

EAST's Reporting of Leadership, Strategy, and Culture (2020)

This document contains responses written by the charity. ACE has made no content changes other than the removal of confidential information.

Workplace Culture

How would you describe your organization's culture?

I would describe EAST as having a decentralized culture where employees are empowered to participate fully in the organization and organizational decision-making.

Employees are encouraged to take on new responsibilities and given the space to direct their own work, making use of the resources available to fulfil their potential.

We try to minimize the effect of hierarchy and employees are encouraged to contribute to all discussions regardless of their role or time at the organization. This provides an avenue for employees to receive feedback and input on an even footing.

Do you regularly conduct surveys to learn about staff morale and work climate?

No

(How) do you integrate and encourage diversity practices within your recruitment and hiring process?

While we do not keep formal metrics, we currently have a diverse team of employees. The majority of our staff and leadership are female, and our employees span a broad spectrum of ages, sexual orientations, nationalities, and abilities.

What areas of your organizational culture have room for improvement?

I would like to see even more active involvement of employees during our meetings, especially when we are discussing strategies for issues or campaigns.

Do you have a workplace code of ethics or a similar document that clearly outlines expectations for employee behavior?

This year we introduced a workplace anti-harassment and discrimination policy. The policy will be formally incorporated into our organizational charter at the next general meeting.

The policy includes a statement of our values as an organization, expectations for employee behavior, and clear processes available to employees who encounter instances of discrimination or harassment.

The policy can be viewed here: shorturl.at/gCPT0

How much time and funding is allocated for the professional development of staff?

There is no specific amount of time or funding allocated to professional development activities, although this is something we would like to encourage employees to pursue.

We do try to provide opportunities to staff to grow their skillsets and responsibilities during their day-to-day work, for example by taking charge of a campaign, leading press conferences, or contributing in external meetings, however we do have specific knowledge or skill gaps that need to be addressed.

One example of this is knowledge of alternatives of animal experiments, which is a highly technical area, constantly evolving, and would benefit from professional development activities.

Do you offer a health care plan or a healthcare reimbursement account?

EAST pays National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and Labour Insurance Scheme (LIS) fees for all staff, including the portion that is usually deducted from employee salaries.

The NHIS is Taiwan's single-payer healthcare system. The NHIS provides high quality health care to all legal residents with very low out-of-pocket expenses.

The LIS covers all legal workers in Taiwan, commencing on their first day of work. The LIS currently covers medical costs for incidents involving childbirth, injury, disease, disability, old-age, death, and occupational hazards.

How many days of paid time off, sick days, and personal leave do you offer full-time employees per year?

We offer a sliding scale of paid leave based on the amount of time an employee has worked at the organization, in accordance with Taiwan's labor laws. The paid leave entitlements are as follows:

- Three days for employees who have worked at the organization for six months to one year
- Seven days for employees who have worked at the organization for one to two years
- Ten days for employees who have worked at the organization for two to three years

- 14 days for employees who have worked at the organization for three to five years
- 15 days for employees who have worked at the organization for five to ten years
- An additional day per year for employees who have worked at the organization for more than ten years

Employees are entitled to up to 30 days of sick leave per year, paid at half their usual salary. Female employees are entitled to an additional three days of paid menstruation leave per year, with additional menstrual leave treated as sick leave.

Employees may also take up to 14 days of unpaid personal leave per year (we apply this flexibly where needed).

List of Policies

Please indicate which of the following policies your organization is committed to, in writing.

Please note: while we think it is generally better to have more of these policies rather than fewer, we do not expect every organization to have all or even most of these policies in place. We do not currently require organizations to have a certain number of these policies in order to receive a recommendation from us.

Checklist:

- ✗ Regularly scheduled performance evaluations
- ✗ All positions have clearly defined essential functions with written job descriptions
- ✗ Staff salaries are determined by a formal compensation plan
- ✓ A written statement that your organization does not discriminate on the basis of race, sexual orientation, disability status, or other characteristics
- ✓ A written statement supporting gender equity and/or discouraging sexual harassment
- ✓ A simple and transparent written procedure for filing complaints
- ✗ An optional anonymous reporting system
- ✓ Mandatory reporting of harassment or discrimination through all levels of the managerial chain, up to and including the board of directors
- ✓ Explicit protocols for addressing concerns or allegations of harassment or discrimination
- ✓ All reported instances of harassment or discrimination are documented, along with the outcomes of each case
- ✗ Regular, mandatory trainings on topics such as harassment and discrimination in the

workplace

- ✓ An anti-retaliation policy protecting whistleblowers and those who report grievances
- ✓ Flexible work hours
- ✗ Internships are paid (if your organization has interns; leave blank if it does not)
- ✓ Paid family and medical leave
- ✗ Simple and transparent written procedure for submitting reasonable accommodation requests
- ✓ Remote work option is available
- ✓ Audited financial documents (e.g. for U.S. organizations the most recently filed IRS form 990) are available on the charity's website
- ✗ Formal orientation is provided to all new employees
- ✗ Funding for training and development is consistently available to each employee
- ✓ Funding is provided for books or other educational materials related to each employee's work
- ✗ Paid trainings are available on topics such as: diversity, equal employment opportunity, leadership, and conflict resolution
- ✗ Paid trainings in intercultural competence (for multinational organizations only)
- ✗ Simple and transparent written procedure for employees to request further training or support

Does your organization have any other important or unusual policies you'd like us to know about?

- Paid lunches for employees on all work days
- Weekly yoga classes during work hours (subsidized to 50%)
- Employee retreat day-trips, usually in an outdoor setting in the mountains by the coast

If your organization has an employee handbook or written list of policies, please provide a link here or email it to us.

A basic outline of our working principles and office procedures is contained in this document <https://bit.ly/2DPa394> (in Chinese); our anti-harassment and discrimination policy can be viewed here: shorturl.at/gCPT0

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your organization's human resources policies?

Furlough for a certain period of time is encouraged if an employee is experiencing any signs of burnout and needs a longer period of time away from work to return to their best mental state.

Leadership and Strategy

Please identify 1–5 key members of your organization's leadership team.

Leader 1

Please list this leader's: (1) name, (2) role, (3) the number of years they've been with your organization.

- (1) Wu Hung
- (2) Chief Executive
- (3) 20

Leader 2

Please list this leader's: (1) name, (2) role, (3) the number of years they've been with your organization.

- (1) Yu-Min Chen
- (2) Deputy Chief Executive
- (3) 20

Leader 3

Please list this leader's: (1) name, (2) role, (3) the number of years they've been with your organization.

- (1) Tai-Ching Lin
- (2) Director

(3) 13

Leader 4

Please list this leader's: (1) name, (2) role, (3) the number of years they've been with your organization.

(1) Liping Peng

(2) Director, Taiwan Animal Protection College & Executive Secretary, Cage Free Alliance

(3) Four years at EAST, and around six years at the Life Conservationist Association, where EAST was spawned

Questions for Primary Leader:

What do you consider to be your organization's major strengths?

Over the past twenty years we have accumulated significant experience campaigning for animals. In this time our team has built up considerable institutional knowledge pertaining to the systems and institutions of government, domestic industries, animal issues, and campaign execution.

Through our long-term presence and sincere engagement we have established credibility with decision makers, in addition to meaningful relationships with government officials, legislators, academics, and other stakeholders. These two assets are crucial to our policy and legislative advocacy work, and mean we are able to push for change more effectively.

In this way we hope to ensure we are achieving true, lasting change for animals—not just a flash in the pan.

What do you consider to be your organization's major weaknesses?

Policy and legislative advocacy is where we started out as an organization, and an undeniable part of EAST's DNA.

That said, the communication methods we use to engage government, politicians, and the media have sometimes seeped into our public engagement, meaning the content produced can be lengthy, technical, or unappetising to the general public.

Last year we hired a new staff member to manage social media. This has enabled us to engage new audiences, including a younger demographic. We have also paid more attention to our visual and written messaging to make it appealing to a broader audience.

While a lot can be achieved through top-down advocacy, our ability to make continued progress will depend on public awareness and support for our appeals. For this reason, progress in this area will remain an ongoing focus.

What's the best decision you've made as a leader?

One valuable strategic decision we made was to change our central message from “humane” to “animal welfare.” When EAST was established, both of these concepts were unknown to decision makers and the public. At the time we advocated for the “humane” treatment of animals, drawing on terms already in use overseas.

However, we found that this terminology was frequently misunderstood. Many times, we found that important decision makers thought humane meant doing what is right by human beings. In extreme cases, this could be extended to permitting drowning as a method of euthanizing dogs in shelters—so long as the staff did not need to witness the horrifying ordeal.

While seemingly a minor terminology change, our decision to adopt an animal welfare framework—that clearly puts the life quality of animals front and centre—reframed the conversations we led, and enabled many of the reforms we have since achieved.

What's the biggest mistake (or maybe hardest decision) you've made as a leader?

Some of the biggest mistakes we have made have been putting trust in organizations—be it international or Taiwanese—in the belief we are working on the same page, only to have that trust violated and impact for animals jeopardized.

From this, we have inferred the need to establish a rapport over time and do research prior to entering into new collaborations.

What changes have you made to your organization as a result of past successes?

Building on our successes as an organization, and acknowledging the importance of ensuring these can persist and be built upon in the long term, we established the Taiwan Animal Protection College (TAPC).

The TAPC plays a movement-building function, transferring our experiences and knowledge to the next generation of animal advocates. Through this process we hope to inspire future leaders and ensure the movement has the scaffolding required for future growth.

What changes have you made to your organization as a result of past failures?

Aside from our campaigns for ‘humane slaughter’, when we first founded EAST much of our attention was devoted to companion animal issues—in particular the overpopulation of stray animals.

We managed to achieve some progress for the welfare of stray dogs, for example, instituting humane catching and euthanasia techniques, compulsory registration for pet dogs, and a neutering/spaying scheme. However we found it very difficult to make further or final progress in this area, as most other organizations at the time were staunchly in favour of trap-neuter-return (TNR) and 'no-kill' policies.

Due to the enormous stray population and inadequate shelter facilities (both then, and even now) this resulted in animals living miserable lives of sickness and starvation on the streets, or suffering in overcrowded, poorly-run shelters that were unable to handle the number of animals in their care. While EAST of course does not wish to see any animal put down, we acknowledge the pragmatic need for adequate infrastructure to support a 'no-kill' policy; without it, the welfare of the animals risks being severely jeopardised.

Over time we shifted our focus away from companion animal issues, with most energy and resources now devoted to farm and laboratory animal issues (also due to the large number of organizations working on companion animal issues).

What does your organization do differently from other animal organizations? How does your organization stand out?

A strong emphasis on research and use of evidence is a feature throughout all of our work. I believe this is one factor in our ability to attract diverse stakeholders to our campaigns, and maintain a high-level of credibility with both decision makers and the public.

Another point of difference is our democratic internal structure, which fosters an inclusive and participatory culture where all staff can have meaningful input into the strategy and direction of the organization.

Have you had a leadership transition since the beginning of 2019? If yes, please describe the transition process.

No. We have had stable leadership for a long time now.

Please provide a list of board members and brief descriptions of their occupations or backgrounds (job titles/industries or links to LinkedIn are sufficient). If this information is available online, feel free to simply provide a link.

See PDF on Google Drive: <https://bit.ly/35q8Yjr>

What does your organization do to create or revise your strategic plan? How often do you revise strategy? (If no formal plan is used please explain how you set strategy)

We do not have a formal strategic plan for the organization. We typically set our strategic priorities at the beginning of each year after assessing our performance of the previous year. This involves coming together as a team to figure out what worked and what didn't, whether it be related to one of our campaigns or how the organization functions.

Based on these discussions we decide on a broad vision for the year ahead, making key decisions such as which programs should expand or shrink, or where future hiring should be focussed.

While we take minutes to document these decisions, this is still a relatively informal process and leaves room for fluidity throughout the year should circumstances or priorities change.

How are the board and staff involved in the strategic planning process?

The board plays a supervisory role and is not typically involved in day-to-day operations or strategy setting.

Conversely, we involve our employees at every stage of developing our strategy. Our overall strategy decisions are made in meetings in which all employees are present. We enforce non-hierarchical norms of discussion and actively encourage all staff to bring forward their ideas and expertise to achieve the best outcomes for our organization. We also encourage staff to challenge ideas that don't sit right with them, even when those ideas are put forward by leadership.

How do you set goals and monitor progress towards those goals?

Over the years EAST has developed a pragmatic, opportunistic approach, evolving into a nimble team that is able to respond to the political and legislative context to secure the best possible outcomes for animals.

We develop our goals based on our assessment of the best opportunities available at any given time. This could include regulations coming up for review, a change in leader at a government authority, or a news event that brings animal issues close to the spotlight.

After settling on a goal we will develop an action plan to achieve it, with a member of staff electing to lead our work on the issue. This person is then responsible for convening meetings throughout the campaign process and reporting progress to other staff working on the issue.

The windows of opportunity we capitalize on are usually unpredictable, so we have found an adaptive goal-setting process to be an effective way of maintaining fluidity in our strategy and allowing us to take action where there is the greatest probability of achieving change.

Has your organization engaged in any formal self-assessments? How, when, and how regularly?

No. We hold informal reviews periodically when time allows. These typically occur around four times a year and involve bringing together all staff to reflect on our work and organization, and identify areas of success and failure.

Where possible these take place in a café or venue outside of Taipei to create a relaxing environment where staff feel comfortable contributing freely to the conversation, and bringing up issues they have encountered or suggestions for improvements.

We have not conducted any formal self-assessments with fixed indicators, akin to the ACE charity evaluation process. We do conduct assessments of specific programs as part of the grant reporting process where required by grantors.

Does your organization have retrospective or “post-mortem” meetings following major projects?

Not routinely. Typically we will reflect briefly on concluding projects during weekly meetings, or at the subsequent meeting for that project.

Often we will immediately start work on the next campaign due to lack of capacity or new events and opportunities.

International Operations

Do you operate in more than one country?

No