to videos that show common processes of their best work, so they can review and better understand the information before coming to the training. This is a concept call Blended Learning and we implement this in the English classes too.
- **Recognition and personal motivation (English Department):** We acknowledge and recognize "The Teacher of the Month" according to the students' evaluations and which teacher decorated the classroom the best. Also, in each meeting we do a "big ups" in which teachers can write reviews of other teachers who have helped them with something and this is read to the whole staff. In 2014 we started with Portuguese classes, and now all staff can take courses free.
- We are committed to reducing all forms of child labor and exploitation within our network. Intercultura has adequate and provable mechanisms of age verification maintaining copies of every employee's official government issued identification cards and/or passports. For all employees, a minimum age of 18 is required.
- We ensure our employees are provided with enough work and high enough wages compared to national average standards, so that adults are able to support their families. Therefore, children need not supplement the incomes of our employees.
- We offered 12 scholarships to local children and adults for English classes at our Heredia campus last year, and continue to offer for this year.
- The CREAR association continues to develop the teen and pre-teen program with Intercultura's support: these programs are aimed at keeping teens in school through graduation, aiding them in applying to and attending college, and providing marketable workplace skills.

Environmental Report

This year, Playa Sámara again received the Blue Flag award, in recognition of the environmental protection and clean-up activities implemented throughout the preceding year. We participated in this process through sponsorship of a daily, salaried clean-up program; environmental programs run by our partner, the CREAR association for local children and teens; and through financial and logistical support for monthly volunteer clean-up efforts (\$690 in the last year).

- We campaigned to get the Ministry of Health to assist in eliminating mosquito breeding-grounds in Sámara, and supported the community-wide clean-up of organic and plastic trash, attended by 200 people.
- At our schools, we have hot air hand dryers instead of towels, faucets with auto-turn-off pressure knobs, recycling bins throughout each campus for students and staff to use.
- We began using uncooked spaghetti sticks as coffee stirrers instead of plastic straws, to reduce plastic waste.
- We no longer use photocopies in our classrooms, but instead digital copies via our interactive whiteboards.
- Any food sold on campus must be done using recyclable materials.
- We installed solar panels in our Sámara campus and reduced energy consumption from \$1000 per month to \$10 per month.
- We continue to reforest palm trees and other native species on the beach in front of our campus and on roads and nature reserves in the area.
- Last year, the company donated \$1,900 to various community organizations including local public schools, community churches, for children who want to participate in national athletics, tree planting projects, community clean-ups, recycling centers, child orphanages, animal shelters, and environmental reserves.
- We continue to make our beachfront rancho available for community organizations, associations and public schools that need it for graduations, activities, meeting, etc., free of charge.
- We have taken an active role in the municipal council to improve transparency in governance, and to implement a 30-year plan that prioritizes environmental protection, social development and sustainable infrastructure development.
- We co-sponsored the SAMARUN Race to raise funds for community initiatives.
- We continue to support the development of the Cultural Park of Sámara, maintaining a forested area in the middle of town for a public park.
- We planted trees donated by ICE and local associations in schools and public areas, sponsored 4 low-cost castration campaigns of dogs and cats at low cost, organized 6 student-led beach cleanups, filled in the eroded entrance to the beach, contributed to materials to fix town sewers in collaboration with City Hall, offered/hosted 3 free computing and 3D printing classes to the Sámara community, subsidized German and French courses (\$20 per month, free for Intercultura staff), and Free community adult-education courses in conjunction with the INA

Anti-Corruption Report

Intercultura is committed to fighting all forms of government and other corruption. We strive to eliminate corruptive actions by filing official complaints, documenting corruption with real photographs and witness records and creating as much objective input as needed to begin the process of change.

Intercultura started and continues to co-manage the Sámara Security Committee, which works in conjunction with local authorities to eliminate police corruption and improve public security efforts in our town.

We have denounced inhabitants engaging in illicit activities such as drug dealing and bribery of government officials aimed to cover up environmental abuses and allow the perpetuation of enrichment at the cost of the environment.

We have also denounced noise-pollution and sanitary waste-water uses, and as a result of inaction on the Health Ministry's part, we have also denounced them for corruption, as they are the public entity in charge of ensuring environmental compliance laws.

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