# GFF'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.*

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## Workplace Culture

**How would you describe your organization's culture?**

The good side is that we feel that what we do has good promises and potentials to make a difference and that we are part of a team that are respected for our undertaking and are a pioneer in many ways. The down side is that we are located in different cities and do not have many opportunities to get together, do trainings together and build an organization culture.

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

No, we haven't.

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

Candidates tend to be mostly women. So we do encourage men to apply for our job vacancies. We welcome people from different religious backgrounds (many vegans tend to have Buddhist background - something we have been very mindful about). As our main message is reduction of animal protein, instead of veganism, our team consists of non-vegans who support reduction of animal protein in addition to vegans and vegetarians.

**What areas of your organizational culture have room for improvement?**

Due to lack of funding, we do not have team building opportunities so often times our team is driven by day to day work and do not yet have time and opportunity to be together in one space where we can reflect on our work together. Therefore, miscommunications and frustrations that arise during daily work cannot always be effectively channeled to enhancement of understanding.

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

Everyone in the senior management team has signed a code against sexual harassment in the workplace. We do not yet have a general workplace code of ethics for our team.

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

Almost all our funding is project-based so there is hardly any budget built in for professional development of the team - a situation we are very keen on changing but are constrained by our resources. At the same time, since our budget is limited, every colleague is multitasking so can hardly allocate time for professional development.

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

We pay for a government-mandatory health care plan for all formal, full-time team members.

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

Since we started with a small team of 2-3 full-time employees, we are still developing the capacity to formalize our policies on leaves. Apart from government holidays, our team take leaves on an informal basis - meaning that they can take leaves when needed (sick days or family emergencies) up to certain numbers (usually no more than 10 work days) but usually do not take "vacations" per ce - days when we can have leisure travels with families. This needs to change, we know, but needs resources to support.

**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.*

*Also, ACE respects the unique regulations in each country where we evaluate charities, such as China. As a result, this list of policies differs from those in our other 2020 reviews and supplemental documents.*

Checklist:

- ✔ Regularly scheduled performance evaluations

- ✔ All positions have clearly defined essential functions with written job descriptions

- ✔ A written statement that your organization does not discriminate on the basis of race, sexual orientation, disability status, or other characteristics

✘  A simple and transparent written procedure for filing complaints

✘  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

✘  Simple and transparent written procedure for submitting reasonable accommodation requests

✔  Remote work option is available

✔  Formal orientation is provided to all new employees

✘  Simple and transparent written procedure for employees to request further training or support

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## 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.**

JIAN Yi, founder & President, 3 years

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

Melinda Hou, Executive Director, 11 months

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

Cecilia Zhou, Chief Project O"cer, 3 years

**Questions for Primary Leader:**

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

We are known to be a pioneer and leader in our space. We have pushed the limits, helped build legitimacy, expanded the scope, and redefined the movement in many ways. We have also provided many public goods for the community. We are one of the most respected leading organizations in the field.

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

<u>Lack of security</u> - we have to constantly looking for support for the projects (still without an endowment that can give us a solid amount of time to stablize). Lack of stability for the team is a weakness like many other civil society organizations - we have done quite well in the past year regarding ensuring more security for our team and thus stability, but without enough resources committed to supporting the team, we have to rely on project management funds to support the team, which poses a big issue - if, for instance, we cannot secure funding for a project that involves a current colleague, then that colleague either has to leave or takes another role that might not best fit him/her - this is a waste of talent in some way, and of our previous resources put into training this colleague.

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

To stick to our core values, while try to be as inclusive as possible in order to leverage mainstream resources for change.

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

Some of our colleagues had to leave because there was no more financial resources to support their roles.

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

We continue to engage more stakeholders to support our cause. Recently I spoke at the first workshop on food system transformation in China, first time in Chinese language (which is significant because all previous conferences were organized by organizations outside China with mostly English-speaking speakers) with representatives including the Chief Nutrition Scientist for

Chinese Center for Disease Control. We can see that momentum is built up and tipping point is approaching. We have also started a series of talkshows on China Global TV.

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

We have constantly been looking for resources to support a stable team and for opportunities for our colleagues for professional development, although most of funders by far do not seem to be interested in that.

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

We are arguably by far the only voice for China's animal organizations in the mainstream conferences - including the highlevel conference on sustainability organized by the Fortune Magazine in 2019, the Good Food Dialogue talkshow series we organize on China Global TV Network, indepth reports on major national media such as Southern Weekly and Caixin, and the above-mentioned the 1st highlevel China workshop on food system transformation. We are the only winner from China/East Asia for the prestegious 2020 Food System Vision Prize by Rockefeller Foundation. We also redefined the field by coining concepts like Plant Forward, being the first one to champion "food system transformation" in China and providing public goods for the community such as the Good Food Summit, Good Food Festivals, Food Forward Forum, Good Food Roadshows, and the China Meat Atlas.

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

We have added Melinda Hou, formerly with CIWF China, to our senior management as the Executive Director.

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

1. Dr. Zhou Jinfeng, Secretary General of the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation;
2. Victor Koo, founder of youku.com, sometimes known as China's YouTube + Netflix.
3. Mia MacDonald, founder & Executive Director of Brighter Green, who helped find initial support for founding the organization.

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

We discuss it first among senior management team (President, Executive Director, Chief Project O"cer), and with managers of various sections before bring it up to the Board. We will reflect on recommendations from the Board and revise.

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

As mentioned above, it is an interactive process. We do have an "Incubator" built in our structure, which focuses on the more future-looking, vision-oriented side of work headed by the President, whil the rest of the team headed by the Executive Director focus on the implementation side. The Board focues on larger pictures and resource mobilization.

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

The President focuses on strategy and will discuss goals first within the "Incubator" and the monitoring processes will be led by the ED who is responsible for implementation of the goals.

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

We have not had any formal self-assessments of the entire goal of the organization but assessments on our projects mostly happen on a weekly basis during our internal Monday conference call.

**Does your organization have retrospective or "post-mortem" meetings following major projects?**

Yes, we do. We have these meeting sessions after every major project, such as the annual Good Food Summit, the Good Food Festival, etc.

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## International Operations

**Do you operate in more than one country?**

No