

**Activism Sub-committee Minutes**

**07 March 2015, 10am to 4pm, T3  
Human Rights Action Centre,  
17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA**

**Present**

Ruth Breddal (chair)  
Barrie Hay  
Eilidh Douglas (phone)  
Liesbeth Ten Ham  
Malcolm Dingwall-Smith  
Melanie Thienard  
Sameena Matthiessen  
Susan Mew  
Ade Couper  
Dave Beynon  
Simon Ware (New thematic networks representative)  
Rachael Palmer

**Apologies**

Hannah Perry  
Gemma Hoskins  
Samidha Garg (New TUNC representative)  
Melanie Thienard

**Staff attending:**

Kerry Moscogiuri  
Andy Hackman  
Daniela Manske

**Minutes by:** Daniela Manske

**1. Introductions, thanks and apologies**

Ruth welcomed Simon, who is new to the committee. Simon introduced himself briefly.

**2. ASC stall and roles at AGM**

Ade gave some background on the ASC stall at the AGM. There have been discussions what the best use of the ASC stall would be. This is to engage members more. Ideas were discussed such as to ask activists to note down their proudest moments with AIUK. This would provide info about the motivation of members. Andy suggested preparing something ahead of the AGM and then activists can add to that. Sameena suggested that some feedback on the proudest moment action could be given at the plenary. Ade will take these ideas forward.

The AIUK website contains role descriptions for activist roles. Ade would like to have them enlarged and Andy agreed to organise that.

They stall should have further info such as nomination papers, executive summary of GTF. Malcolm said material should be available and he will check at next week's GTF meeting.

Ade explained that the staffing of the stall will be in the following slots: Saturday morning 10-12.45pm, then breaks. The ASC will look for volunteers via email.

Andy explained that Fabiana from the Events team had asked if it was possible to get members more involved in the running of the AGM, and if there were any suggestions on how to do that. Andy said that there had been the idea to get the Nottingham group more involved in running in 2016.

The question was asked if the AGM would be returned to its previous length. A discussion followed as to the advantages and disadvantages of an extension.

#### **Actions:**

**2.1 Ade to follow up on ASC stall idea**

**2.2 Andy to enlarge role descriptions from website and provide Ade with them**

**2.3 Malcolm to check availability of GTF materials**

#### **3. Minutes sign-off**

Point 3. It was noted that most had missed the last paragraph (during the 24/1 meeting) and only picked it up from the minutes. It seems to state that a decision had indeed been taken by the Board whilst the opening paragraph states that no decisions had been taken.

There was a discussion about the length of the minutes and if it was necessary for them to be so detailed. It was suggested to have a summary of the discussion at the end and to keep them shorter.

Point 9. Susan didn't think it was the role of the committee to draft messages and communicate but that of staff. Minutes were changed accordingly.

It was noted that the dates for ASC attendance at S & Vs have changed since the 24/1 meeting. The meeting agreed the minutes as 'final'.

#### **4. AGM resolutions**

It was noted that resolution A.8 would cause controversy.

It was also pointed out that the process as agreed with the GTF was contrary to A8, and that according to Chris Ramsey the GTF had therefore expected a different resolution.

Malcolm, who expressed his personal view, explained that this was a different process than had been agreed. Originally, the Board was going to draft enabling resolutions which would be open to amendments. The Board has changed this approach without consulting with the GTF. There will be further consultations but not enabling resolutions. Malcolm felt an important part of the democratic process is thereby removed. This will be discussed at next GTF meeting. He believed that the current approach will result in a 'take it or leave it' special resolution in 2016.

Ruth explained that the Board had many GTF recommendations. The AIUK Constitution is patch work and quite a mess. If doing this much work then it would be best to do it all. Board therefore decided to do it all properly.

It was pointed out that the previously agreed process would also have allowed for that. It was also noted that the previous ASC had discussed that a holistic view would be taken. Changes should be included in the resolution not just in the background notes allowing all members to vote on it. The following year this would then be put in the Constitution.

It was noted that resolutions have a word limit. If all proposals so far agreed with the GTF would be listed in the resolution the word limit would be reached quickly. Putting the info into background notes was a halfway compromise to give AGM an indication what they wanted to do instead of presenting tons of resolutions.

It was asked whether there would then be a discussion about background notes and what were the Board thinking on that. Ruth said that the deadline had passed and that she was sorry if the GTF feels they haven't been valued.

It was explained that special resolutions need a 75% pass rate. This means that members can vote yes to all or vote down 3 years of work because a full Constitution was presented. Ordinary members have not seen the draft yet.

Ruth explained that she had asked Tim Hancock why the NCVO report was not in the public domain. Tim apologised for dropping the ball. Some quotes in there need to be looked at as some of them are incorrect / rude. Ruth apologised and suggested to circulate the report. It was flagged up that there was a corrections process and issues should have been picked up earlier.

Kerry suggested that post 2015 we would need a proper consultation and ASC could have a role in this ahead of 2016. Concerns were raised that from a RR and local groups point of view having another consultation was not desirable and there could be consultation fatigue.

It was suggested that the Board needed to be prepared to members standing up at AGM and questioning how this process came about. Therefore, it might be helpful to have a short summary available at the AGM.

There was a discussion on whether the Board should withdraw the resolution and instead put forward to the 2016 AGM the matters that require discussion (e.g. length of membership necessary etc. The possibility of a friendly amendment was raised. However, a friendly amendment would not allow discussion at group level before AGM as they wouldn't know until AGM. There should be individual resolutions to the AGM so that members can vote on them individually rather than the whole Constitution.

It was brought up that one of the things discussed was to change number of members required to call an EGM. Legal advice received by the Board was to make it percentage of membership instead of 100 members. Not decided yet. What worries people now is that this was a little known fact but now its well-known and easier to organise. It was stressed that it is unlikely that members will call an EGM over it the Constitution.

As nothing can be changed now it was suggested that going forward maybe there could be a discussion about how to consult ASC. Liesbeth expressed concerns about the consultation that had been had. Everything was discussed. Now we need a discussion at AGM level. So far everything is anecdotal and instead a full discussion is needed. Worries were raised that if members only find out about content of the Constitution a month before the AGM they might feel like it is sprung on them and feel less supportive of it.

A vote was called on whether the ASC wants to ask the Board to withdraw. Nobody voted in favour.

Summarising it was decided that different options including friendly amendment should be discussed at GTF next week. Malcolm will update the group on any amendments. In addition the ASC thinks AGM should vote on individual issues / resolution on Constitution, instead of voting on whole Constitution. This also necessitates Standing Orders to be amended so that there cannot be contrary decision. ASC doesn't think looking at Constitution draft beforehand without possibility of votes on bits at the AGM is sufficient.

It was asked whether the Board will mark which resolutions they support. Traditionally they do not as they are not allowed to do so.

It was suggested that an explanation on voting at the AGM would be helpful. E.g., "if you vote yes on this resolution you then need to vote no on this", as there will otherwise be a contradiction. Also, it was felt important that the Board emphasises impact on resources / staff implications.

The meeting looked at individual resolutions and discussed some of them:

**B3:** Abortion – Quite positive that student members raise issues important to them even though it might have been raised in a similar matter in the past. It might be helpful to speak to proposers and give them background and history so they re not surprised at reactions they might have at next AGM. Either the Board or member of staff should do that.

**C1:** Torture - Liesbeth suggested that the Board response could be amended to say that we could divert some resources to look at issues in the UK instead of abroad

**C3: Anti-Semitism** – Positive coverage in Jewish press already. Put forward by a recent joiner. Important that Anti-Semitism is raised. Also those who are pro-Palestinian can be against Anti-Semitism. This resolution is likely to attract attention from outside AIUK.

**Actions:**

**4.1 Ruth to feed back to Board ASC's feeling regarding resolution**

**4.2. Ruth to circulate the NCVO report**

**5. Update on HRA / General Election Campaign**

Andy explained that much training and workshops have gone on. Fionna Smyth has looked at the focus again and broken the campaign up into 3 phases. She wants the thinking of activists. Andy mentioned media research about coverage of human rights that had been completed. Staff are preparing case work, training and content for activists to engage with local media. Asked for feedback what activists need from the organisation. Ade mentioned that Community radio stations are untapped potential. Ruth asked for question to ask at hustings. Guidelines for students / schools on how to get involved with local media would be helpful.

**Phase 1: Now until general election:** peak of activity first two weeks of April

This is time to put down a marker. AIUK associated with defending Human Rights Act in the UK. We want to educate more around human rights and why it is relevant to people in the UK. How can people be part of promoting and protecting in UK and worldwide.

Possible channels: Media/ Activists/ Social Media/ Artists/ Advertising

The team will issue what they want local groups / activists to do within next 2 weeks.

Looking at building local / national partnerships with other NGOs (Mind/ AGE UK etc.). Organisations don't want to do active campaigning until elections because of Lobbying Act. Media and Partnership focus in local communities.

**Phase 2:** Determined by result of election – various scenarios

**Phase 3:** Long-term work/ campaign on human rights in the UK

A live feedback mechanism has been set up to feed back what local groups are planning on AIUK website in addition to other resources. It was noted that searches on the AIUK website under 'general election' had not produced any returns; but appears to have been updated.

It was suggested that it would be good to have social media coverage about what local groups do (AIUK Facebook, twitter etc.) – pictures. To coordinate country-wide action it would be helpful to set up a Google group or other system to alert all activists in advance to organise themselves.

In Scotland it is now a good time to follow up on work done during the referendum.

Andy explained that there are 30 target seats – soft Tory seats – we want to enable them to support human rights act (activism / advocacy focus).

**Actions:**

**5.1 Andy to share media research with ASC**

**5.2 Andy to share spreadsheet of target seats put together by Laura**

**5.3 Andy to share General Election and Lobbying skills pack and link**

**5.4 Barrie to send Daniela CC report for the minutes**

**5.5 Kerry to send round the IS response to the web issues raised by CC's**

**5.6 Kerry to ask the IS what quality assurance they had in place prior to website launch**

**6. Updates from across the movement**

**6.1 Country coordinators (Barrie):**

## **CC Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee met on 31 January. Draft minutes have not been circulated. Chair and Vice Chair will be elected for a three year term at the AGM, and the CC ToR are currently being discussed. Groups Planning Pack 2015 Regional Coordinators have been sent details of local groups that have opted into their World sub-region. The office plan to update this list quarterly.

## **Stop Torture conference 14 February**

The conference, *Stop Torture: How Activists can Campaign for Safeguards*, was well received by participants. Craig Murray, former Ambassador to Uzbekistan, gave an entertaining and thought-provoking keynote speech highlighting the lack of support by HMG in promoting human rights. The five workshops were well received though some thought they could have been longer and the ideas generated should be shared. The panel discussion that ended the conference was generally well received. It was disappointing that, while the conference had been oversubscribed, it was not well attended which meant that others who wanted to go were prevented from doing so.

After Barrie presented the feedback, it was suggested that it might be helpful to ask for a £5 nominal fee for conference attendance in future, as only 50 out of the 150 who had registered for the Conference actually attended. Could ask for contribution for lunch provided. There were 25 evaluations all of which were very positive.

## **CC Annual Survey**

The annual survey of CCs' activities for 2014 was published on 8 February. It shows:

- 45 CCs spent 15600 hours, equivalent to 9WTEs
- 193 visits to give talks, take actions or campaigns, and increase of 24 from 2013
- Communication with local groups was rated positive by two-thirds of CCs, as in 2013. CCs thought more personal contact with groups was needed, though not all groups responded positively
- 450 action requests were sent to local groups; 29 meetings with officials and politicians in the UK, and 12 outside the UK; contacts with AIUK Networks
- Slight decline in satisfaction.

## **Global Transition Programme**

CCs continue to raise concerns. The Central America team has had no updates since January, emails unanswered, and no news of appointments in Mexico. Horn and East Africa says they have had very little contact with the IS team in Nairobi and find them poor at facilitating actions. China and East Asia has not responded.

## **International Section website**

CCs have criticised the re-launch of the IS website which coincided with the publication of the AI Annual Report. The website no longer links to historic information, the search does not retrieve IS publications, and country specific information is out of date. This despite the Secretary General's congratulations to the web team for getting the website 'up and running on time and on budget'.

Hugh Sandeman has told CCs that Kerry had contacted the IS with our concerns. Matt Haigh, Head of Design, has asked CCs to contact [website@amnesty.org](mailto:website@amnesty.org) to report URL problems. Country related content is controlled by an algorithm that is wrong, as is the search engine. Both will be fixed in the next release.

## **6.2 Trainers/ school speakers (Susan):**

Susan had sent an email to Shoomi asking for better communication around training. She has followed this up. Due to data protection a full list of trainers cannot be online. Shoomi and Rowena can come to the June meeting.

Andy said that we now have 53 trainers. Next training sessions in Bristol / South West and Scotland. Sameena wanted to know how Shoomi targeted areas. Andy agreed to find out.

## **6.3 Youth (Rachael):**

- Meeting with the current YAG next Saturday to talk about the ASC's role as a sub-committee, what my role is and some of the actions and resolutions so far that have been made relevant to the YAG and the youth movement. So this meeting is to make the relationship and liaising between stronger as the 2013/4 YAG disband.

- The activist survey has gone out to groups however Anne Montague has reported there has been so far very few youth group responses - this has been a concern but a notice has gone out.
- Communication: how does the youth movement know how Amnesty is working on a case, what it does and the progress?
- Mentioned last time about knowing about success and there has been a rise in youth groups having their own Twitter but groups feel it would be nicer to be 'in the loop' more if you will.
- Technical Issue: some groups who don't get things posted to them to maybe save Amnesty money/or prefer to have it online are struggling because mailings and resources are not on the youth page. Our last mailing that is on there is from March to do with the CRC. It is a real struggle for groups who have completed all of the actions and are almost running out of things to do because the mailing is from 2 months ago.

Andy agreed to speak to Anne about updating youth actions on website

#### **6.4 Regional reps (Liesbeth):**

Discussed at RR's meeting on 28th Feb:

- Website progress seems to be paralysed. Why no progress in a year i.e. 12,000 items on the website, but you can't find pictures, etc. for a group leaflet. Can't easily find a document that sets out Amnesty's position on the death penalty and its work.
- RRs not consulted on Members at the Heart? Very unclear how we are involved, how we can influence? What real difference is there for groups?
- When CAPP evaluation going to be published/NCVO report going to be published
- Lack of actions, major point. Need to go to AI USA website
- Looked at how we can build up a picture of the health of our groups
- presentation to staff & volunteers. Highlighted the issues such as "What does members at the heart" mean. Why isn't there enough material/action? I.e. only Women's Right action is for South Africa, not a traditional Amnesty action, and for most of us really difficult to see where Amnesty can make a difference

Conclusion of Liesbeth's presentation:

I concluded with the following: "So say that each group reaches about 2000 people in their local community then local groups reach about half a million people in the UK. But I know that many groups do far more than that, some a bit less, but for example Reading's group stall at Womad reaches in the tens of thousands. Also a bit of press coverage, or giving an interview at a local radio station goes a long way. So if each group reaches 4000 people, then local groups reach a million people in the UK."

Coming back on the issues raised about the website, Andy explained that Farshid had forwarded Caroline's suggestions. Members' area now fixed – next will be the search function.

Liesbeth asked what was holding up the Members' panel, and why the roadmap has to be implemented first. Andy explained that the Web team's focus had been on other issues. There was a feeling that it should be prioritised as issues have gone on for 1.5 years. Issues have been raised but nothing seems to happen. Kerry explained that Sam Strudwick had updated her saying that all suggestions but one have been implemented. Maybe the feedback hasn't happened, which is something that needs to be addressed so that RR get back feedback on what they have fed in and what will be done.

#### **6.5 Thematic networks (Simon):**

##### **Children's Human Rights Network (CHRN) Update**

Recent Activities:

- The CRC campaign to get the USA to sign up to it has gone well, it was great to be able to have a network campaign as a monthly action and an action with youth and student group involvement. The petition of several thousand signatures is ready to hand in to the US Embassy on the 25th March.
- Positive developments following Networks Day last November. Now have a fixed committee with particular responsibilities and active members more able to be engaged helping the growth and impact of the network. Looking to increase role of active members to increase activism and further grow the network.
- Increased social media presence including Facebook, Twitter, and blogging and created a Google group for more active network members so they will get all children's rights UAs.

#### Barriers/Concerns:

- Not enough activists know about the CRC. The CHRN feel the CRC campaign should be a main priority for AI. With more actions from AI to support their work on children's rights.
- help to more effectively communicate CHRN work to activists across AIUK
- Want support to involve more schools in work on CRC. Young people are key audience for their work as well as activists of the future.
- Training on volunteer support and management for people in Network leadership positions would be brilliant

#### Growing activism:

- Having a workshop at this year's AGM. This is new for network and will hopefully be a good way to get more members informed and involved with campaigning for children's rights.
- Would like to develop a right to primary education campaign - perhaps with Malala as AI ambassador of conscience.
- Keen to develop materials on the CRC to increase profile of it.

### **Women's Action Network (WAN) Update**

#### Recent activities:

- formed a committee and established our roles
- set up Facebook and Twitter accounts
- writing a blog about International Women's Day (Sunday 8 March)

#### Priorities:

- the My Body My Rights campaign
- preparing for the AGM
- engaging and inspiring the WAN

We would be keen to know how the ASC would like us to report on the health, growth and impact of the network moving forwards.

### **LGBTI Network**

#### Activities:

- Formalised committee with clear roles and responsibilities.
- Developed good relationships with country coordinators in key countries.
- Pride screening. Co-hosted with Trade Union Network. This was a great success in terms of promoting our work, getting actions and building contacts.
- Social media success including blogs on LGBTI rights, a regular e-newsletter for network members, and use of Facebook and Twitter.
- Pride Planning Day and guidance pack for groups planning Pride activities.

Barriers/Concerns: We've had difficult in engaging our wider network membership and those in other parts of the UK besides London. The network expects this to improve following our social media success and Google group set-up.

Activism: Great to have educational resources on sexuality and LGBTI rights produced by Education Team. There are lovely new banners for our Pride Activities been made so that key local groups can use them in activities. Social media team have co-hosted key events such as Pride Film Showing with Amnesty UK Facebook Page which has been really helpful.

### **6.6. STAN Update (Melanie – provided via email)**

- about the change in the name of our network, we are still undecided. We are attached to the name STAN and believe we should maybe consult our student groups on the issue
- as usual, it is quite difficult to get a hold of some groups, and we believe that a global strategy for the handover process should be created
- some of us are in the process of meeting with local groups and graduate groups to improve collaboration
- we are working on the organisation of a national week of action on My Body My Rights

## **6.7HRAC (Kerry and Andy):**

HRE unit:

Youth Awards are going well – finished judging. Shortlisted and then press release winners;

There is an ongoing partnership with the British Library around Magna Carta;

The unit is looking at how to usefully monitor and evaluate around HRE

Events unit:

Working mainly on the AGM;

Aikta Hancock returned as maternity cover until Sarah Ben-Tovim comes back

Staff changes:

Fiona Smith covers Champa Patel's sabbatical

### **Actions:**

**6.1 Andy to ask Shoomi how she targeted areas and feedback to ASC**

**6.2 Andy to speak to Anne about updating youth actions on website**

## **7. ASC sub-group project updates**

7.1 Activists and staff relationship building: Sameena said this had partly been covered by Liesbeth already. Dates forthcoming

7.2 Activist insight - activism survey: Andy reported 85 responses so far to the survey. 55 from local groups and 25 from students. Still pushing. Will get further info and draw up plan of action and use data intelligently

7.3 AGM and AGM stall: Ade said it had already been covered

**7.4 Planning - representative body calendar:** Daniela shared the governance calendar that is currently available and explained that Gemma was putting together a calendar containing all events and representative bodies meetings.

### **Actions:**

**7.1 Activist insight: Andy to forward latest version to ASC**

## **8. Strategy implementation update**

8.1 Members at the Heart implementation (Sameena): Hasn't spoken to Kerry yet. Barry explained that so far it is being embedded in PDRS. Kerry to talk to Sameena – to bring back to June meeting.

8.2 Members at the Heart implementation – Data mapping (Barrie Hay)

Put on hold until Kerry has spoken to others about Mascot? Didn't want to duplicate but need certain information. Liesbeth was unsure who has responsibility and it was clarified that it is Gemma.

8.3 Members at the Heart implementation – Impact of activism project - L T-H, M DS and RS

Malcolm: missed the bit of the last meeting

### **Actions:**

**8.1 Liesbeth to speak to Gemma**

## **9. Other actions update**

- Andy reported that the 'master' mailing list for trainers is in operation
- Andy updated on how activists are being planned into the roll-out of advocacy in our campaigns: working with Laura in Advocacy: dream teams – 18 groups targeted with training how to lobby. Now extended to another 30. There will also be an evaluation
- Kerry update on the training/ tools for activists regarding our 'common approach to campaigning': we are about to commission the training for Campaigns and it will form part of this; Andy stressed that we want activists and staff to train together

- Kerry updated on the sharing of campaigns calendar for activists: Not finalised. Not yet shared, as over 40 different calendars that will be merged. Kerry to provide timeline
- Kerry/Andy updated on how activists will be advised on pursuing partnerships at a local level: Partnership review had been done in the past. Picked it up again. Fiona had useful statement from Oxfam which could be used.
- Kerry updated on how activist-related risks will be factored into campaign planning: had session at SMT on this. Will be discussed with Board
- Kerry / Andy are liaising with the HRAC events team regarding accessibility of HRAC for activists vs. external booking. It is an ongoing conversation.
- Work to enable a better connection between relationships at a local level e.g. so that the Regional Rep knows about school speakers and schools and so that the CC's can easily find out which groups have signed up to which country or case: Liesbeth explained that we have nearly up-to-date lists of who are local, student and youth groups. Just a matter of making people use it and create these links. Should be taken off the minutes list for ASC as rolling item.
- Kerry: Investigate helpdesk software suggested by DB. Andy to liaise with Dave on helpdesk software. Take off rolling matters
- Kerry reported that Adult Trainers organiser have created supporting materials for groups to review

#### **Actions:**

**9.1 Kerry to provide timeline for Campaigns Calendar**

**9.2 Daniela / Ruth ensure that item on 'work to enable better relationships between groups' taken off the agenda**

**9.3 Andy to liaise with Dave on helpdesk software. Ruth / Daniela take off rolling matters**

#### **10. Next steps for Amnesty's Activism strategy**

Andy reported that:

- We need to evolve Activism into Community Organising. Gemma to work with Hannah on that. Will then feed into Communications strategy. Gemma reviewing Activism strategy. Will develop own UK based strategy. Based on foundation papers.
- Rather than having isolated strategies feed all together.
- Timescale: plan to be drawn up by November. ASC to be involved over next few months.

Clarifying the name and role of our activist representative bodies:

It was noted that STAN feels uncomfortable about it. It was suggested to keep names but have line in terms of conditions clarifying the role and power vested in that body. Andy suggested to wait with names changes until integration of groups has been completed. Start with understanding of the role of the groups and see if there is a need to amend names later. A discussion followed. It was pointed out that the name change was a GTF recommendation for transparency purposes. It was decided to carry on with the strategy and park name change.

For next meeting we need a clear schedule when we do what work so we know when we reached a conclusion.

#### **11. Media update**

Andy updated the ASC on the work of Media team and developments in terms of regional connections with activists through PowerPoint presentation.

The idea was discussed that Regional Media Offices should be set up. AIUK would offer training. He asked how the ASC feels about it? A discussion followed but the general consensus was that it was a sensible and helpful idea. It was felt that it needed to be clarified that the role should have two sides: media and contact with local groups. It needed to be considered whether to recruit limited numbers per region or rather recruit first and then sort out? Could have a network, but there are different ways of recruiting.

#### **Action:**

**11.1 Andy and Niall to draw up a role description for next ASC meeting in June**

#### **12. Actions rolling forward from previous Meetings**

Meeting Date	Action	Who	Original Deadline
24/1/2015	Gemma to share survey results with ASC. Survey not closed yet so feedback at June meeting	Gemma	7 March
24/1/2015	Hannah to circulate ASC link	Malcolm	7 March
24/1/2015	Hannah to circulate GTF group link	Malcolm	7 March
24/1/2015	Community Organising proposal on what Community Organising is externally and how this works for AIUK - Gemma to share proposals with ASC	Gemma	13 June

**13. Next meeting: Ruth to confirm whether it is on 13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> June, as there was confusion.**

It was agreed that it would be helpful to have an update by Shoomi / Rowena on Adult training as well as an updated organisational chart with staff names.