

International Issues News # 26 (March 2013): The Global Transition Programme Roadmap.¹

Introduction

The Global Transition Programme (GTP) is AI's response to the changing political and human rights environment throughout the world. It aims to increase AI's relevance by strengthening work with local activists; to develop the diversity of AI membership outside Europe and North America; and to better align AI's resources with its priorities through a fundamental restructuring of the movement's resources. In particular, by "moving closer to the ground", which is a key part of the GTP, AI will reduce the size of its London headquarters and develop a substantial number of hub offices in other parts of the world. Furthermore, by more strongly integrating the work of its different national and international entities, AI will make much more effective and efficient use of its resources.

The roadmap for the implementation of the GTP has developed since mid-2010 through several iterations² which have been widely discussed within AI. Key concerns which emerged from these discussions included the need for stronger prioritization in AI, the cumulative neglect of support services by AI (e.g., IT, human resources), and the lack of integration between sections and the International Secretariat (IS). In response to consultation feedback, several key organizational features of the initial blueprint were amended and a Transition Management Team (TMT) was established. The TMT has led the detailed design proposals for the creation of regional hubs that are described below.

Overall aims

In response to the changing world, AI is aiming to transform itself into "a truly global human rights movement of people who are passionate about defending human rights for all." To this end, the GTP is structured around five main themes, all of which build on changes that have been underway in AI for some time. Although the GTP focuses on the International Secretariat, it will also have a substantial impact on how sections work together with the IS. The five themes are:

- **Priorities:** AI needs to have fewer and clearer priorities, a small number of well-defined campaigns, and resources that are mainly devoted to supporting these priorities.
- **Position:** AI needs to be able to respond quickly to changing circumstances, especially in the BRICS countries. To do this, it will have nine regional hubs in the global south.
- **Processes:** AI needs much stronger back-office functions, including IT, human resources, finance and security.
- **People:** AI needs to recruit and retain the best people, supporting them with better employment policies, talent development systems, and performance management. It needs to build more trust and confidence, especially when planning and implementing major changes.
- **Profile:** AI needs to link up its campaigning, activism, and fundraising, and to use the strength of its brand to raise its total income and double its membership to 5 million, mostly in the global south.

These themes link closely to a range of other organizational initiatives that have been taken since 2010, including the development of a new resource allocation mechanism for AI, the strengthening of country prioritization in campaigning and research, and the creation of twelve Critical pathways to focus the whole movement's work on the current Integrated Strategic Plan³.

Implementation plan: Waves 1, 2 and 3

As the GTP rolls out, the IS will remain the Global Hub of AI, but it will be supplemented by nine regional hubs. At the same time, new forms of presence⁴ will be developed in some countries to complement the traditional sections and structures that already exist in about 60 countries. In Wave 1 (2012-13), hubs will be established in Hong Kong, Johannesburg, Dakar, and Nairobi. The Hong Kong hub will be operational in the middle of this year with the others starting soon afterwards.

¹ This article is mainly based on *Global Transition Programme Roadmap* (ORG 30/001/2013). The main directions of this document were confirmed at the Chairs Assembly and Directors Forum, February 2013: see *CA/DF Chairs Statement* (ORG 41/006/2013).

² The main document outlining the ideas behind the GTP is: *Making Amnesty International a truly global movement for human rights: Blueprint for an integrated and results-driven IS, closer to the ground* (ORG 30/011/2011)

³ See Resource Allocation Mechanism (FIN 61/006/2011) and *Identifying priority countries* (ORG 41/016/2012)

⁴ See on *New forms of presence – consultation paper* (ORG 80/001/2012).

These will be followed in Wave 2 (2013-14) by Bangkok, Mexico City and Delhi. They should open in 2014, and their detailed arrangements will be adjusted based on the experiences of Wave 1. Finally, in Wave 3 (2014-15) there will be a hub in the Middle East/North Africa and a second Latin American hub in Lima or Bogota.

The processes to establish each hub will be adjusted to the local situation. But they will all share some common elements: initial design, consultation, and update of design; recruitment of staff; development of infrastructure (offices and IT systems); transition to new roles and starting to work with the rest of AI. Staffing for the hubs is likely to be a mixture of existing AI staff and recruitment from outside.

Feedback and information gathering early on showed that there were serious gaps in AI's readiness to create these hubs. As a result, the IS Senior Leadership Team (SLT) created its own five-point plan to address these issues. This included creating "Pathfinders" to simulate the working of working in regional hubs for six months each. These were run as "virtual hubs" within existing AI offices, and many lessons were learnt about logistical realities, matrix-management, cross-functional integration, job descriptions, internal communications and hub structures. As a result, a new post of Senior Director Operations has been created at the IS, and a Strategy and Evaluation Unit has also been developed.

Sections and governance

The GTP does not directly change the role of sections and the AI membership. Instead, it seeks to provide stronger support for sections and to assist in the creation of AI membership in countries where it is greatly underdeveloped. The new regional hubs will also play an important part in increasing the global and regional coordination of AI's work.

Similarly, the GTP does not directly change the governance arrangements of AI. The regional hubs, just like the International Secretariat's main office in London, are ultimately managed by the Secretary General, and he is accountable to the International Executive Committee (IEC) for their performance. The IEC, in turn, reports to the movement and is engaged in regular meetings with section leaders including the annual Chairs Assembly (formerly called the Chairs Forum) and the biennial International Council Meeting (ICM). The IEC's capacity for effective oversight of the AI movement is being strengthened through a range of measures agreed by the 2011 ICM, including better board development and a wider-ranging nominations process to attract the best candidates.

Finances

The one-off costs of implementing the GTP, including opening all the new hubs, are expected to be £11.5m over 2012-2015. This breaks down to £6.3m in staffing costs (covering redundancies, relocation and new recruitments), £3.0m in operating expenditure, and another £2.2m in capital expenditure. By 2017, it is expected that the headcount at the IS will have fallen from 445 today to 202, and the headcount of internationally employed staff outside London – mainly in the hubs – will have risen from 81 to 336. These costings are, of course, subject to change in the light of experience with the first wave of hub openings, and also depend significantly on how many staff currently employed in London take up new posts at the hubs.

Risk assessment

There has been detailed analysis of the risks AI faces in implementing the GTP. These include the risks of losing key staff and expertise, adverse impact of disruption on on-going work, reputational risk if the GTP does not work out well, security risks in opening new offices, financial risks of cost overruns and income shortfalls. The risk assessments and mitigation plans have been shared with the IEC and its Finance and Audit Committee. In their view, the risks are acceptable and the mitigation plans appropriate.

AI after 2015

AI's existing offices in Hong Kong, Kampala and Moscow have shown how much can be achieved by being "closer to the ground". The same is true of the Pathfinder project in Johannesburg. Beyond 2015, AI will need to continue to evolve ways of working that support really sustained membership and activism growth well beyond those countries with existing large AI sections.

International Issues News is put together to spread updates on AI's international focus to a wider audience worldwide, encouraging more members become engaged with the issues. The articles are summaries of internal papers which we aim to condense without offering our opinions on the original documents.

We welcome any comments, questions or suggestions on our choice of documents, the accuracy of the summaries, and how the newsletter could be more usefully developed. **Please write to iinews@aivol.org**

Editorial team

- **Barbara Lodge** (AIUK): an AI member for 25 years as trainer with the AIUK training group; country coordinator for Turkey and regional coordinator for work on Europe; former member of the AIUK board and subcommittees.
- **Hilary Naylor** (AIUSA): a 20+ year member of AIUSA who has served on the Board of Directors, as a Country Coordinator, and as a Trainer.
- **Peter Pack** (AIUK): chaired the International Executive Committee 2007–11. He previously chaired AI's mandate and human rights policy committees 1999–2007 and helped to run the AI International Training Network 1991–95.
- **Jane Salmonson** (AIUK): an AI member for 25 years, currently serving on the AIUK International Issues subcommittee. She is the Overseas Development Co-ordinator for L'Arche, previously Executive Director of an international NGO specialising in humanitarian work in countries emerging from war.
- **Hugh Whitby** (AIUK): currently an AIUK board member, he was one of the London Regional Reps (2008-11) and has been a member of AIUK's International Issues Subcommittee following time on the board of AI Hong Kong.
- French translation by **Mireille Boisson** (AIF)
- Spanish translation by **Ferran Nogueroles** (AIUK)

Note on original documents

These articles are taken from internal AI documents from the Weekly Mailings sent out by the International Secretariat. AI sections vary in their practice with respect to making these available to members. If you are interested in finding the original document please investigate within your own Section but feel free to let us know if you are having problems.