CERN OMBUD

5th Annual Report
January - December 2015

Sudeshna Datta-Cockeril
Agenda

• Role, Principles, Actions

• 2015
• Profiles of Visitors to Ombud’s Office
• Types of Issues
  • Overall Statistics
  • Categories of Issues
  • Outcomes
• Other Activities
  • The Ombud Blog
  • Promoting a respectful workplace
  • Shared practice
• Observations
• Recommendations
OMBUD Role

- Provide confidential assistance in the informal resolution of interpersonal issues in the interest of the good functioning of CERN & the wellbeing of all its contributors
- Promote a respectful workplace environment through actions aimed at raising awareness & providing guidance on the day to day application of the CERN Code of Conduct
- Contribute to Organizational culture change by raising systemic issues with management, as applicable
OMBUD Principles

Confidentiality
Neutrality / Impartiality
Informality
Independence
Discussion — a ‘safe place’ to tell your story & get another perspective
Advice — information regarding other services or resources available
Coaching — support in identifying options to work out a strategy for action
Mediation — meet in Ombud presence to find mutually acceptable solution
Intervention — Ombud action only on authorisation of person concerned
Referral — Ombud referral to other services as applicable
Profiles of Visitors to Ombud Office
Types of Issues
Outcomes
January to December 2015

106 visitors to Ombud’s Office

1 5 times / case (+ exceptionally)

Discussion – Advice - Coaching – Mediation - Intervention - Referral
Contract Type

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>LD</td>
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<td>Student</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDAS</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
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</table>
OMBUD Profiles: Gender - 2015

Gender: visitor total

- Female: 44
- Male: 62

Gender: staff member visitors

- Female: 25, 40%
- Male: 38, 60%

Gender: staff member visitors relative to CERN

- Female: 72%
- Male: 28%
Perceptions – issues as experienced by the Visitor
Options – strategies by which to deal with the issues
Intervention – only when authorised

Insights – input for concerned employer

It is often the “little acts of disrespect and failures in performance feedback that seem to corrode some professional relationships like bits of sand and ice”.
OMBUD Categories of Issues 2015
[Classification according to International Ombudsman Association]
OMBUD Distribution of Issues 2011-2015
[Classification according to International Ombudsman Association]

*Evaluative relationships also typically most representative category in other international organizations*
OMBUD Outcomes

Distribution of Outcomes - 2015

- Action: 21%
- Advice/Coaching: 4%
- Discussion: 40%
- Mediation: 35%

http://ombuds.web.cern.ch
OMBUD Other Activities

...communication...
...need for more guidance & feedback...
...respect across professions / levels...
...everyday sexism...
...toxic tales / information flow...
...fairness...bullying
...inclusiveness...
...trust...

Blog

“It’s not fair...”
31 May 2016
The perception of unfair treatment often feels like a downward spiral of demotivation, which ultimately leaves us feeling discouraged and helpless. What are some of the strategies that would allow managers to prevent or limit the risk of all these negative outcomes? On one hand, as colleagues facing these circumstances, to cope with these feelings and to move on?

Third letter from ombudsman focuses on fairness.
16 May 2016
Spring is here again, and once again it is time to focus on fairness of the International Ombudsman Association.

Defeating unconscious bias
06 April 2016
Do you have a tendency to switch off at meetings every time a particular colleague starts talking? Is it obvious to you that your colleagues will never accept a peer as a project leader? And does your candidate from your own alma mater clearly have a definite edge over the others?
CERN Ombuds on Rebuilding Trust

In her latest newsletter article for staff at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, Sudeshna Datta-Cockerill examines the breakdown and restoration of trust. She observes that trust is built on reliability, integrity, expertise and good will. Of these bases of trust, good will is the most critical for achieving trust. The Ombuds is an important resource for disputants to restore trust.

She writes:

Whatever the approach that is chosen, whether ‘tête à tête’ or through a facilitated conversation, an honest and open dialogue backed by the genuine wish to improve the situation is the way forward and constitutes a tried and tested way towards re-establishing the trust that is the cornerstone of all good working relationships.

(CERN Bulletin.)

Related posts:CERN Ombuds Begins Series of Articles for Employees; CERN Appoints Next Ombuds; New CERN Ombuds Continues Newsletter Articles.
OMBUD Other Activities: shared practice

- IOA (International Ombudsman Association) annual conference
- UNARIO (UN and related Organisations) annual meeting
- European Ombud network annual meeting
- IAF (International Association of Facilitators)
- UNARIO - Geneva monthly meetings
- EMBL – Co-design & facilitation of workshop
OMBUD
Other Activities: respectful workplace

CERN Code of Conduct → a workplace based on mutual respect

Promoting awareness of CERN Values

Posters, door stickers, …
Events, e.g. “Accelerating Respect”, May 2015, …

Project: Developing proto-type of a quiz based on typical CERN scenarios to promote awareness of CERN Values

Joint logo
CERN – Geneva association

Working group – chaired by HR: Diversity (2016)
IR: Stakeholder Relations / Education, Communication & Outreach,
HSE: Medical & Safety,
Ombud

http://ombuds.web.cern.ch
OMBUD Observations 2015

Small increase in number of visitors: 106 cases in 2015 [~90/year previously]

Trend of proportionally higher numbers of women visitors to Ombud continues

Sexist remarks / unwelcome behaviour: generation difference, off-site changes in behaviour, surprise at bystander indifference – 1 case referred to HR for formal action in 2015

Staff Member Visitors remains ~2% of relevant population [~4% lowest in other organizations]

Fellows & Students: Lack of guidance, feedback & integration – sometimes ‘nothing to do’

Users: Small increase in numbers of visitors [23 in 2015, as compared to 13 last year]:
- communication/cultural & gender related differences;
- lack of transparency in selection process for appointment to project or sub-project leadership;
- lack of creche, kindergarten hours & concern for work/life balance and family support structures

Majority of visitors prefer discussion or coaching - fear disclosure or retaliation persists

http://ombuds.web.cern.ch
Evaluative relationships: Perceived as a lack of supervisory effectiveness: ranging from poor communication and disrespect to unfair treatment, victimisation and, in some cases, an abuse of power

On-going difficulties with a hierarchy perceived as a long-standing and impenetrable ‘in-group’, with deeply entrenched opinions: negative labelling and exclusion from career development opportunities

Lack of clarity / transparency, inconsistency of messages, leading to proliferation of rumours

Imminent changes of Management and structure leading to uncertainty & increased levels of tension

Breakdown of trust: need for hierarchy to be seen to be held accountable for their behaviour and systematically encouraged to invest in developing their people management skills.

Peer relationships: Abrasive exchanges in person and via email – withholding information, threats or exclusion

Need for regular refresher training in communication skills and diversity management

Career progression & development: Perceived as being blocked, labelled or side-lined

Proposed ‘development conversations’ eagerly awaited
OMBUD Recommendations

Systematic process for upward feedback
- Explore alternatives to 360/180-degree feedback, taking inspiration from existing CERN models, [e.g. IT (survey) - BE (dialogue workshops) – CERN-wide (‘La Mainaz’ workshops)]……….. to define a systematic upward feedback process compatible with CERN culture

Succession planning & assignment change
- Consider time-limited appointments to all levels of hierarchical positions; identify priority areas for the development conversations to prepare colleagues to take on new / leave behind old responsibilities

Mentoring for Fellows
- Launch a systematic mentoring programme with regular interactions to support integration

Values – e-learning
- Introduce E-learning / quiz modules based on CERN values and have them periodically signed off by all members of employed and associated members of personnel

Management Team challenge: promoting trust
- e.g. Management Team Retreat facilitated by external consultant with aim of identifying concrete & visible steps by which to further trust and a culture of mutual respect throughout the Organization
Ombud function gradually being used more widely

Fear of retaliation still persists
Onus of responsibility for change tends to be with the individual

Further time and effort needed to foster staff well-being at a more systemic Organizational level
OMBUD Conclusion

Perception is key……

Individual responsibility

+++ Visitors to Ombud ‘early intervention’
+++ mediation

CERN – wide culture

Seen to value ‘non-technical aspects’
Input – Action
Communication

VALUES
Code of Conduct
Ombud
“Micro-inequities” – apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, and frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator.

Micro-affirmations – apparently small acts, which are often ephemeral and hard-to-see, events that are public and private, often unconscious but very effective, which occur wherever people wish to help others to succeed.”

Mary P. Rowe, ombudsperson, MIT, USA, pioneer in the field

- ‘Micro-inequities’ – often unconscious and therefore hard to avoid,
- A conscious practice of ‘micro-affirmations’ can lead to three positive outcomes:
  - staff motivation
  - block negative behaviours / prevention / focus on positive aspects,
  - if consistently applied may prove to be contagious & widespread.