



INTERCULTURA: COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

February 23, 2022

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

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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 GLBTQI diversity, awareness and presence in the workplace. The following list provides an overview of our actions in support of human rights:

ACTIVITY:	DESCRIPTION:
Minority Rights Support	Intercultura has continued to be active in promoting heightened awareness for Afro-Costa Rican Culture Day. This was finally made an official national holiday in 2022.
Gay Marriage	Public support on all company social media and in official school policies
Anti-discrimination hiring practices	Pro-active hiring of all ages, ethnicities, religions and gender expressions: 40% of our staff is non-traditional Costa Rican (ie. Not Catholic, heterosexual, white or Latino, or within the average 22-50 age range).
Gender equality	750% of our staff are women, 25% are men. Of the 5 top-level directors, 5 are women. Of our mid-management level: all are women.
Religious and ethnic equality, Age Ranges	Of our staff: one is muslim, 5% of our employees are over 60, 40% are from countries other than Costa Rica, 25% are of Costa Rican indigenous descent, 3 % are of Indian descent, 8% are of african descent, and 2% are of Asian descent.
Gender and sexuality-preference	We have three out of nine managers and three out of twelve Spanish teachers who are homosexual, as well as two out of twelve administrative personnel who are bisexual and one manager who is gender-fluid.
Anti-Age discrimination	5% of our staff are over 60, and we have staff members ranging from 18 to 74 years of age.
Cultural Activities	Offered free to all staff and students
Need-based scholarships	Offered to all students during and coming out of the pandemic
Volunteer Programs	30% of our Spanish students participate in volunteer programs in the community (teaching, environmental and elder care)
Donations	We give donations to the organization of \$30 - \$60 for each volunteer placed there

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 never 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:

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Employment security	Despite COVID, all of our staff are back up to 100% employment rates
Labour law compliance	For salary and hours reductions, all government requirements were met and employees fairly compensated from March 2020 to the present
Resumption of Duties	100% of employees are back at full time work and salary
Legal Severance	All employees who left were paid full, legal severance pay
Aguinaldo	100% of permanent employees receive mandated extra month's pay
Vacations	100% of permanent employees receive 12 days or more per year. 35% of employees receive an addition one or two weeks a year, based on longevity at the school.
Insurance	100% of permanent employees receive free state health care. All contract employees must have INS insurance to work at school.
Pension	100% of permanent employees receive matching pension contribution donations
Extras	School offers additional school bonus plans to employees, and interest free loans for education, housing or personal reasons.
Grievances	There is a standard, objective procedure to address grievances and receive complaints
Communications	Periodic workshops of Emotional Intelligence and Non-violent Communication are offered to all staff
Emergency procedures	We have a manual and procedures in place for emergencies
Access to information	All employees have access to the employee manual which covers all aspects of employment with the company
Foreign Hires	All permanent foreign hires are given private health insurance
Professional Development	100% of employees may receive free language classes in Spanish, English and Portuguese.
Additional incentives	100\$ of employees eligible for: interest-free loans, emergency assistance, study-sponsorship, and need-based flexible scheduling
Forced Labour	Intercultura has never and will never be implicated in or charged with forced labour practices in any way
Above-minimum wage	Intercultura always pays minimum 20% higher than minimum wage for each position, based on annual state publication of salaries
Talentum Feedback	Performance reviews are positive feedback and opportunities to improve reviews, designed to enhance motivation, give positive reinforcement and show appreciation to employees.



CREAR	Intercultura continues to support CREAR association, ensuring access to education, children's and women's rights, and work opportunities to Sámara's youth.
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Environmental Report

This year, Intercultura continues to sponsor a variety of environmental initiatives at the school and community-wide level, despite limitations imposed by social distancing, restricted movement, transportation and other COVID measures.

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION
Clean Energy	Both campuses function almost 100% on solar power
Water conservation	Bathroom faucets are self-closing to avoid waste
Beach clean-up	We sponsor a salaried, daily beach clean-up in Sámara
Tree re-planting	We plant native-species trees in and around the campus to replace those damaged by human intrusion or natural causes
Turtle protection	Last year saw the first return of turtle nesting to Sámara with the decrease of visitors due to COVID. The school added three new turtle protection programs to our volunteer offering, and continue to contribute to these programs with volunteers and donations.
Paperless processes	All non-essential printing has been eliminated with the implementation of digital administration and educational processes. The use of smart boards in classrooms and online classes has enabled us to reduce by 95% the use of paper books and support materials. We no longer have a photo-copier.
Non-disposable kitchenware	We use only re-usable containers, stirrers, utensils and cups for coffee and meals served on campus, except during health crisis. We do not allow Styrofoam containers to be used for on-campus food sales, only recyclable materials are allowed.
Recycling	Both campuses provide and maintain recycling bins for paper, plastic, glass and aluminium
Environmental donations	We have a yearly donation budget and provide facilities and equipment for environmental initiatives in both communities where our campuses are located, including: stray -animal neutering, reforestation, sewage management, clean-water maintenance, classrooms for sustainable development education programs, youth environmental programs, park creation and maintenance, electronic equipment and stage for meetings and workshops .



Anti-Corruption

We continue to work with the municipality in Sámará and Heredia to combat any local corruption regarding building laws, community programs and environmental protection evaders. We provide consulting and physical infrastructure for community activities on this topic, and lead by example in transparent and legal practices regarding adherence to zoning regulations, permits, patents, denunciations of those who abuse environmental protection regulations, timely tax payments and other.

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION
Legal Actions	We followed up on complaints with the Health Ministry denouncing abuse by local restaurants emptying waste water onto the beach
	We signed petition to demand application of local laws prohibiting business from occupying public beach land for profit. This has resulted in a recent law being introduced that will regulate public land use by for-profit enterprises.
Compliance	We continue to abide by all local laws regarding land-use, business management and operation
Law-enforcement	We continue to work closely with local police to ensure law is properly enforced regarding pollution, environmental abuse, illicit drug activity, and to confirm that bribes are not accepted to circumvent these laws
Media	We provide information and documentation to media sources who provide coverage on issues involving local corruption and legal abuses

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES:

Legal Successes	Several new laws have been introduced into Costa Rican legislation, due to pressure and work by numerous groups and individuals fighting for their recognition. These include official recognition of Afro-Costa Rican culture day, the upholding of the gay marriage and equality act, and the new law requiring municipalities to regulate unauthorized use of public lands (which results in social and environmental problems) by local businesses
Health & Well-Being Benefits	We have seen through our scholarship programs that men, women and children have been able to obtain better- remunerated jobs after completing Intercultura's English and Portuguese low-cost language programs. One paraplegic student who studied with us intensively for 2 years on a full scholarship now has full-time employment, whereas before he was unable to find work. Single mothers from a socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood are provided free English classes, and 4 have now graduated from the program and found bilingual jobs which enable them to provide a decent living for their families.
Teen Suicide Reduction	The youth program addressing the issue of teen suicide and depression has resulted in an increased number of contacts from local youth via the youth



	association we partner with, leading to treatment of depression before it becomes a more serious problem.
Access to Learning Opportunities	The language programs we offer are for all ages, nationalities and other differential factors. We offer scholarships to those students who cannot afford to pay but demonstrate merit and commitment.
Gender Equality and Female Empowerment	We specifically target women and girls in our scholarship outreach efforts, and have seen the advances not only in job and school success rates, but also in higher self-esteem and increased participation in extra-curricular activities. Women are the recipients of our Puertas Abiertas full scholarship program. Women represent the majority of our management positions, both mid and top-level.
Sustainable Economic Growth	Our salaried positions are always above minimum wage and our hiring practices have enabled us to provide job opportunities to marginalized or minority groups including Nicaraguans, other immigrant groups (Perú, Colombia, Argentina), and social minorities such as homosexuals and indigenous groups. Our highest-paid jobs cannot be more than 5 times our lowest-paid jobs, ensuring more pay equality from cleaning lady to manager.
Foster innovation and engage in sustainable building practices	All our facilities are constructed of sustainable materials, in accordance with local anti-seismic regulations, and optimizing use of space, light and natural ventilation and clean-energy sources.
Combat Climate Change	Our installation of solar panels in both campuses (5 buildings in total), has drastically reduced our carbon footprint and eliminated 98% of our reliance on traditional energy sources.
Protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems	Our reforestation programs have created new-growth trees on the beachfront public land, replacing trees lost to disease, human intrusion and lightening. We have approximately 60 new trees in and around our campus.
Promote peaceful and inclusive communities	We are creating more transparent feedback tools for employees, and have seen a rise in employee suggestions and addressing of issues pertinent to their status. These have been rapidly resolved in accordance with CR labour law and our business norms. We continue to emphasize volunteer programs as a way to promote intercultural interaction, tolerance-building and understanding, and had approximately 75 students this year participate in the program.