



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture



The Ethics Office

2013 Annual Report

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Part I. Mission Statement

The Ethics Office is responsible for providing confidential advice on ethics and standards of conduct to the Organization and all its employees. It promotes ethical awareness through training, communication, policy development and liaison; and aims to resolve allegations of unethical behaviour or wrongdoing.

The Ethics Office is independent from all Programme Sectors, Support Sectors and other Central Services, and reports directly to the Director-General. In the event that the Director-General is the subject of an allegation, the Ethics Office will refer the case to the UNESCO Executive Board.

Part II. Overview of the Ethics Office

1. Introduction

Since its establishment in 2009, the Ethics Office has continuously developed and grown, and has become a key component among the services provided by UNESCO to assist in the resolution of grievances.

The Ethics Office from the offset has taken a preventative approach rather than a punitive approach to promoting a culture of ethics at UNESCO. Through a comprehensive communication and outreach strategy to sensitise UNESCO employees on the reputational risks of failing to respect the UNESCO norms of conduct, to the implementation of a policy protecting those who speak up against unethical behaviour, the Ethics Office is proud to highlight the progress achieved since its inception.

In this annual report, the reader will notice that the number of requests received in 2013 is, for the second time, lower than the previous year. This was an expected outcome that proves that the strategy in place devised by the Ethics Office is coming to fruition, and the number should become constant in the coming years as employees are sensitised in ethical decision-making.

2. Ethical Core Values

It is important to recall the fundamentals relating to Ethics. Ethics refers to the basic concepts and fundamental principles of decent human conduct. At the organizational level, it relies on three core values: Integrity, Professionalism and Respect for diversity.

Integrity is a core value in all aspects of our professional and personal life. Integrity includes, but is not limited to loyalty, impartiality, fairness and honesty.

High-standards of professionalism are required to fulfil our duties at UNESCO. We should show pride in our work, demonstrate the highest standards of competence, be conscientious and efficient in meeting goals and commitments, and be motivated by professional objectives rather than personal concerns.

Finally, we take pride in the diversity of our colleagues, which brings together people from varied backgrounds, cultures and experiences. We should embrace this diversity, and view it as an advantage. We should be able to work constructively with people from all backgrounds, examine our assumptions and avoid stereotypes, and show no discrimination against any individual or group.

Part III. Activities and operations

1. Trainings

Education is key in building a culture of Ethics in UNESCO. From its inception, the Ethics Office considers that sensitizing employees and raising ethical awareness is the best way to attain this objective. This is the reason why the Ethics Office has developed and implemented a specific training programme aimed at enabling all employees to make decisions in a clearly understood ethics context.

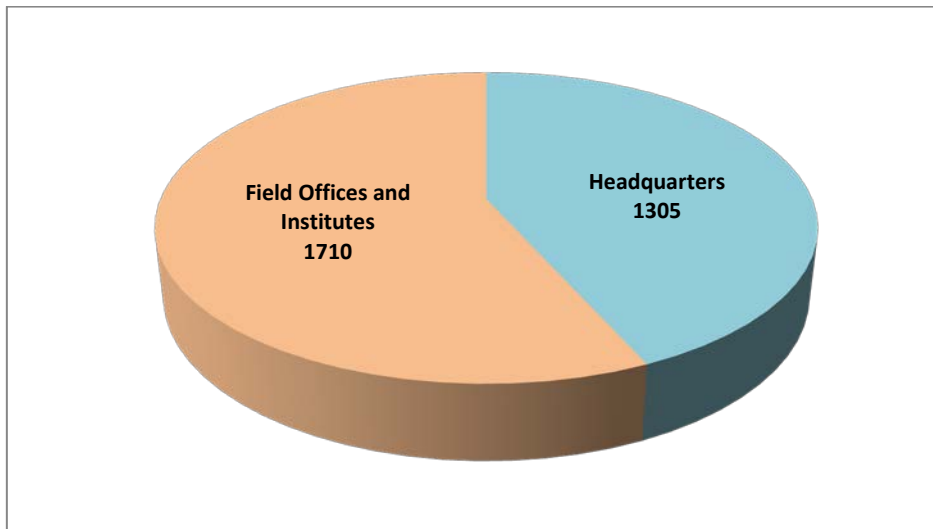
The training on Ethics was specifically tailored to the needs of UNESCO by the Ethics Office and has a certain number of elements, which makes it unique compared to the training delivered in other international organizations. First, it is important to note that it is a face-to-face training, directly delivered by the two staff members of the Ethics Office, namely the Ethics Advisor and the Ethics Officer. This approach was adopted by the Ethics Office as it was felt that a delicate and sensitive topic such as ethics, which relates to the daily professional life of each employee, requires real interactions and further discussions with the practitioners. In addition, it also allows the Ethics Office to take the ethical temperature in UNESCO offices around the world, and to best address the concerns of the employees.

It is also noteworthy that the attendance is mandatory for this training, for all categories of employees regardless of their contractual arrangements, whether based at Headquarters or in the Field Offices.

Figure I. Number of Employees Trained

Ethics Training by year	Number of participants
2013	253
2012	838
2011	1315
2010	609
Total	3015

Figure II. Geographical Breakdown of Employees Trained since 2010



2. Requests: advice, guidance and complaints

The Ethics Office responded to a total of 179 requests during the 2013 calendar year, fewer than during 2012 (235 requests), and fewer than during 2011 (348 requests) and closer to the number recorded in 2010 (178 requests). The trend suggests what began the past year: the Ethics Office’s trainings program have borne fruit. UNESCO employees have followed the training programmes and are more aware of the ethics function. They seem better equipped to take ethical considerations in their decision-making and in their actions without needing prior consultation with the Ethics Office.

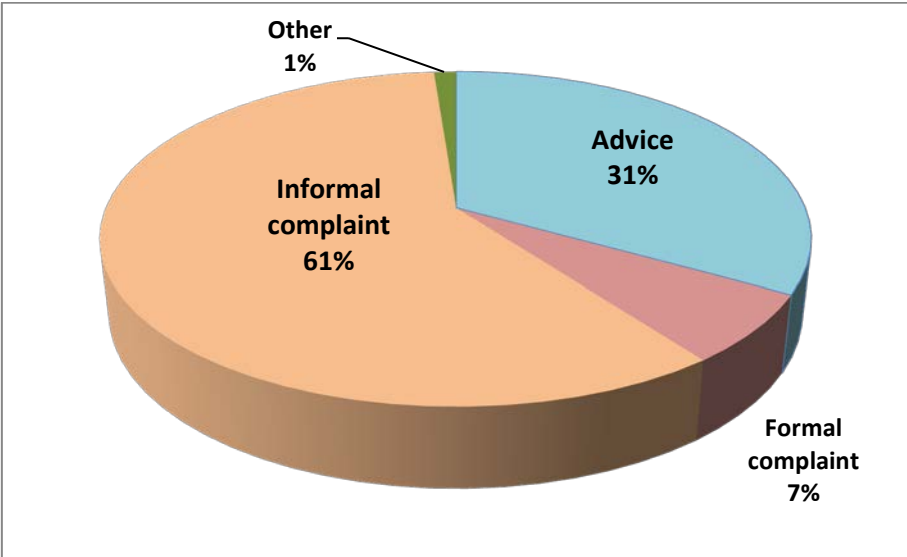
The trend may also be explained by the financial constraints facing the Organization, as a result of which the number of missions made by the Ethics Office to deliver the training and meet the employees in the field has substantially decreased. A further possible explanation might be that due to the financial constraints of the Organization and

consequential uncertainties, employees feel somewhat apprehensive to come forward to raise their ethics-related issues.

You will find below statistics compiled by the Ethics Office for 2013. As previously mentioned, the Ethics Office responded to a total of 179 requests.

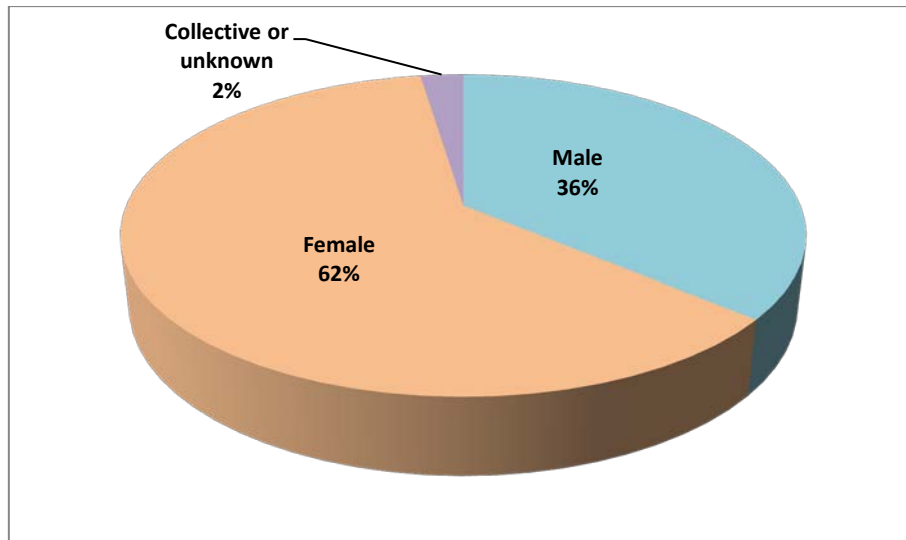
It is interesting to note that, of these requests, a third of them were requests for advice or guidance regarding an ethics-related issue, while other requests pertained to allegations of misconduct, and were either informal complaints (when an employee informally seeks assistance for an ethics-related issue with another employee) or formal complaints (when an official complaint is lodged against another employee for action on the part of the Organization). The majority of employees contacting the Ethics Office made informal complaints. Compared to 2012, the number of informal complaints has risen and the number of requests for advice has diminished. The number of formal complaints is similar to last year.

Figure III. Nature of the requests



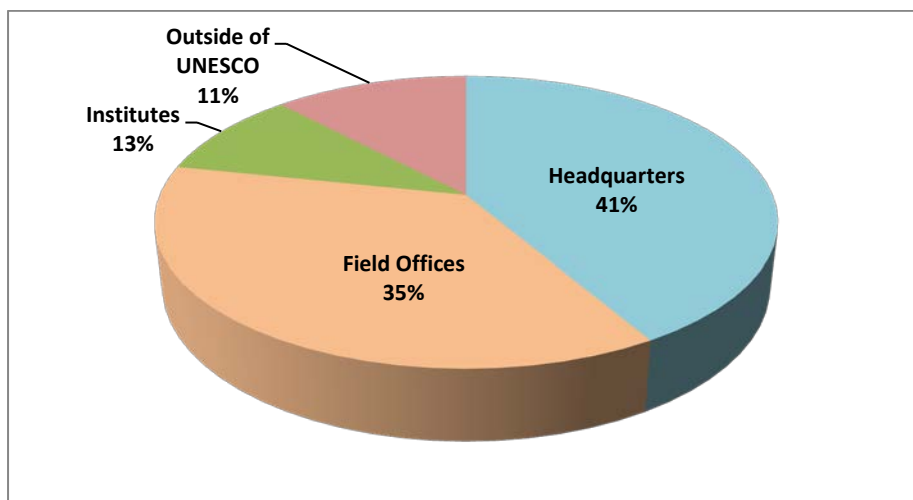
Furthermore, almost two-thirds of the requests were brought forward by women. This has to be viewed in conjunction with the fact that there are more women in positions of supervisees in the Organization. It is also noteworthy that there are some requests that are reported collectively, that is by more than one employee, and that requests reported by unknown or anonymous sources are also taken seriously by the Ethics Office. One might indeed be able to argue that, in addition to the already in place whistleblower protection policy, the best protection against retaliation is anonymity.

Figure IV. Requests by gender



In order to ensure equitable access to the Ethics Office, we make sure to meet employees in the field offices and institutes when delivering the training away from Headquarters. This could explain the reason why there are approximately the same number of requests from employees based at Headquarters and those deployed in the field. Furthermore, the Ethics Office can also be directly contacted by those outside the Organization, when employees are for instance not honouring their private legal or financial obligation.

Figure V. Origin of the requests



A quarter of the requests received by the Ethics Office are in relation to moral harassment issues.

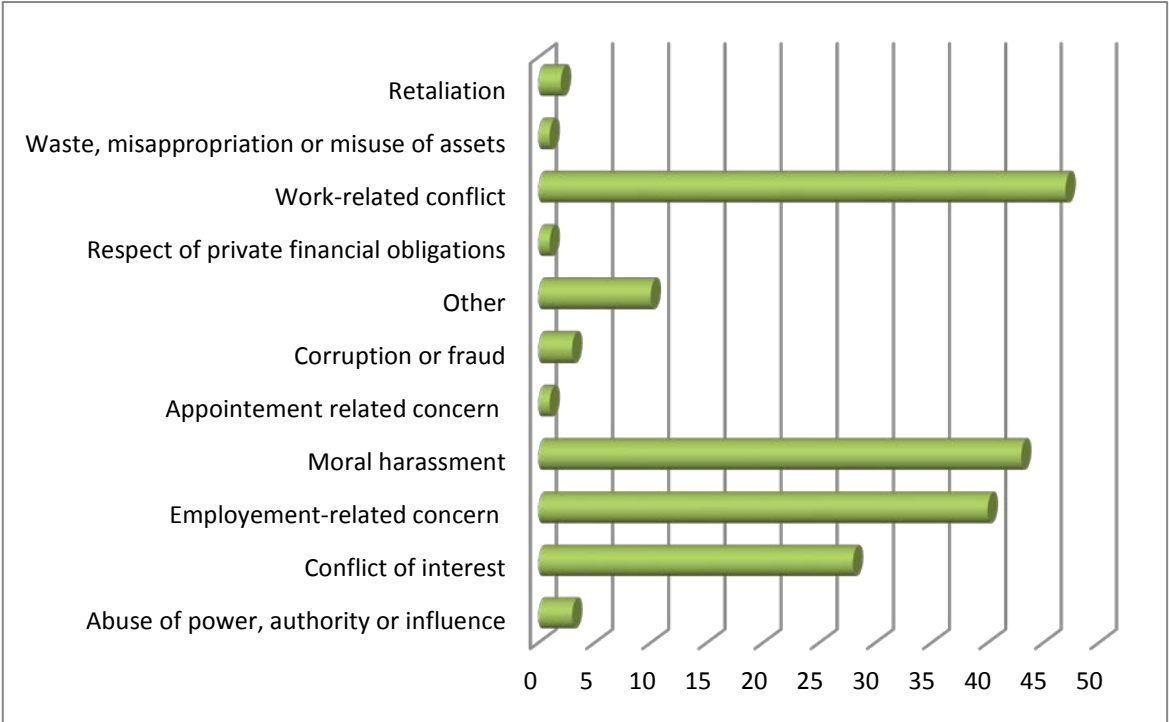
Almost a quarter of the requests received by the Ethics Office refer to employment related concerns: issues with contracts, performance reviews, transfers, career development recruitments or job description. While they are not necessarily ethics-related issues as such, the Ethics Office might address them in cooperation with the responsible service, should there be an ethical concern at one level or another.

Almost a quarter of the requests received by the Ethics Office involve work-related conflicts, such as interpersonal and managerial issues, absenteeism, or incivilities.

Finally, less than a fifth of reported requests relate to conflicts of interest. This notably refers to situations such as the acceptance of gifts, honours, and remuneration, or on outside activities and employment, favouritism, family employment, as well as of privileged information and situations of external pressures.

Beyond these main categories, other reports received by the Ethics Office include situations of retaliation, abuse of power, fraudulent practices, waste of resources, corruption, and the non-respect of private legal and financial obligations.

Figure VI. Category of requests received by the Ethics office



131 out of the 179 requests received by the Ethics Office in 2013 were resolved by the end of the reporting year. A third of the requests made to the Ethics Office were employees needing advice (see Figure III). The Ethics Office usually provides advice or guidance and closes the request. Other types of requests are closed by the Ethics Office following successful resolution between the parties concerned, or following the Director-

General's acceptance of the recommendations by the Ethics Office for action to be taken by the administration.

3. Participation in the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations

In July 2013, UNESCO hosted the fifth Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations meeting. The meeting's objective is to share ideas and exchange on topics of an ethical nature. This year, five topics were addressed: whistleblowing and retaliation protection, ethical risk assessment, conflicts of interest, challenges facing ethics offices and ethics in performance management.

The discussions led to a fruitful exchange of opinions and ideas, and they were an opportunity to see how ethical challenges are dealt with in different multilateral organizations. The Ethics Office was very pleased with the meeting and is thankful for the interest of the participants.

Part IV. Going forward

1. Ethical concerns to look at next year

In 2014, it is expected that the mandatory training on ethics will have been delivered to all the employees of the Organization, whether at Headquarters or in the field. Following this, catch-up sessions are foreseen for newcomers or those employees who have not yet had the opportunity to attend. Refresher sessions addressing more deeply certain specific ethics-related topics will also be considered.

In addition, with the completion of the delivery of the mandatory training on ethics, employees will have a sense of the implication of ethics in the workplace, and will consequently be able to provide further information about their expectations. In this regard, the Ethics Office will consider the feasibility of an ethics and workplace survey.

2. Policy on the Declaration of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme

In December 2012, the policy on the Declaration of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme was approved by the Director-General, following a stringent consultation process with relevant internal stakeholders (the Bureau of Human Resources Management; the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs; the Advisory Council on Personal Policies; and both Staff Associations).

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the risk of conflict of interest arising from the financial holdings or outside activities of some employees, while striking the right balance between their private interests and their obligations to the Organization.

The first disclosure will be made during the first semester of 2014 for the 2013 reporting period. Only employees at P-5 level and above, and those whose principal duties include the procurement of goods and services for UNESCO or related to investment of UNESCO assets, are eligible to respond to the questionnaire.

The employees in question will be requested by the Ethics Office to complete a short questionnaire on the previous calendar year. The questionnaire will be composed of ten questions and information will have to be provided in relation to the employees, their spouse or partner (if any), and their children (if any). This policy is quite different from the ones in place elsewhere, as the information will have to be shared only when it relates to a potential conflict between the functions of the employee and his/her private interests. In most United Nations entities, employees must declare all their personal assets even if these assets are not related to with their work.

In the future, the scope of the policy may be widened at the discretion of the Director-General.

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