

Strategic Goals 2016-2019

Phase 2 input

AI Sweden Board

October 2014

INTRODUCTION

The following input was decided by the Swedish section Board after consulting with members, activists and staff at the secretariat. On the whole, it is the Board's opinion that the proposals made by the International Secretariat are generally on the right track, although we have many comments on them. There are however a few things that we, to begin with, would particularly like to stress:

- **THE NEED TO CLARIFY THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC GOALS.** AI Sweden's first concern is regarding the format of the document: the way the document is designed at the moment leads to its mix of both strategic and operational content. This makes us feel like the document is ambiguous and difficult to read and furthermore raises questions about what kind of document it really is. If it is meant to show our priorities, we believe that it does not make enough prioritizations, whilst we believe that if it is meant to include *all* of our work, then many important issues are left out, for example our work against the death penalty. In our opinion, all the work the organization will undertake in the coming years does not have to be included in the strategic goals. They should instead be narrowed down and offer a clear prioritization of our areas of work. For the sake of transparency, the next phase should include a separate document, listing what issues have been given a lower priority.

Also, we believe that the more operational elements (as expressed in more or less specific outcomes) should be completely removed from the final strategy document. By providing a global outlook and description of what we will have achieved as well as where we want to be at the end of the period, we can ensure that the strategic goals are outcome orientated.

- **A LACK OF ORGANISATIONAL GOALS.** Important as they are, AI Sweden would like to raise a question regarding why Proposition 5 only includes matters of growth and digital presence. As the proposition is focusing on creating a vibrant movement, we find it strange that issues such as activism, membership and internal democracy are nowhere to be found. There are several parallel processes (such as the ongoing Governance Reform process) focusing on these matters and AI is in a phase of organisational transition. Our devotion to remain a strong grassroots movement, made up of dedicated and engaged members, should be explicitly stated in and permeate the strategic goals throughout.

- **WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING.** Despite being one of the core issues in the ISP 2010-2016, and despite the 2011 ICM decision on the implementation of the Road Map for Diversity and Gender Action Plan, gender mainstreaming is a largely unfinished business. The current proposal does not contain a stand alone goal on women's rights, nor is it gender mainstreamed.

Although women constitute more than half of the human population, they are primarily identified as one discriminated "group" among several others in the document. The proposal lacks an analysis on how gender effects are linked to other human rights violations. In addition, we believe that all work on discriminated groups should include a gender perspective in order to reveal double discrimination/intersectionality. Finally, at the moment no goals include continued work on sexual and reproductive rights, which we believe is a serious mistake. Should the outcomes be retained in the next version of the strategy, they must include specific outcomes regarding women's human rights and gender, and the gender perspective in all human

rights areas should be clarified. It would be both very relevant and indeed equally important to include gender mainstreaming as an objective in the strategic goals in order to strengthen AI's work on gender mainstreaming across the movement.

GENERAL CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- ***GENDER MAINSTREAMING***

The Swedish section Board mentioned in the introduction, above, the need to strengthen the work for women's rights and the importance of applying a consistent gender equality perspective in Proposition 1-4. Ultimately, it is a question of securing the quality and relevance of our work (of giving the whole picture), which in turn would increase the potential for real impact that benefits both women and men.

- ***APPROACH***

We like the approach with clear, understandable "propositions" - a kind of vision - about the world AI wishes to see in the long term. It is easy to communicate and to connect to the propositions and they form a framework for AI's work and focus for the coming four years. However, we lack clarity on what is AI's long-term goals and we do not believe that visionary goals can "stand on their own feet", but must instead be supplemented with an engaging introduction where the individual, serious human rights violations, as well as opportunities for change, are in focus.

- ***NEED TO CLARIFY AI'S FOCUS, ROLE AND ADDED VALUE***

As mentioned in the introduction, AI Sweden sees an overall need to clarify the focus, role and added value of AI. The way the proposal is now designed, it contains a mix of strategic and operational content, making it vague and difficult to read. A more comprehensive outlook can ensure that the strategic goals remain "outcome orientated".

- ***CURRENT AND FUTURE WORK - PLAN FOR EXIT***

As we move into the next strategic period, there is already a lot of work that we have not yet completed, both in different sections and internationally. A key strategic issue is how human rights issues related to the global campaigns are integrated into AI's programmatic work after the end of each such campaign. One such example is the ongoing *My Body My Rights* campaign, where large resources have been put into the Criminalization of Sexual and Reproductive Health Project. Given the investments made in research, membership training, development of policies, mobilization of the global movement, and despite the fact that we are unlikely to achieve our goals within the time frame of the campaign, we see no explicit continuation of the work in the strategic goals. We call for sustainability in our work and a more luminous thinking about "exit strategies" for global campaigns, including whether or not, and how to integrate campaign issues into AI's ongoing work. This applies particularly to those issues where AI has developed its work, policy and partnerships through a campaign. We believe that exit strategies should be developed early during the planning stage.

- ***LOCALLY RELEVANT WORK - ONE AMNESTY***

From the Swedish section's perspective there is room for locally relevant work. The major challenge is perhaps not in the actual content of the strategy as much as in *how* we work. A stated goal of the Global Transition Programme is to increase Amnesty's local relevance in general. Locally relevant work is ultimately about implementing Amnesty's human rights agenda in a country. Locally relevant work does not necessarily contradict One Amnesty. It does however require consensus, shared attitudes and the stressing of our core values throughout the movement. We welcome the adopted guidelines on how the sections and

structures can develop locally relevant work in line with the movement's core values and priorities, including global campaigns.

- **REGIONAL FLEXIBILITY**

AI Sweden believes that the proposed regional flexibility is both reasonable and effective. At the same time, we want to emphasize that flexibility should not be confused with sections avoiding certain human rights issues for discriminated groups because they are not optimal fundraising issues or because the work is generally seen as controversial (for example, violence against women, sexual and reproductive rights including LGBT rights). AI will continue to work with such violations of human rights at the global/regional level and with global/regional impact. International solidarity must continue to be a guiding principle for the movement.

- **GLOBAL/REGIONAL CAMPAIGNS 2016-19**

We have difficulties to decide what the global/regional campaigns should be like and do not know whether we can anticipate two 4-year campaigns or four 2-year campaigns. We believe that the process of selecting the global campaigns of 2014 -2015 was a more appropriate method to decide on the campaigns and suggest that sections are again asked to consider developed proposals.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSITIONS

Proposition 1: Exercising fundamental freedoms

Amnesty international's added value and "signature" is obvious. There are different ways to cut the cake and one of the advantages we see is that human rights issues such as torture, freedom of expression, association and assembly are put into a current context. However, the proposition should explicitly include work on human rights violations such as arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, extrajudicial executions, unfair trials, the death penalty and prisoners of conscience. The *individual* should be in focus, rather than technology as such.

An enhanced knowledge and awareness, as well as continuous work to change attitudes, are crucial in order to strengthen the general respect for human rights. It is therefore necessary to push for the integration of human rights education into the formal education systems that states are responsible for. The question is what role AI sections could have in countries where the formal education system already includes human rights education? During the last years the Swedish section has developed a model to support educators (mainly teachers) so that they can carry out HRE of high quality and aligned with the curriculum.

The outcome 1.1 is not very clear when it comes to "[...] significant advances in reframing the discourse on rights [...]" Generally, goals such as "change the debate/discourse" tend to be very vague and difficult to measure and evaluate.

Proposition 2: Securing rights for all

It is our opinion that this proposition is lacking a main thread and a connecting thought. There is no clear focus or outlook: where do we want to be by the end of the period?

Clarification on AI's added value is needed. What is the most strategic entry point for AI's work on ESCR's? How do we make the best use of our strengths and what do other organisations do better? What have the evaluations of the Demand Dignity and End Discrimination campaigns showed, and what lessons have been learnt? For example, we need to know why work on marginalized groups or individual communities in some specific countries is the most strategic approach for AI. Also, it is unclear to us if AI has got a presence or not in those target countries and what part or entity within AI that should work with marginalized groups/communities - should it be the section in that particular country, the IS, or a hub? If the outcome is referring mainly to locally relevant work for sections, this should be made evident.

In relation to work against discrimination, the proposition states that AI will choose to focus on some of the groups that are mentioned. There may be other groups that are subjected to discrimination in different contexts. As no decision has been made on which groups to focus on we would like to emphasize that *women must not be regarded as a group* that AI can choose not to focus on. If so, this would constitute a backlash for AI as a relevant and global HR organisation. In addition to this should all work on discrimination be gender mainstreamed in order to expose and address intersectionality and multiple forms of discrimination.

Finally, the Swedish section regard the proposed project on macro-economic issues etcetera as being potentially very controversial and we believe that it could lead to substantial changes in AI's methods and ways of working towards a more solution orientated critique of the global economic system. Therefore, we believe that this is an issue that should be prepared and dealt with in a democratic process aside from the process of developing our strategic goals.

Proposition 3: Responding to crises

We believe that this is generally a clear goal but there is a need to define "crises". A much too narrow definition might, for example, risk excluding many refugees. The work on People on the Move should also include situations that cannot be characterized as a crisis but where individuals are forced to flee, i.e. refugees that flee persecution inside a country or across a border, as well as refugees who need to seek asylum in a country, and the right to seek asylum *and* access to a fair and efficient asylum procedure.

We do not believe that it is strategic for AI to prioritize the issue of refugee status determination processes, as several other actors has pushed for and gained political hearing for the need of increased resettlement, for example in the EU. Instead, the strategic goals should explicitly include access to asylum and a fair and secure asylum procedure.

The proposition focuses on the importance of responding to crises in a quick manner. This is, quite obviously, good but historically AI's strength has always been the credibility of our reporting - this is also stressed in the proposition. The analysis of the added value of responding more quickly is weak and this goal should not be made at the expense of what is regarded as one of our major strengths. As our work develops, a more thorough analysis of our methods and way of working should be made. Only after this is made will it be possible to consider what the right balance might be. In our opinion AI should not "speed up" just for the sake of it.

Proposition 4: Ensuring accountability

Again, we believe that Amnesty's role must be made clear. We lack a main thread and many of the goals are focusing on *where* rather than *what* we will achieve during the period.

As for corporate accountability, our focus should remain on the extractive industries. It is (literally) a dirty industry which so clearly generates human rights violations, both in terms of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Amnesty International has just started its work in this area and we have far from completed it. We have gone from focusing on the companies themselves to home states' and host states' responsibilities. We believe that Amnesty should focus even more on the home state responsibility to regulate "their" companies but also to improve access to justice and compensation for those affected.

AI must clarify how we look at the long term trend regarding, and the ability to, establish internationally binding rules regarding States' extraterritorial obligations in relation to companies. Previously we advocated internationally binding rules, but the proposal now instead focuses on national regulation of businesses in home states and host states. It is not made clear if AI would consider resuming the demand for international regulation at a later stage if or when we see a window of opportunity to successfully pursue the issue, or if we have completely moved on from this - and if so, why.

Although the focus of our demands should be directed toward states, we should continue to investigate violations that companies are guilty of, and "name and shame" the responsible companies. We need to continually exemplify violations and if we only work with "old" cases, we face the risk of being told that companies no longer act in the same manner. If we want to be able to involve and mobilize our activists, members and supporters, we have found that working towards companies is something our activists responds well to.

Proposition 5: Increasing our organizational effectiveness

As mentioned in the introduction, AI Sweden would like to strongly emphasize the importance of our members and their role in our democratic structure. We therefore find it strange that proposition 5 does not mention the democratic challenges we are facing, but instead refer them to a parallel process.

Organizational reforms within the AI often had a strong focus on effectiveness, sometimes at the expense of participation and support within the movement. We want the goal to have a strong emphasis on the importance of democratic structures.

Furthermore, we question why the proposition equates "growth" with a "vibrant movement". It takes more than strategic growth and an increased digital presence to ensure that the our long term ambition to build the strongest possible global movement is achieved. It is also not enough to believe that an increase in the proportion of young supporters and activists in the Global South will achieve the goal of being an effective and vibrant movement. According to the Global Group on Activism our activism is risk-averse, slow and conservative. These problems are not addressed in the proposition. We have a large, diverse base of activists and our size is an enormous asset. However, whilst our supporter base is growing, our activist models are not evolving in tune with the changing realities. More diverse, flexible and creative activism opportunities are more attractive to young people and would hence attract more activists. This is why we need to up the ante towards a holistic approach concerning activism.

Even though growing in size does not automatically make us more relevant, we still *have* to grow. Some of the most income generating sections show zero or negative growth and we would like to see a proposition on how this problem might be addressed. The Swedish section believes in a stronger emphasis on our members. In order to keep our independence, central to our core values, we need long-term members. The proposition lack outcomes related to creating a movement where our members feel a strong affinity with and ownership of their organisation. In order to achieve the feeling of belonging to the movement, we need to

work strategically with issues concerning what being a member and an activist actually entails. As the section mentioned in our last statement of opinion, we find it important that AI develops a common “Amnesty identity” based on our core values, pervading our work at all levels of the movement. To specifically strengthen this identity will generate loyalty, strength, credibility and even market value. We therefore believe that it is very important to include this in the strategic goals.

With regards to the specific growth target we find it strange, if not inappropriate, to set goals for the number of members in the Global South (and to some extent also the number of young people). The Swedish section would at best be able contribute to such a target by a decrease in the number of members in Sweden. We would like to see the targets reworded in terms of absolute or relative numbers, focusing on the current situation instead of the proportion of our future members. The Swedish section would also like to stress the importance of AI working with fundraising as an *integrated* part of our human rights and communication work and not as a separate activity, which is why these outcomes should be part of the propositions concerning human rights. Growth needs to be something that runs through every single area of our work, otherwise we might lose the essential association between mobilisation, campaigning and fundraising.

We also find it strange for the organization to be tied to two social networks (Facebook and Twitter) since we can not ensure their relevance in 2019. An increased presence in social media is indeed desirable, but the number of followers or web hits are very blunt tools and we therefore find it necessary that the strategic goals clarify what these followers are expected to achieve. An increased digital presence also requires a greater efficiency when it comes to coordination, speed and timeliness, where other organizations are often faster than AI in the very same issues.