

THL'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?

At THL, we invest in continuously developing our culture. Our staff enjoys a collegial and cooperative work environment that has yielded many fruitful professional relationships and lifelong friendships. Because our employees work from home, we offer many opportunities for informal team-building and bonding to combat the challenges remote work presents: an annual all-staff retreat (this year it was virtual), departmental retreats, informational and professional development workshops, weekly informal tea breaks, and many opportunities to socialize via Slack (through channels such as just-for-fun or cooking-plants).

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

Yes, we conduct annual employee satisfaction surveys. Additionally, we solicit feedback continuously—via various surveys, meetings, focus groups, and check-ins—on our initiatives to support morale and a healthy work environment.

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

We follow HR best practices for recruitment, and work to minimize bias and encourage diversity through the hiring process and employee lifecycle. Our hiring process is led by a recruiting professional, our Talent Acquisition Manager, who trains everyone who participates in recruiting on EEOC requirements and unconscious bias. Our Director of People Operations, who manages the Talent Acquisition Manager, is the advisor of THL's Equity and Inclusion Committee. The hiring teams for each position are comprised of multiple interviewers (who vary in age, tenure, gender, etc.) to allow for a diverse perspective. The initial screening of applicants is performed by the Talent Acquisition Manager and job skills tests are graded blind. Our job descriptions are carefully crafted to improve accessibility and encourage individuals from marginalized communities to apply. For example, we remove non-essential qualifications and education requirements, and we transparently list salaries for all positions.

What areas of your organizational culture have room for improvement?

We see four main areas: prioritization, training, streamlining information and resources, and DEI/cultural competency.

Prioritization: We have a number of programs across the organization, and often our central teams (such as Technology, Communications, or Legal) are spread thin trying to support each distinct project. Historically, we have had too many disparate org-wide goals and similarly too many team goals. During planning this year, we plan to refine our goals to a few key areas and ensure all teams are aligned that those areas are the priority. Additionally, we will be developing a project prioritization protocol to assist in day-to-day workflow decisions.

Training: Our organization grew rapidly over the years, and we now realize a need for more and better training. Currently, a lot of knowledge is learned on-the-job, but this leads to managers and other teams (such as People Operations), devoting a significant portion of their time to answering questions and resolving errors. Over the next few years, we intend to develop a much more thorough training program to ensure each individual has the knowledge they need to succeed in their roles.

Streamlining information: As The Humane League staff and programs grow, we create greater diversity in our workflows and work products. At present, we are generating a cornucopia of documents, documentation, data, research outcomes, templates, meeting agendas and notes, action items and decisions, correspondence, advertisements, appeals, reports, tutorials, proposals, and more. Meanwhile, we are collecting and using a variety of the same from partner organizations and third parties. We see a need to establish a communication strategy and central repository for all work-related information. While we have had an employee intranet for several years, it can be made more user-friendly and requires guidelines for what information goes where. All of this in process—we are building a new intranet that will be the “one stop shop” for all employees along with guidelines for usage. This should also help with training.

DEI/Cultural Competency: Historically, our organization has been relatively homogenous with a US-centric approach. While we've always felt our culture was inclusive, we expect there are areas of the culture that are not inclusive of a more diverse, multicultural workforce. We began a partnership with Encompass in summer of 2019, and as of summer of 2020 we are nearing the end of phase one (of three) of our work with them. We have an active Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee, which held a series of workshops on racial justice for our staff throughout the summer. The committee continues to actively engage with our staff by assigning optional monthly DEI topics and providing resources through our diversity-equity-inclusion Slack channel (for example, August's DEI topic was “Supporting Inclusion on your Team”). Staff were provided with a training and a corresponding action in line with that theme. We hired external presenters to lead a workshop on embracing our multicultural organization, we are in regular communication with our international leadership to assess where and how we can improve, and we've made

changes to our committee membership to ensure the composition of each committee (Equity & Inclusion and Culture) reflects our multicultural organization.

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

Yes, within our employee handbook, we have a Standards of Conduct Policy that clearly outlines expectations for employee behavior, as well as a set of specific expectations to optimize staff interaction. We review expectations at the start of every staff retreat as well. Additionally, all staff are trained on our core values during new hire orientation and evaluated on them within annual reviews.

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

Our FY2020 budget allocated \$52,035 for learning and professional development. This number does not include retreat expenses, which are largely learning and development focused. In previous years we set a goal focused on cultivating an environment of learning and engagement. Consequently, learning and engagement have become built into the day-to-day workflow of our staff and integrated into our culture. We invested in a Learning Management System, Grovo (which is sunsetting by EOY 2020, and we will be replacing with a similar system). Staff are encouraged to spend at least one hour per week focused on learning and growth, and we check-in on learning and growth during monthly individual goal progress reviews.

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

Yes, we offer full coverage of employees' healthcare premiums for the HSA Choice health plan and employer-paid life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment premiums. We also offer a 50% cost share of employees' vision and dental premiums.

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

The Humane League recognizes the importance of time off for rest, relaxation, and other familial or personal obligations. Therefore, employees may use Paid Time Off (PTO) for any purpose including vacation, illness, bereavement and personal appointments. Time off is essentially "unlimited" and may be used up to two consecutive weeks at a time. All staff are required to take a minimum of five consecutive days of PTO each year and managers check with staff quarterly to ensure sufficient PTO is taken. Country-specific leave conforms to local regulations, erring on the side of being more generous.

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?

- Mandatory PTO minimum
- Pre-leave checklist for staff taking PTO to support "unplugged" vacation
- Private accommodations when traveling
- Twelve weeks of paid parental leave for any parent following the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child (US)
- Reimbursements are provided for full-time staff: home internet, cell phone and "bring your own device."
- Voluntary benefits offered to full-time staff: Pet insurance benefits (veterinary and prescription costs), Short-term disability, Long-term disability, Critical Illness, Accident and Hospital Indemnity
- Employer paid Employee Assistance Plan
- 401k plan for all eligible staff to participate in

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

Our handbook has not changed since last year. Melissa confirmed that ACE already possesses it.

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

Our People Operations (HR) team administers policies and benefits with the following principles: the employee comes first, we recognize that employees bring their whole selves to work, and maintaining a safe, comfortable and respectful work environment is paramount to our work. The benefits and policies in the independent entities in the UK and Mexico have a similar employee

first philosophy when developing policies and benefits, these are tailored to comply with country-specific laws.

Leadership and Strategy

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

Jennifer Barckley, Vice President, Communications, 2 years

Vicky Bond, Managing Director, UK (Leadership, Development and Scientific oversight), 4 years

David Coman-Hidy, President, 10 years

Andrea Gunn, Executive Vice President, 7 years

Rachel Huff-Wagenborg, Vice President, Operations, 6 years

Michelle Kucerak, Senior Vice President, Programs and Development, 6 years

Ana Ortega, Managing Director, Mexico, 5 years

Aaron Ross, Vice President, Policy and Strategy, 12 years

Maho Uehara, Regional Manager, Japan, 3 years

Wendy Watts, Vice President, Legal and General Counsel, 3 years

Questions for Primary Leader:

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

- Focus on high-impact program areas.
- Excellent relationships with other animal organizations, ability to organize or join coalitions to make major progress.
- Many talented advocates and experts on the team.
- Willingness to change approach over time and across regions.
- Active sharing of resources and training with other organizations.
- Tenure of leadership and key staff members.
- Digital and grassroots supporters.

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

- Strain from very rapid growth over the last few years. Still catching up on debt of central team burden (eg tech, communications, operational and finance, HR, etc.). Rapid growth means we have proportionally higher staff with shorter tenure.
- Large reliance on success of corporate campaigns brings an element of risk.
- Dependence on a small number of large donors.

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

Delegating and trusting other leaders at the organization. Stepping back from much of the direct work I was involved in previously (eg corporate negotiations, training of other organizations, etc.)

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

Not delegating soon enough in some cases. Managing too many people until 2020.

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

In the last few years, we have moved a huge amount of resources into the Open Wing Alliance and whatever it has needed to support rapid growth in regranting, international campaigns, events, training resources, and more. We continue to grow this part of our work quickly as it has been yielding great results.

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

We have shifted the majority of our resources to institutional campaigns, mostly cage-free and broiler chicken campaigns. This change was a reversal of our previous allocation of resources, which was more highly focused on efficient means of individual outreach (leafletting, online ads, humane education, tabling at events, veg starter kit newsstands). This is the largest strategic change in the history of the organization. While it's true that this was responding to the success of the cage-free campaigns in the US, we also decided that there was insufficient evidence to support the continued level of outreach we were carrying out when the cage-free campaigns were an achievable alternative for us to pursue.

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

We are unusually collaborative and open with other organizations. We stand out in our willingness to share information, resources, funding, and successes with others. In the US, we are also one of the more aggressive campaigning groups and stand out in our willingness to escalate pressure against corporate targets.

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

No

Please provide a list of board members and brief descriptions of their occupations or backgrounds.

THL (US) Board of Directors:

Mark Middleton, Board Chair: Mark has a background in engineering, and is the co-founder of a software development company. He has been contributing to the animal protection movement as a volunteer and donor since 2005.

Lydia Chaudhry, Board Secretary: Lydia has been a volunteer with The Humane League for more than a decade and has a background in volunteer management, event planning, and plant-based cooking.

Suzanne Niemoth, Board Treasurer: Suzanne is a finance, operations, and business affairs executive specializing exclusively in 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. She has been volunteering in animal welfare since 2008.

Neysa Colizzi, Director: Neysa has a background in change management and strategy execution, training and facilitation, and engineering and business consulting. She is an Expert Principal at Bain and Company.

Jacob Eliosoff, Director: Jacob is a NYC-based cryptocurrency entrepreneur from Montreal who has worked at startups, in finance, and as a teacher. He is actively involved in NYC's "effective altruism" community.

Alicia Rodriguez, Director: Alicia is a lawyer with a background in corporate law and animal law. She advocates for sustainable food and climate policy, with a focus on local government plant-based food initiatives.

Shannon Champion, Director: Shannon is an executive for a national public education advocacy organization with a background in issue advocacy and electoral campaigns, grassroots organizing and non-profit fundraising. She has been contributing to the animal protection movement as a volunteer and donor since 2012.

What does your organization do to create or revise your strategic plan? How often do you revise your strategy?

Every three years, we set a three-year plan, and then each year, we establish an annual plan (comprised of priorities and goals) that will lead to achieving the three-year plan. These plans are developed during annual strategic planning retreats. Since our three-year plan is ending in 2020, we will set new three-year priorities this year. At the end of the strategic planning process, we will have a set of organization wide goals, team goals and individual goals which will cascade from each other.

We conduct quarterly reviews to assess progress toward our goals. Mid-year, we review our goals to determine whether changes need to be made based on the changing landscape. In 2020, we made significant changes due to COVID-19, in particular to our organizing and campaign goals.

As each charity have become independent, the UK, Mexico, and US organization will each set their own, separate three-year plans in 2021. Each organization also has their own goals.

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

The US board has created a strategic planning committee in 2020 composed of four board members. Following an initial research phase where they will interview internal and external stakeholders, the board strategic planning committee will provide guidance to the US Executive Team to assist them in drafting the three-year strategic plan. This draft will be refined by the US Leadership Team (representing all departments across the US organization) at the fall Strategic Planning retreat. This process will help inform how the international board may be involved in future strategy development in the UK and Mexico. In the meantime, those boards pass a budget and the associated annual plan for those countries.

Across all THL organizations, prior to setting our annual goals (or three-year plan), we gather feedback from our staff to understand the challenges and successes of each team and role. At our strategic planning retreat, we create a framework (draft) for our plan, and then engage each team before finalizing it to ensure it is realistic and to gain buy-in. We also provide guidance and coaching for teams and individuals in setting their own goals to ensure that they align with organizational goals and priorities.

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

As described above, annual org-wide goals are established at the strategic planning retreat. Annual goals are designed to ensure we will achieve our three-year goals. We use the SMARTIE framework for goal setting, which means that each goal must be strategic, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, inclusive and equitable. We set organization-wide goals in cooperation with department heads and international leadership. Department heads collaborate with their teams in setting team goals, with coaching available from leadership if necessary. Individuals set their individual goals in partnership with their managers.

Progress toward organization-wide and team goals are reviewed quarterly. Individual goal progress is reviewed monthly.

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

We engage in a quarterly review of our org-wide goals and strategic plan. Teams review progress toward goals quarterly, and individuals review goal progress monthly.

Projects are completed with project debriefs to assess what went well and what could have improved. Additionally, we frequently use surveys and leadership meetings to discuss challenges the organization is facing. Because we have created a culture of feedback and openness, we regularly receive feedback (both solicited and unsolicited) and discuss it as it comes up.

The board completes an annual self-assessment, as well as an annual assessment of the President.

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

Several of our teams (campaigns, communications, organizing, development, OWA, Labs, and UK) hold post-mortem meetings regularly. For other teams there is a more generic debrief following major projects. We expect every project to be debriefed. We have a debrief meeting template, where we discuss what went well, what didn't, why, and what we can do differently next time.

International Operations

Do you operate in more than one country?

Yes

In which countries do you operate?

United States, Mexico, United Kingdom, Japan. The Open Wing Alliance operates globally with 80 groups in 63 countries.

How long have you operated in each country?

US: 2005

UK: 2016

MX: 2015

Japan: 2017

OWA: 2016

Have you stopped operating (or closed a subsidiary) in any country? If yes, when and why?

No

What is your approach to deciding which countries to expand into?

Our preference is to work internationally via the Open Wing Alliance. By providing grants and training to organizations already present in a region, we are able to expand the impact of our programs with extremely low overhead costs and risks to THL while providing benefits to our partners. We do not have plans to expand into new regions beyond this approach.

Our decisions to move into the few countries where we do have employees are based on what we see as an urgent need to fill a particular program role. For example, without THL's presence in Japan, there would be no organization carrying out essential corporate outreach activities to support the global campaigns.

Our ethos with new offices is to give the local organization a lot of latitude and independence in carrying out their programs.

Are your subsidiaries financially independent?

No, THL US makes a large grant to the UK organization and is currently the sole funder to the Mexico organization.

Do your subsidiaries have independent boards?

THL UK was founded with two US staff members on the board of trustees (David Coman-Hidy and Rachel Huff-Wagenborg) as well as three UK volunteers. The UK Charity Commission requires this balance to found a charity. Currently, the board for THL Mexico is made up of four US staff members (David Coman-Hidy, Andrea Gunn, Rachel Huff-Wagenborg, and Aaron Ross) as we move quickly to complete the process of becoming an independent charity that can receive donations. We will revisit board composition once this process is complete.

What do you do to understand the local context of the countries in which you operate?

We have organizations based in the US, Mexico, and the UK, as well as our Open Wing Alliance (OWA) global coalition, which partners with organizations around the world.

Each organization (in the US, Mexico, and the UK) create and work from their own, unique strategic plans, and determine their own programs and tactics to achieve their goals. Our Japan operation is part of the US organization, but THL's Regional Manager in Japan is a Japanese native and heads up local strategic decisions, hiring, and goal setting. During our virtual retreat in 2020, provided a workshop to all staff to expand multicultural competency, and we plan to provide additional training before the end of next year. Our Equity & Inclusion Committee and our Culture Committee have members representing the various countries in which we operate. Finally, our leadership across the three organizations (as well as in Japan) frequently discuss our culture and how we can be a better multicultural organization.

We formed the OWA with the understanding that we could make an impact by partnering with locally established organizations rather than expanding THL operations. OWA member organizations are empowered to set their own strategies and tactics in alignment with the OWA's overall goal to end the use of cages. Within the OWA, our OWA Advisory Committee, composed of a select group of 17 strategic partners from various regions, provides input and guidance on the coalition's initiatives, resources, and strategy. The resources and training we provide through the OWA act as a framework that can be adapted depending on the local context. When hosting Regional Summits or strategic meetings with OWA groups, we develop programs based on the needs of the groups on the ground and focus on round-table style workshops that allow the groups to lead the discussions and determine the direction of the event. When conducting training for individual OWA member groups, we do as much as we can to understand the specific challenges, opportunities, and context that the group is working in before helping them develop a regional strategy. Each training starts with a presentation from the trainee group that explains the local situation, cultural considerations, historically successful strategies, and challenges they've encountered or expect to encounter.

When possible, we favor hiring international staff who have the regional expertise to develop appropriate strategies and support local OWA groups in a way that US-based staff can't, especially by providing translated resources and conducting meetings and events in the local language. For example, our OWA Latin America Coordinator is from Brazil and based in São Paulo. She has vastly improved collaboration between OWA groups in Latin America as well as increased their participation in global OWA initiatives.

Finally, we support THL staff who work closely with or manage international colleagues in making time to learn about cross-cultural collaboration (beyond what is offered to all staff). The OWA team is reading *The Culture Map* and has bi-weekly discussions about how to incorporate learnings from the book to create a more inclusive coalition. We have an OWA Slack channel to discuss our inclusivity practices and provide an anonymous feedback form to ensure all coalition members are able to give input related to our equity and inclusion efforts.

Who is responsible for decision-making for local programs carried out by the subsidiaries?

This has changed each year as the Mexico and UK organizations have moved from being contractors with the US organization to separate organizations, which has mirrored the independent development of strategic plans for each organization. As the main funder (and as board members) leadership from the US staff have oversight of broad strategic priorities, but management decisions and more granular strategy choices (e.g., which corporation to campaign against) are left to local staff.

Who is responsible for the strategy and direction of the subsidiaries?

See answer above.