

International Issues News # 32 (September 2013):

The state of the movement¹

1. AI's size

Amnesty International has 69 national entities (55 sections, 8 Structures, 1 Pre-structure, 5 National offices and 8 Strategic Partnerships) which employ about 1600 staff in total; the International Secretariat (IS) employs just over 400 further staff. There are also members in 123 countries and territories where AI does not have an office: in these places people are offered the opportunity to participate in the movement's work through becoming an International Member, a supporter or an activist. The overall size of AI has reached 4.65 million members, supporters, and activists. Of these, 2.03 are paying and 2.62 million are non-paying; the respective figures in 2010 were 2.06 million and 0.65 million respectively, showing that worldwide paying support of AI has remained constant while non-paying support has grown substantially. Most of the increase in non-paying support is due to the work of AI India, which mobilized more than 1 million people to contribute to AI's work in 2012.

Although AI's overall paying membership figure is static, there are examples of substantial growth (admittedly from a modest base) in several countries: in the Philippines, paying members have grown from 860 to 2,322 in 2010 to 2012; in the same period, AI Korea grew from 2,000 to 16,000 monthly donors. There are also, however, examples of shrinkage in some large sections – paying members declined by 11% in the Netherlands and 8% in the UK in the same two years; France and Italy reported similar falls. In response to this lack of growth in key AI Sections, the International Executive Committee has been working with a "Big Five" group of sections (France, Germany, Italy, Japan, USA) to try to boost their membership.² AI France has decided to invest €2m per year in Face to Face, mostly out of its reserves. The programme is already a success, with income growth in 2013 projected at 15%, but it is too early to say how successful growth plans will be in the other large sections.

2. AI presence around the world

The proportion of AI members, supporters and activists in the global south has, thanks to the work of AI India, grown from 13%³ to 30% of the movement's headline total of 4.65 million. However, almost all of this growth is amongst non-paying supporters.

Several new AI entities have been created in the last two years, including four which are run under the direction of the Secretary General and are intended ultimately to evolve into national sections: AI India has been established, has generated a high level of activism, and is now working to draw in members and regular supporters. AI Brazil has also been created anew, has created local partnership networks, and has mobilized about 20,000 activists, although it has not yet started to recruit members. AI Kenya has been formally registered as an NGO and now has about 1,000 members. AI South Africa has just over 800 members and has reached out to about 50,000 online and social media activists.

Other forms of AI presence that are in development⁴ include affiliation (Latvia), strategic partnerships (Indonesia, Haiti, Cambodia, DRC, Liberia, Central Asia, Romania, Timor Leste), the creation of a virtual section (Colombia, due to launch in 2013), deferred-governance national entities (Egypt and Nigeria), and mobilisation of international members. It is too soon to assess the ability of these new types of AI presence to deliver growth and activism, but much effort is going into supporting and assessing them.

¹ This document is based on 2013 ICM Circular 23: *state of the movement report* (ORG 50/016/2013)

² See 2013 ICM Circular 16: *IEC and treasurer report* (ORG 50/010/2013)

³ But note that AI's definition of the global south has changed since the 2011 State of the movement report; on the previous definition, this figure was 13%.

⁴ For an overview, see *New forms of presence – consultation paper* (ORG 80/001/2012), summarised in International Issues News #23.

3. Actions and impacts

In 2012, AI's main aims were enshrined in 11 global priority projects (also called "critical paths") covering crisis and transition in MENA (Middle East & North Africa); the Arms Trade Treaty campaign; End forced evictions; Individuals at risk; Maternal health relating to sexual and reproductive rights; corporate accountability; make our rights law; security with human rights; international justice; death penalty; and people on the move. The most widely supported project was the successful Arms Trade Treaty campaign, in which 57 sections took part. In about 50% of AI's projects, there is evidence that AI's work has made an impact or made progress towards impact; this figure is midway between the 2010 and 2011 figures (respectively 62% and 38%). However, the definition of impact is very broad, covering four main areas -changes in people's lives, in activism & mobilization, in policies, and in accountability – and much of the impact of AI's work has not yet changed peoples lives.⁵

4. Financial health

AI's worldwide income is growing and is forecast to continue growing at around 4% per year, from €215 million in 2010 to €263 million in 2015. Even when inflation is taken into account, these figures show AI growing its income in real terms. Just over a third of the money that national AI sections raise is transferred to the international budget from the sections, and this international budget is then used to cover the cost of running the International Secretariat (including the new hub offices outside London), as well as helping to fund those AI sections that are cannot raise sufficient funds on their own: about 25 sections are almost entirely reliant on the international budget. A new system, called the Resource Allocation Mechanism (RAM), has been introduced since 2011 to fund them. The RAM contributed £8.1 million to supporting AI in the world regions in 2012.

5. Organizational health

It was only at the 2013 ICM last month that AI agreed core standards⁶ which included common ways of measuring organizational health. Evidence from recent years is therefore somewhat anecdotal. Nonetheless, there is positive news from Thailand, where a new AI structure has been created, and from AI Ghana and AI Zimbabwe which became AI Sections. The IEC has, however, had to intervene in several AI sections which have faced internal difficulties. These include Argentina, Israel and Slovakia (all stable with plans to grow); Benin and Ukraine (suspended and growing under the management of the Secretary General); Croatia and Mauritius (closed); and Cote d'Ivoire and Greece (on-going IEC engagement and intervention).

6. Accountability

AI operates within several accountability frameworks. These include the recently adopted core standards and the International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) Accountability Charter. The core standards will ensure that AI collects systematic data on basic processes and outcomes including governance, staff terms and conditions, treatment of AI volunteers, and AI's environmental impact. Initial assessment of this accountability data by the IEC suggests that AI is improving its alignment of resources, IS work, and movement priorities; that AI offices need to improve their frequency of staff appraisals; and that AI should strengthen its commitment to reducing CO₂ emissions. This analysis is based on information collected annually by the IS from sections in the SAR (Standard Activity Report): 56 sections submitted these within a fortnight of the deadline and another 10 within the following two months, leaving only three out of 69 significantly overdue. This is a very considerable improvement on the situation a few years ago, showing AI's growing commitment to mutual accountability.

⁵ For details of the impact assessment model, see *AI's Dimensions of Change - A tested framework for measuring AI's results and value added* (POL 50/010/2008)

⁶ See Decision 6 in *Decisions of the 2013 ICM* (ORG 53/006/2013)

International Issues News is put together to spread updates on AI's international focus to a wider audience worldwide, encouraging more members to 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**

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Note on original documents

These articles are mainly based on 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. We can normally supply English-language versions of all documents referenced in these articles.