

Activism Sub-committee Minutes
24 January 2015, 10am to 4pm, S1
Human Rights Action Centre
17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA

Present

Hannah Perry (chair)
Ruth Breddal (vice-chair)
Barrie Hay
Eilidh Douglas
Liesbeth Ten Ham
Malcolm Dingwall-Smith (morning only)
Melanie Thienard (new STAN representative)
Sameena Matthiessen
Susan Mew

Apologies

Ade Couper
Dave Beynon

Staff attending:

Kerry Moscogiuri (morning only)
Andy Hackman
Gemma Hoskins (interim Community Organising Manager during Hannah Shaw's sabbatical)
Daniela Manske

Minutes by: Daniela Manske

1. Introductions, thanks and apologies

Hannah introduced and welcomed Melanie, who is the new STAN rep to the Committee after Rachel's term on the Committee finished in November. The Committee expressed their thanks to Rachel for the work she had done.
It was noted that Malcolm and Kerry would only be able to attend the morning session.

2. Minutes and board recommendations update

It was agreed that any amendments to the minutes for the June and November meetings, needed to be emailed to Hannah. It was suggested to circulate the link to where the ASC minutes can be found on the website to all.

Hannah explained that the list of recommendations went to the Board meeting at the beginning of December. Due to a combination of factors the recommendations were not cover and will go to the upcoming Board meeting. Therefore, Hannah will update on the formal responses at the March ASC.

Actions:

- 2.1 All to send amendments to HP by end of 25/1/2015**
- 2.2 HP to circulate the web link to Committee**

3. Governance reform/ board resolutions for AGM 2015 feedback

Hannah updated that the GTF recommendations went to the Board. Since then, various meetings of Board members by phone / in person have taken place to go through the recommendations and discuss views. It is not a simple process to make these decisions but the vast majority of the recommendations the Board is in agreement on. They now need to decide on next steps, eg who to consult. It is key that they don't chip away on something but rather that changes are seen as a whole. The Board is conscious of the resolution deadline for the AGM and is still in discussions on what resolution it will submit. Nothing has been decided yet and the Board is asking the ASC to support its thinking on certain recommendations which will have a great impact.

Hannah introduced a discussion on whether or not reserved places on the Board should be removed. She explained that the Board of Directors is made up of a combination of posts. Some are directly elected by members. There is also a possibility to co-opt for certain expertise that is needed, eg treasurer. There are a number of reserved places (post for candidates who meet certain criteria, eg network place (STAN/ TU), CC, local groups. If there is no contest for these reserved seats and somebody meets the criteria, he / she is automatically elected to the Board.

The GTF's recommendation would be to remove these seats, and Hannah asked for ASC's reaction to the proposal. This was followed by a discussion around pros and cons. It was flagged up that currently not enough activists put themselves forward for the Board, and that some who have certain needed skills do not stand for election. It was suggested that the Nominations Committee could play a more active role in identifying candidates. It was stressed that it is important to get the right skills and activists with an AIUK perspective and sufficient numbers standing.

It was also discussed if the qualifying AIUK membership should be extended from 6 months to 1 year if reserved seats are removed or if the necessary skills are more important than the length of membership if somebody is member of a local group. Concerns were raised that 1 year might be too long for younger people. It was flagged up that in fact the age to become a member had been lowered 14 so AIUK should continue encouraging young people to become members.

Hannah suggested that it might be an option to agree the removal of reserved seats if qualifying membership is extended to 1 year. Barry flagged up that reserved seats had in the past prevented CCs from disappearing. It was considered if an exception should be made for CCs.

Andy stressed that it is important to support the Nominations Committee to ensure that different perspectives are in the room to ensure more representation.

Hannah explained that for the AGM a list would be compiled to show what events/ interactions Board members had to see the reach.

It was summarised that if there are no reserved seats no exceptions would be made. This could lead to an unbalanced Board. There is a concern that people without AI activist experience could end up on Board, eg entryism

Hannah pointed out that the GTF had made lots of other recommendations. She will send the link to the GTF to the Committee for all to review and feedback. To ensure that everything has been covered, the Committee could set up a quick call. She explained that nothing would be rushed for this year's AGM. Rather, a holistic view will be taken to be presented when ready. There will be a general resolution endorsing the overall direction taken. There is nothing specific to go to the 2015 AGM (expected for 2016) but rather this is opening up the discussion followed by a consultation.

Actions:

3.1 HP to circulate the GTF group link to Committee

4. Developing AIUK's strategic plan 2016-2019

Kerry said that she wanted to use the session to get advice on how to develop AIUK's 2016-2019 strategic plan. The current strategic directions are running out at the end of 2015. Whilst at the ICM in August 2015 the movement will agree the global directions, AIUK needs to start planning before that date. Kerry asked how best to include and consult activists. She is aware of the danger of consultation overload but thinks that it is important to get input.

Areas to discuss could be for example:

- Connect more people to our work (but how?)
- AIUK's role in the UK
- What do we mean by 'movement' and what do we do to enable it
- The relationship to the IS
- Internal organisational objectives and external activities for human rights change

Kerry said that the strategic goals consultation should be a starting point and that we should draw on data which we already have. We need to develop training & consultation papers asking the question: this is what you said you wanted – now *how* do you think we get there?

In the discussion it was flagged up that there is value in talking about campaigning aspects but potentially there will be less enthusiasm about internal processes. The content of our work should be discussed – what do you want the organisation to work on? It was questioned whether this needed to be sent to all activists / members or if it should instead be made available on the website to all those who are really interested.

It was felt that certain issues needed to be discussed: eg death penalty (being able to subscribe to IAR cases), human rights in the UK.

There is a need for a timetable and a strong starting point. Kerry explained that the process for signing off was not set yet, as this is a new process but that it is foreseen as going to the AGM in 2016.

Melanie asked how student voices would be included in the consultation as it is difficult to make the connections between youth, student and graduate groups. She wondered if it was possible to organise a meeting with the STAN Committee.

Eilidh suggested that it might be better to draw up some priorities and ask for feedback, rather than ask groups what they want to work on, as it should be goals-driven work rather than simply what groups want to work on. Instead, groups could be asked about how they would plan and structure that work, which would also useful data to have. It would be similar to a prioritisation exercise.

Sameena explained that we already know how groups want to plan and so it would be best not to ask again.

The Activism Survey was raised, which had just been sent out with the Groups Planning Pack. It is endeavoured to be completed one month after sending it out. All groups have been asked to complete it. It takes about 40 minutes to complete, and the next ASC meeting will look at the results.

Hannah summarised that we should get as much information as we already have together before approaching members about more. It is important to prioritise.

Kerry said that we need clarity on Human Rights in the UK/ growth as we have not yet looked into that. This will help get a sense of target setting around growth for groups. She added that after consolidation of everything we know we might go external for external input.

5. Supporter Campaigning and Communications 2015 goals

Kerry explained that this was divided into 5 key areas and that she would like the ASC's input. She went on to talk the Committee through all the points as per the paper circulated before the meeting.

Create and deliver impactful campaigns: no feedback. Other countries have declared programme on HR in their countries – AIUK need to think about that.

Deliver the goals of the members at the heart vision:

Improve supporter care and feedback: data sharing was raised at the last ASC meeting as an issue – need to get that right – Mascot recording
Liesbeth said that she found the reports on how many members have resigned and why really useful. This needed to be shared with CCs, RR and trainers also as it helps to understand how we do nationally.

Eilidh is on the Feedback Oversight Committee for the Board as individual. Items were escalated to the Board and there was concern. Meets every quarter and reviews feedback to Supporter Care. It would be useful to add also what feedback is provided to Community Organising.

Improve supporter access to individual cases: The question was raised why there is no input from CCs as it is so far a staff-only document. The meeting was uncertain what the issues are – important to find out the problem, resolve it. Signposting could one issue.

Improve the connection between Amnesty activists and staff. Should there be a regional focus? In Scotland it seems unclear how to go about it.

Kerry mentioned that the so-called 'West Papaya Question' is not yet included: the group involved doesn't feel supported by the movement. They have lots of IS knowledge. There is a need to clarify if AIUK can provide support or not. There is a reputational risk if statements are made not supported by AIUK or materials / petitions used from other organisations.

Kerry explained that the Communications strategy will come for input to the ASC. The benchmark target for growth as part of Building the movement is 46,000.

Hannah stressed that it is important to ensure that everyone is owning this – staff and activists – therefore the rationale for the target is important. She also questioned whether this target is realistic for this year.

6. Community organising unit 2015 priorities

Gemma reported back from the team's two-day team planning session. She explained that it was an opportunity to bring the team together, to reflect, to look at capacity issues and what improvements can be made to the way the team works. She reflected on the fact that there had been complications as the team was new and that there was a need to look at roles and responsibilities, look at the future and understand how Community Organising can best

serve activists. During the away day there was a feeling of unity and team purpose, and more of a focus. There is still work to be done on what Community Organising is externally and how this works for AIUK. Proposals will be presented to the March ASC.

The team had identified all activities that it undertakes and categorised them. This helped to establish purpose and impact. Now there is a need to streamline. All work fits into the following five areas: integration, health, effective campaigning, engagement, visibility.

The team also came up with some new pieces of work following Kerry's paper:

- Growth & diversity
- Devise a model of Community Organising that works for AIUK
- Transition of activists (optimising the journey/ data: what does success look like?/ communication & signposting)

Gemma will write up the notes from the day and distil the information. This will be followed by an internal consultation plus ASC on the team purpose, the model for Community Organising and what to work on. Individual Community Organisers will write short strategies for their areas.

The new work might not be actual 'projects' but rather a focus for work.

There was then a discussion on the merits of consulting all activists. It was noted that it might not be sensible to ask for a wish-list of things if the organisation won't be able to support them. It might be more appropriate to offer 'services'. It was pointed out that it would be helpful for activists to understand why certain activities cannot be done.

Gemma explained that strategies will be shared with constituencies.

Hannah stressed that we need a transparent and responsible way of joint working between staff and activists. Gemma flagged up that the Community Organising team needs to be able to respond and that it is generally difficult for staff to keep 'free space' for reactive work. Hannah said that it is also important that activists can trust staff know they can make decisions.

Actions:

6.1 GH to share proposals with Committee at next ASC meeting

7. Members at the Heart strategy implementation update

ASC subgroup update – Sameena:

Sameena clarified that she wouldn't repeat anything that Kerry had already covered. She explained that the attendance of activists at Staff & Volunteers briefings had now been arranged in the following way:

4th March: Liesbeth, RR

9th April: Ade (Trainers)

15th May: Barry (CC)

Gill had asked for additional info. There will be a review of these arrangements at the June ASC. The issue around visiting Nations & Regions will be picked up with Kerry.

AGM / stall: Ruth

Ruth explained that she would like to improve the shadowing of working party chairs at the AGM. She asked if anyone knew anybody who might be interested.

Gemma explained that a call for young people to shadow at the ICM had created interest and if something similar might be an idea.

A discussion followed whether this would provide the right people. It was felt that if a role description was put together there might be a pool of people to tap into. It was suggested that this could be mentioned during the 'new delegates meeting'. Slides already exist they just need to be updated. Eilidh and Susan agreed to work on the 'new delegates' workshop.

Stall: Ade will arrange a doodle to organise attendance

Concerns were raised that the stall at last year's AGM was 'boring' and nobody attended it

A Skype meeting to be arranged (probably 15 February) to discuss further. Gemma to join to provide AIUK support.

There was a discussion about how best to engage with interested members.

Activism Survey

Gemma updated that the url was included in the Planning Pack and went out during the week of 19th January. There is now a need for follow-up with youth & student groups as there have only been 4 replies so far. Drawing up a communication plan can help with this. Gemma informed that a couple of the original questions had to be amended.

The survey will go out in all existing communications and all ASC members were encouraged to share it also. It was clarified that questions can be answered by groups or individuals. Individuals who fill in the survey will receive a copy of their answers.

The survey will be reviewed next year with a view to possibly shorten it.

Hannah suggested to use the feedback at the AGM during the Activism report feedback.

The data from the survey will be shared with STAN/ YAG and Regional Reps.

Data mapping – Barrie

Barry reported that there had been mixed results, and that staff member Jeni Dixon had requested for this not to be continued until a conversation with Hannah Perry had taken place.

Impact of activism project

The info available from Mascot it not yet helpful. Liesbeth will forward Gemma an email outlining some of the issues.

Actions:

7.1 Eilidh to update slides

7.2 Draw up a proper rota for the stall at the AGM

7.3 Gemma to draw up a communications plan

7.4 Lydia / Daniela to update on the rep body calendar

7.5 Liesbeth will forward Gemma an email outlining some of the issues.

8. Other actions update

The 'master' mailing list has not gone to local groups yet. There are 32 trainers of which 27 are active so far. More training is scheduled to happen. The list will be circulated once all names are included (in 2-3 weeks).

It was noted that in comparison with pre-CAPP trainer numbers have fallen considerably. Previously we had 100 trainers we now are expecting to have 47.

Andy updated on the roll-out of advocacy in our campaigns. This is work in progress in conjunction with staff member Laura Trevelyan. He mentioned the so-called 'Dream team' concept and suggested that an evaluation of that should be used.

He explained that there is an updated version of the Campaigns Calendar out together by Kathy Druce.

Tim Hancock is advising on pursuing partnerships at a local level.

Activist-related risks: outstanding

Accessibility of HRAC: inability to access building on Saturdays

Digital Roadmap – website: in the interim this is covered by Andy and Sam Strudwick.

Process used to respond to web site feedback: there will be a gathering of feedback to be fed back to the digital team. Adrian is does a paper on proposed website/ activist panel. Andy will share this with ASC.

Lobbying Act training: training session run by Shoomi. The date rearranged at very short notice. It would be helpful to share the PowerPoint presentation with group. Andy will arrange.

Standard Imprint – to include in Training pack. Need an update on everything around it by February. Andy will follow this up. Hannah will contact Tim Hancock

Actions:

- 8.1. Check in with Shoomi how training has progressed**
- 8.2. Andy to check for latest version of Calendar and to Barrie Hay**
- 8.3. Andy to find out about accessibility of HRAC on Saturdays from Leni**
- 8.4. Andy to follow up with DB regarding software suggested helpdesk software**
- 8.5. Andy to share Adrian's paper with ASC.**
- 8.6. Andy to share PowerPoint presentation from Lobbying Act training**
- 8.7. Andy to update on Standard Imprint**
- 8.8. Hannah to contact Tim Hancock**

9. Updates from across the movement

Hannah stressed that it was important to share the updates with others.

Students:

Melanie updated that planning had taken place during their first meeting. A monthly email is to go to groups (update/ guidelines for groups – Student handbook). There are plans to link up with local groups. Liesbeth pointed out that a guide on local groups and how to work together can be found on the AIUK website.

She asked whether passwords for social media accounts could be saved in the office to avoid any issues during handover periods when activists leave positions.

Gemma suggested that this could be included in discussions during development of a Communications Strategy. The question was raised whether there is a library for AI policies as some groups campaign on positions which are not AI positions.

STAN wants to organise a one-week national student campaign, focused on a single issue (possibly Torture or MBMR) in March. Amongst students there has been concern around AI's position on abortion. The position caused problems when collaborating with the Feminist Society in the past. Andy suggested for Melanie to contact Naomi McAuliffe, the campaigner, to discuss these issues. Gemma will forward a detailed document on abortion to Melanie.

Regional reps:

Liesbeth reported that planning packs are coming out. She hoped that next year it would be on time and that more options would be included on the options form. Groups are not aware that they can work on the death penalty as its not included as an option. This needs to be raised as part of the Communications Strategy.

There was a discussion whether the planning pack should be available online. It was agreed that this would be helpful, but also noted that some activists / groups do not work online. It was suggested that they could be supported by the Regional Reps.

Web Panel: the Regional Reps would like to get onto the panel. Caroline is collating data on face to face meetings in addition to the Activism survey.

There is a need to talk about flow charts for regional conferences which were established. Board reps have not yet been allocated. Hannah will look at the flowchart and suggest actions around ownership to Liesbeth.

The issue of accessibility of AI materials for the visually impaired was raised. The chair of a group resigned after despite a year-long discussion all actions still came out as pdfs which cannot easily be enlarged for activists with sight impairments. It was questioned why there has been no solution from the web team. Andy will look into accessibility of AI materials with Sam Strudwick.

Country Coordinators:

Barrie reported that The Country Coordinators Steering Committee has not met since the last ASC.

CC Weekend 22-23 November: The weekend conference held at the HRAC was well organised and run. It covered domestic matters, a briefing on the global transition programme, parliamentary and advocacy workshop, media training, and inspirational human rights defenders speakers from Sri Lanka and a survivor of Argentina's 'Dirty War'.

Case Management Group: The CMG (composed of staff and volunteers) meets monthly, determining which new cases submitted to them may be offered to local groups, and beginning to review existing Individuals at Risk cases held by CCs taken up by local groups to decide whether they should continue, be closed, or be suspended temporarily.

The Groups Planning Pack 2015 was sent to local Groups mid-January for completion and return by end-February.

Stop Torture conference 14 February: Plans are proceeding for the conference, *Stop Torture: How Activists can Campaign for Safeguards*. Guest speakers include Craig Murray (former Ambassador to Uzbekistan), with workshops on the five countries that form the campaign. Entry is free but [tickets must be booked](#).

Reporting:

CC Annual Survey covering 2014 calendar year was completed and submitted by each CC before Christmas. They are being analysed before the report is completed next month.

Quarterly reporting.

A revised spreadsheet, devised by Jeni Dixon, has been circulated for each of the 13 world region teams to complete. It is hoped the new format will be easier for CCs to use (though there are some teething problems) and the data transferred more easily to MASCOT. The first return using the new form (for Oct-Dec 2014) is to be completed in early February. It does not cover all the work undertaken by CCs.

Global Transition Programme:

Barrie asked CCs to report on any difficulties they have experienced since the GTP began. 9 out of 13 World Regions responded. Regions that remain for the time being in London have not experienced any diminution in support except for North America which appears to have ended contact with CCs. Regions that have left have experienced differing levels of support, from total loss of contact, to reporting only to their country's Section, to a reasonably smooth transition. This has produced frustration among CCs when casefiles haven't been updated, reductions in production of Urgent or campaigning actions, and lack of contact while staff are recruited, poor or non-existent handover between IS staff and CCs, and indifferent or non-existent communication between out-posted staff and CCs, either because they do not consider this their responsibility or positions have yet to be filled. This has led to at least one CC resignation.

The question was raised what can be done to address these issues and if there are any internal solutions. A more detailed report to be circulated to Andy, Kerry, Ruth and Hannah.

Trainers/ school speakers

Susan reported that Shoomi is working hard but that we are still a long way from where we were two years ago. There are currently a total of 32 trainers, of whom 27 are active. This total includes five school speakers who have joined the trainers' network. A message about trainers/ speakers has not yet gone out. The onus is now on groups to invite trainers rather than the way it was before (active approach gone). Once the list of speakers is complete it will then be advertised as paragraph in the groups monthly mailing asking groups to get in touch. The idea was put forward to make PowerPoint presentations with voiceover available instead of an actual trainer.

A review on how things have progressed was requested for the June meeting. The Activism survey will also help to establish the health of groups. It was mentioned that maybe the Regional Reps could also participate in reviewing groups through a traffic light system.

Different communication channels need to be used to explain to groups about the new approach to training. Susan will feedback to Shoomi the concerns expressed at the ASC and request that the new approach is communicated promptly to groups.

HRAC

Andy provided a list of recent staff appointments:

Fiona Smith to cover Champa Patel's sabbatical
Gemma Hoskins covering Hannah Wilson's sabbatical
Berry Cochrane new Digital Manager
Georgia Mills (Stephanou) covering Loretta Fisher's maternity leave
Selma Shirazi has returned after maternity leave
Ann-Marie D'Souza is still on sick leave

There is still a vacancy in Events which will be recruited soon.

Campaigning update:

- David Cameron raised Shaker Aamer's case with Barack Obama.
- Two vigils had been held for Raif Badawi with approx. 300 people attending. Andy will forward an email from Kerry about AI's impact in Saudi Arabia.
- Shell reached an out of court settlement

Media update:

- Huge coverage for Boko Haram and Shaker Aamer
- Andy to speak to Niall about attending ASC to report on why media work is so successful

Member numbers:

208.131 (end of 2013)

210.183 (end of 2014)

Networks:

Andy informed that Jeni is working really hard. Please refer for further info to the Networks update paper.

For the ASC a thematic network rep is to be appointed for the March / June meeting. The application process is via Jeni Dixon, Hannah Perry and Gemma Hoskins. One rep will represent all three networks. Hannah will attend the TUNC meeting to explain.

A kick-off meeting around Refugees took place on 17/1/2015. Jeni and Shoomi had organised it. 50 people attended, and 7 agreed to take up leadership roles.

Benchmarked how many people are connected with AIUK: 473.000

Face-to-face fundraising is piloting in Manchester. Andy will email Sameena more information after his meeting with Wayne. It was suggested that Wayne could attend an ASC meeting to update on Fundraising.

AI's teach programme had received very good feedback according to Rowena. The Education team is working on Human Rights in the UK and are looking into 'British values'. They have met with the British Library. They are also working with Youth Action who focus on Magna Carta. The closing date for the Youth Awards is 31/1/2015. The Times Education Supplement Partnership is going well.

Actions:

- 9.1 Gemma to forward detailed documentation on abortion to Melanie**
- 9.2 Hannah will look at the flowchart and suggest actions around ownership to Liesbeth.**
- 9.3 Andy to look into accessibility of AI materials with Sam Strudwick**
- 9.4 Barrie to circulate detailed report of issues related to Global Transition Programme to AH, KM, RB, HP**
- 9.5 Susan to feedback to Shoomi the concerns and request that the new approach is communicated promptly to groups.**
- 9.6 develop a message around training for groups with LH, GH, AH**
- 9.7 Andy to forward an email from Kerry about AI's impact in Saudi Arabia**
- 9.8 Andy to invite Niall Couper to attend ASC to report on why media work is so successful**

9.9 Andy to email Sameena information after meeting with Wayne around Manchester face-to-face.

10. Clarifying the name and role of our activist representative bodies

There was a discussion around initial proposals. This included: STAN Committee / CC Committee / Regional Reps Committee / LGBTI Committee. It was suggested that similar groups should have similar names.

Proposal:

Trade Union Action Network (Committee)
Student Action Network (Committee)
Youth Action Network (Committee)
Local Action Network (Committee)

Liesbeth will take this back to the Regional reps for feedback, while Gemma will take it back to staff. This will be further discussed at the March ASC.

Proposal:

LGBTI Network Committee
Children Network Committee
Refugee Network Committee
Women Network Committee
Trade Union Network Committee

Hannah to write up the sheet with proposals and circulate to the group.

Actions:

- 10.1 Liesbeth will take this back to the Regional reps for feedback, while Gemma will take it back to staff.**
- 10.2 Hannah to write up the sheet with proposals and circulate to the group.**

11. Activist Code of Conduct updates

This needs to be updated for the AGM papers. Andy will update it to reflect the new structure. It will be reviewed thoroughly by the ASC at a later stage.

Actions:

- 11.1 Andy to update Activist Code of Conduct to reflect new structure**
- 11.2 Hannah to write up the sheet with proposals and circulate to the group.**

12. AGM programme

AGM programme thoughts to be circulated by Tuesday 27/1/2015

13. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will take place on 7 March 2015. A room needs to be confirmed as it clashes with Action for Change on the same day. Hannah and Gemma are both unable to attend this meeting.