

ANNEX 2

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION ON READER PROFILE AND THE QUALITY OF SUR JOURNAL

The journal was founded with the purpose of developing a channel for communication and for promoting innovative research on human rights, while adopting a focus that addresses the peculiarities of countries from the southern hemisphere. The first issue was launched in the second half of 2004 and it has been published twice yearly ever since. SUR Journal is printed in three languages with a press run of 2,700 copies and it is also available online. In addition, it has a mailing list of 2,119 readers. Subscription is aimed at professors, human rights activists and the libraries of universities with postgraduate courses in human rights.

As publication of issue No. 7 approached, we conducted a survey to discover who our readers are, what they think about the journal, what they use it for and how they think it could be improved. This was done with a questionnaire to evaluate reader profile and the quality of the journal.

Survey format

The survey on the quality of SUR Journal took six months (from April 15 to October 15). The questionnaire was posted on the journal's website and readers were invited by mail to fill it out.

Reader profile

The questionnaire was answered by 391 readers from 60 countries, representing approximately 18% of subscribers to the printed version (our goal was 300 responses). Brazilians represented 40% of respondents to the questionnaire. In numbers of responses, they were followed by Argentina (9.7%), United States (5.1%) and Mexico (4.6%). The African country with the highest number of responses was Nigeria (2.3%), while the most responses in Asia came from India (2.3%). The language distribution of our readers is relatively even: 38% read the journal in Portuguese, 32% in Spanish and 30% in English.

Most readers work at NGOs (31.2%) or are university professors (36.8%). The majority of them read between 3 and 5 articles.

Opinion about the quality of the journal

The survey appears to confirm that the journal primarily serves an educational purpose, since 58.3% of respondents said the articles frequently improve their understanding of a given topic. However, the journal has not achieved its goal to spark debate, given that 49.1% replied that only occasionally do the articles manage to challenge their position on specific matter.

The question about the purposes the journal is used for was presented in multiple-choice format. Most readers answered that they use the journal for research (77.2%), university training activities (45.2%), personal reading (43.7%) or as recommended reading for university courses (41.6%).

The most important question was the one asking the reader to make an overall evaluation of the journal, and it was in these responses that journal was given the best assessment: 62% of readers said the quality of the journal was excellent and 38% said it was good (none judged it to poor or very poor).

Reader suggestions

The final two questions enabled us to have some form of dialogue with our readers. Many of them responded, even though this section was optional.

The readers suggested an enormous list of topics that the journal could address, some of which are the subject of discussion in this and the next issue.

The question on critiques and suggestions yielded some welcome surprises and plenty of important information for us to continue our work with the journal: 36.3% of readers left comments, 28.1% of them to express their gratitude for the journal and to praise its content.

Many of the comments emphasized the need to give more space to new authors (young researchers) and others highlighted the need to publicize the journal more widely.

The next steps

We believe that the number of responses to our evaluation questionnaire represents a significant sample of our readers. As the responses have indicated, our major challenge now is to promote an effective human rights debate capable of shattering existing false consensus and, in doing so, help develop a doctrine on the topic in a more coherent and critical manner. We realize that we need to pursue this objective without sacrificing the achievements made so far, particularly the regularity of the publication and the diversity of the authors.

At the same time as we launched the online evaluation questionnaire, we also consulted some professors and activists on how to maintain the quality of the articles and the diversity of the authors (so far, 75% of the published articles have been penned by authors from the southern hemisphere). As a result, we reached the conclusion that it would be necessary to create a new system for editing articles, whereby professors with more research experience would collaborate with the new authors. Therefore, starting with our next issue, a group of professors will work with the authors to improve their contributions so we can publish articles by new authors without losing any of the editorial quality we enjoy.

We would like to thank everyone who responded to the questionnaire and invite you all to continue sending us your comments and suggestions. We always welcome your ideas on how to improve the quality of the journal and how best to publicize it among the right audience.

SURVEY - READER PROFILE AND SUR JOURNAL EVALUATION

A – Reader Profile

1. Indicate which category is applicable to you? (multiple answers possible)

- I work for a NGO
 I am a professor
 I am a student
 I work for a foundation
 I work for a government
 I am responsible for acquisitions in a library *
 I work for an international organization (UN, OAS, AU, etc.)
 Other

* if you are responsible for acquisitions in a library, please contact us at surjournal@surjournal.org

2. How many articles have you read?

- 0 1 - 2 3 - 5 6 - 10 More than 10

3. Country

4. Language in which you read the Sur Journal:

- Spanish English Portuguese

5. You usually read the Journal: (multiple answers possible)

- Printed On-line

Questions 5 and 6 are for subscribers of the printed version only:

6. The Sur Journal is used for: (multiple answers possible)

- Personal use Institutional use

7. Editions of the Sur Journal that you have received: (multiple answers possible)

- No. 1 No. 2 No. 3 No. 4 No. 5

B – Sur Journal Evaluation

8. In your opinion, the issues addressed in the Sur Journal are:

- Irrelevant Fairly relevant
 Relevant Very relevant

9. How often have the articles challenged your perception about a given topic?

- Never Sometimes
 Many times Very often

10. How often have the articles enlarged your perception about a given topic?

- Never Sometimes
 Many times Very often

11. Do you think that Sur Journal has succeeded in addressing specific issues of the Southern Hemisphere?

- Never Sometimes
 Many times Very often

12. You use the Sur Journal for: (multiple answers possible)

- Personal reading
 Bibliography for academic courses
 Litigation
 Mobilization
 Research
 Training
 Other

13. What is your evaluation concerning the layout of the Sur Journal?

- Very bad Bad
 Good Very good

14. What is your opinion in relation to the general quality of the Sur Journal?

- Very bad Bad
 Good Very good

15. Please, suggest topics for following issues:

16. Other suggestions and critiques:

Thank you very much for your cooperation!