

VIII. Forging a Movement – Collaboration and Alliances

The animal protection movement has already used collaboration and alliances to good effect, particularly in Europe. These are going to become increasingly important to the movement as it struggles to cope with the effects of globalisation and the changing political and business scene that it faces. Different types of collaboration and alliances are examined here, together with the benefits and drawbacks of collaboration. The aim of this chapter is to clarify this subject and highlight major issues that contribute to success or failure.

A Movement of Force and Strength?

Despite being established for over 30 years and having many well resourced and influential organisations, many still feel that the international animal protection movement has not reached its full strength and potential. This could be attributed to many reasons, including the following: -

- Until recently, there have been no international legislation or policy initiatives around which the movement could unite.
- Lack of urgency about the mission (the need for ‘fire in the belly’).
- Lack of ‘common sense of mission and purpose’ (an apt phrase coined by John Hoyt when he was President of WSPA).
- The detrimental effect of divisive attitudes in the movement – particularly as regards the welfare v rights debate (instead of accepting that all are working on same path – just on different steps along the way – and focussing attacks on the common ‘enemy’).
- The breadth and range of issues covered by the movement and the lack of (agreed) focus and prioritisation.
- Lack of resources or skills necessary for successful alliance building.
- The tendency towards competition, rather than genuine collaboration.

Previous Successes

There have been some excellent successes at European Union (EU) level, where there is now a body of animal welfare legislation that is in most cases stronger than national law. The use of networks and coalitions has doubtless played a fundamental role in these. These include: -

- The Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, which has member organisations across the EU and lobbies at EU-level on the whole range of animal welfare issues.
- The European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE), which is a pan-European coalition campaigning and lobbying to end animal experiments in Europe.
- The European Coalition for Farm Animals (ECFA), which is an alliance of animal advocacy groups campaigning and lobbying together on farm animal issues throughout Europe.

Benefits of Collaboration and Alliances

In business management, international work often revolves around the addition of foreign acquisitions, mergers and strategic alliances. The purpose of these is often to supplement the organisation's core competences and/or to reach and understand new markets. It is generally recognised that collaborative ventures and networks can add value to the organisation's systems - providing complementary skills, assets and resources to strengthen the business, as well as geographical outreach.

In the animal protection movement, such alliances and networks are vital to enable regional and/or global campaigning, where many countries have to be persuaded to support a particular measure or reform and/or a global industry has to be opposed. Without collaboration and alliance, the desired regional or global outreach is impossible. Collaboration and/or alliances also help to avoid duplication, focus pressure on key demands - ensuring strong and consistent messages and enable sharing of information and resources.

Another role of collaboration and alliances is to give strength and credibility in lobbying and other representational work.

Drawbacks of Collaboration and Alliances

Alliances are difficult to manage and can fail or become stagnant. To be successful, considerable commitment, input and nurturing is needed. Yet, this is a delicate balancing act, as dictatorship removes motivation and empowerment from the members. Yet the other side of the coin is that excess democracy and involvement can cause a waste of time in process, rather than achieving, and lead to demotivation and collapse.

In general, groups tend to accept less democracy and involvement if the lead group's contribution towards the network is significant. For example, CIWF's leadership of the European Coalition for Farm Animals (ECFA) and the networks processes are rarely questioned – possibly because CIWF contributes significant amounts in terms of finance, coordination, campaign research, investigations, development of campaign materials (and, in some case, assistance with translation etc.). ECFA members may seek greater involvement in the creative campaign development process, but this is natural and linked more to wishing to input into the development of a better product. On the other hand, the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE) and Eurogroup for Animal Welfare charges their members a subscription (a significant amount in some cases), and members expect more of an input and service. The process of 'democratisation' also tends to lead to an increase in bureaucracy and conflict (when different ideals, priorities, ethics and motivations come into play).

Another common problem in alliances is that of competing egos. Networks involve a lot of power play and negotiation to balance competing needs and expectations. Key factors include recognition and branding. Major groups often prefer a separate identity and branding for the alliance, whereas leading groups that make a significant contribution expect recognition and prominent branding.

The competitive ethos also militates against genuine cooperation. In fact, competition is probably the most serious impediment to the creating of a strong and coherent movement for social change. This is partly a product of ego, but is also wrapped up in competition for supporters and funding: it is notable that the market is mostly saturated in areas that attract the most funding (i.e. disaster relief, wildlife and particularly attractive species such as bears, primates, whales and dolphins etc.).

Types of Collaboration and Alliances

There are many different forms of collaboration and alliances. The below are examples of those that could be appropriate to animal protection societies.

➤ ***Joint Ventures***

Operational links with other animal protection societies on a bilateral basis.

➤ ***Affiliations and Networks***

One of the classic NGO cooperative structures (as characterised by the Labour Movement). These are ways of trying to obtain representative democracy. Democracy may be achieved if there is internal democracy and voting/decision-making. However, without such democracy this can be used as an empty way of validating the will of minority interests (e.g. leaders of the lead society). Governments and international organisation are already querying the extent to which NGOs represent the interests of their members, and it will not help the debate if affiliations and networks are also shown to be unrepresentative? For genuine affiliations, policy and governance reside with affiliated groups. There are also more informal networks, such as working parties.

➤ ***Joint Projects***

Joint projects are a useful way of organising cooperation, especially around service provision. There have also been joint service provision ventures with animal protection societies and governments. Also, in a groundbreaking departure, there is now a joint campaign between animal protection societies and two UN agencies – the GRASP (Great Ape Survival Project) project, which includes UNEP and UNESCO.

➤ ***Alliances and Coalitions***

These are more solid linkages than affiliations and networks. They can be either issue-orientated or broader-based. Animal protection societies use these for joint campaigning and they can be either issue-based or general. Campaign coalitions are best organised around task/issue in order to ensure creativity and motivation (especially for the ‘mission driven’). They enable animal protection organisations to become involved in an issue without using the entire resources necessary to develop this. Pooled resources provide economies of scale and cost cutting.

➤ ***Federations***

A federation is a formal alliance whereby a super-national body coordinates and governs cooperative matters. The comments on affiliations and networks above apply here also.

➤ *Franchising or Licensing*

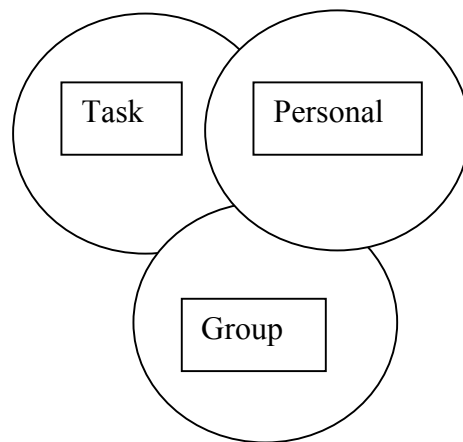
These can be useful models for organising link-ups with societies in other countries – particularly when the name and/or brand of the lead society is to be used. For example, some international organisations have branches that use the society name and logo, but are governed by a separate national Board. In such cases, franchising or licensing could have ensured a necessary measure of control and coherence.

Action Orientation

Member societies are motivated and inspired by action-orientated collaboration. As most seek to increase their capacity for mission fulfilment by collaborating with other groups, it follows that they will only be satisfied if they feel that cooperation is achieving their mission goals. This means it is important to avoid time (and resource) wasting process work and to focus on achievement. As regards campaign coalitions, longer-term goals need to be broken down into small stepping-stones so members can witness progress towards the ultimate goal.

Personal Contacts

There is no substitute for personal contacts in keeping a coalition or alliance alive. A regular meeting helps to build allegiance and motivation (particularly if linked to an action or event that moves towards mission). The energy at meetings can be palpable, if well organised around action, rather than process. The ideal meeting will meet group, task and personal needs: -



Task: Motivate by planning and/or doing goal achievement activities

Personal: Ensure hygiene factors are catered for (food, drink, accommodation etc.), time for personal space, time for input and ideas, time for creativity to be expressed etc.

Group: Opportunities for group work and social/bonding activities - a social event (e.g. meal or outing) is ideal.

Also, a dedicated coordinator who can build personal relationships with group members is invaluable (particularly if able to travel to meet groups and see their work at first hand (or, better still, join in with this), building understanding and rapport.

The ECEAE rotates its meetings so each member can, over time, host this in their own country, and show the other groups its situation and working environment. This helps inter-group understanding enormously. It also gives an excellent opportunity to highlight relevant national issues and/or reinforce lobbying efforts. A country exposé/investigation and/or link to the country in question's EU Presidency would be particularly powerful.

Considerations

When establishing collaboration and alliances, major considerations include the following: -

- Type of collaboration?
- Purpose?
- Permanent or temporary?
- Level of resource provision?
- What will each member bring to the table and level of expected outputs (funding and other resources)?
- Recognition and branding?
- Degree of democracy?
- Process for negotiation and compromise?
- Coordination mechanisms (and information flows)?
- Where collaboration is representational, how will democratic input be organised?
- Frequency/location of meetings and personal contacts.

These questions need to be asked to facilitate the most suitable choice of approach for the purpose, with bureaucracy minimised and expenditure directed as far as possible towards project or mission.

A written record of agreement is recommended. Such agreements are, in essence, contractual arrangements.

The Future of Collaboration and Alliances

The forces of globalisation have made the need for animal protection collaboration and alliances even more pressing. Both the increasingly international political arena and the global outreach of the industry combine to make these necessary. It is no longer a question of whether these are necessary, but of which are the most appropriate models. Also, the movement needs to examine how to achieve real representation, rather than 'tokenism'. To achieve this, powerful democratic alliances and coalitions are necessary, based on an urgent mission for social change and backed by a substantial investment of financial and human resources. The movement must drive this by a keen professionalism, giving strategic strength to the emotional drive of 'fire in the belly'. As well as fighting together, *the movement needs to fight clever as well as hard*, otherwise its energy will continue to be dissipated and wasted.

A study at Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management found that compassion and building teamwork will be two of the most important characteristics business leaders will need for success a decade from now.
Doc Childre and Bruce Cryer, From Chaos to Coherence