

## "Cultural diagnosis through dialogue" BLIHR project 2007

The following is a list of questions that were created by a reader of the Human Rights Corporate Accountability Guide: From Law to Norms to Values. One reality of business – and especially in the area of risk and reputation – is that time for reflection and dialogue is highly limited. This is a real risk as time spent in this way is one of the most effective (and efficient) ways to identify strengths and weaknesses. There are multiple ways to engage with these questions. We suggest three:

- Convene a group from across the business for 1.5 hours and discuss the questions (ideally a cross-functional and senior group)
- Send out the questions to a sample of (e.g. 50) employees and ask for their anonymous written input (the questions can be easily adapted to become multiple choice in terms of level of agreement – hence providing quantitative data)
- Request a third party to interview a sample of people across the business where their decisions and actions have an inherent human rights risk or opportunity

### 1. IN ESSENCE

- A. Expanded moral vision: How does your business purpose and identity align with the big challenges facing the world — including human rights, environmental challenges, competition for natural resources and global rule of law?
- B. Culture and Values: How would you describe the culture and values at your business? Do you have a clear sense of what drives behaviour from day to day — regardless of human rights concerns?
- C. Perception: Who really understands your current business culture and what drives and influences people? Is there a shared picture of this in your organization? Would stakeholders agree?

### 2. VALUES, RULES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- A. Connecting Human Rights to your Real Values: What are the shared values of your business and how do they connect to your human rights obligations (using for example, BLIHR's essential steps)?
- B. Spoken v Unspoken Rules: When it comes to human rights, what are the implicit rules and tacit assumptions that allow the business to lead?
- C. Wallet Cards: What would pocket cards in your business say? Are there implicit or tacit words — good or bad — that should be included? What messages do people really get about what behaviour works?
- D. Daily commitment to Human Rights: Can you provide an example of a daily — or maybe weekly — action that an individual or individuals in your business take that fits this description? What drove the birth of this behaviour in the first place

### 3. CONFRONTING ISSUES AND DILEMMAS

A. Human Rights Pressure Points (i.e., disincentives for respecting or promoting human rights, such as time pressure, conflicting corporate goals, etc.): What are these for your business? What do you think they are for your sector?

B. Challenges: What are the top three challenges for your business to create an ethical culture? Can you provide stories/examples of where you have recognized and overcome/dealt with these challenges?

C. Limits of Cost Benefit Analysis (Ford Pinto Example): Is there an example in your industry of such a clear dilemma? How has it been dealt with? What was the process to reach the end decision?

D. Listening to Bad News: Is your business good at hearing the voice of the minority or the 'irritant'? Are people that ask questions labelled as 'stalling' or 'ineffective'? How does your business create opportunity for challenge and critique in the day to day running of the business? In which part of your business is this essential?

### 4. LEADERSHIP

A. What examples do you have of a leader in your business inspiring others into ethical action? What was the story? When, where, how, what, who, context etc.?

B. Translating human rights into business language: Are your business leaders good at taking complex ideas and communicating them in language that works for others? Where else in the normal running of the business is this critical? Who is really good at it and how did they get good at it?

C. Entrepreneurship/Autonomy v. Acting Ethically: How does your business balance this in the course of doing business and driving profit?

D. Participation of Wider Group of Stakeholders in Business Vision: Are cross-functional groups common in your business? If so, what has driven their creation in the past? Have you used them in relation to human rights specifically?

E. Making ethical decisions: What approach, framework or set of questions does your business use? Who is involved in the dialogue and when are matters discussed? Are they given time?

### 5. PROCESSES, PROCEDURES, DRIVERS

A. Helps and Hindrances: What aspects of your business purpose, identity, vision, strategy, policies and procedures enable effective responses to human rights risks and opportunities? What aspects constrain?

B. Incentives/Disincentives: How does your business incentivise ethical behaviour? How does your business incentivise — unintentionally or as an unintended consequence — unethical behaviour?

C. Organizational cultural variability: Are you clear as to what drives behaviour and responses to human rights issues of different functions (e.g. CSR, HR, Procurement, Marketing, Strategy, and Legal)? Are you aware of the different cultures of certain disciplines and departments in your business? If so, how do they impact the business's approach to human rights?

## 6. LEARNING AND GROWTH

A. Experiential learning: Does your business make use of these experiential and possibly 'life changing' interventions? Would it work in your business? Why? What allows it? Why not? What would get in the way?

B. How do your existing leadership development and education opportunities support or undermine the behaviours that human rights or other ethical training interventions make?

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