

Gaps in the Animal Protection Movement: 2017

This analysis of gaps in the movement has been provided as a backdrop to consideration of the current work of animal protection organisations, and what more we could do to achieve our collective mission. It is intended to be a constructive contribution to collaborative debate between movement leaders on the most effective approaches towards the achievement of real and enduring change for animals.

We have focussed here on public policy, as we feel that it brings some new and unparalleled opportunities and is central to lasting change. But also because the movement has traditionally been largely focussed on practical projects; and has in recent years been building some excellent campaigns focussed on business and financial institutions.

International

- ***An International Federation/Alliance***

When the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA, now World Animal Protection) disbanded its member society network, the movement lost core aspects of the most prominent international federation/alliance that have not yet been replaced. Along with their network, APOs across the world lost:

- Biennial meetings (which discussed the movement, its work, and its development)
- Capacity building/training
- Funding/grants for member societies (especially needed in developing countries)
- Roles in, and funding for, international campaigns
- A sense of unity and connection
- A point of formal and informal coordination
- A centralised source for information
- The credibility of global representation

We feel that it is impossible to forge a concerted world-wide movement without an international federation/alliance.

- ***International Movement Building***

There are a handful of useful movement building programmes at local/national levels. One notable example is the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) which has a major programme on [movement building](#) across India.

World Animal Net pulls together “best practice” information and resources, but more hands-on support and programmes are needed to forge a dynamic international movement. As we say in the first module of WAN’s Strategic Advocacy course when discussing [the AP movement](#):

“The study of social change shows the clear importance of movement building. The major frameworks for social change all include the need for movement’ organisation, leadership development and education.”

- ***International Policy Advocacy***

The International Coalition for Animal Welfare ([ICFAW](#)) is developing into an effective advocacy body representing some of the world’s major APOs at the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). However, there are many other important international policy opportunities for which there is **no** concerted AP advocacy, strategy and co-operation. At United Nations level, for

example, there is an Animal Protection Working Group on the Universal Declaration for Animal Welfare (UDAW), but nothing wider on UN work. There is also no concerted policy advocacy on the massive policy area of [Animal Welfare and Development](#), which covers a multitude of international, regional and national organisations dealing with international development – with [budgets](#) of many billions of dollars and many policy areas connected to, or affecting, animal welfare. Some important players in this arena – such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) – are already considering animal welfare and strategic policy issues such as the role of food choices in development, and factory farming and development. Yet the AP movement is not internationally organised to take full advocacy advantage of these policy developments (or indeed to meet the many challenges and opportunities that development work throws our way, including aquaculture development – as below).

Regional

- *Regional Alliances and Advocacy*

The European Union (EU) region has shown what progress can be achieved when APOs build effective advocacy alliances targeting a regional institution (a Regional Economic Community – REC - in this case). In 1980, the [Eurogroup for Animals](#) was launched as an animal welfare alliance in Europe, on the initiative of the UK's RSPCA. It represents APOs across almost all EU member states, carrying out concerted advocacy on EU policies and legislation. Other EU-wide coalitions were subsequently developed, which worked together on agreed animal welfare priorities in their own fields – including the [European Coalition to End Animal Experiments](#), which was established by the BUAV (now [Cruelty Free International](#)), and the European Network for Farm Animal Protection, which was started by [Compassion in World Farming \(CIWF\)](#), and has subsequently been disbanded. These various initiatives (along with the work of other APOs working in Brussels, such as IFAW and HSI) succeeded in encouraging the EU to include AW in its founding Treaty, and to adopt higher legal standards of animal protection in a wide number of areas – standards which are applicable across the EU. Given these successes, it is surprising that other regions across the world have not followed suit (and so far only one Regional Economic Community apart from the EU has developed a comprehensive AW policy framework, and that is the Intergovernmental Authority on Development ([IGAD](#)) in Africa).

These days there is an even greater need for APOs to form regional alliances – given that Regional AW Strategies are being formulated across the world to spearhead AW development and the implementation of the OIE international AW standards. APOs need to organise in order to carry out effective advocacy at this level, and to form partnerships to support AW implementation. RECs across the world should be including AW within their policy remit, and providing leadership, staff and resources towards this work.

Whilst there have been some moves by APOs to collaborate regionally (including Asia and the Caribbean), these initiatives seem to be geared largely to holding conferences and sharing expertise on practical programmes, rather than for concerted policy advocacy. One notable exception was the Pan African AW Alliance (PAAWA) which had massively promising beginnings, with an excellent strategy which centred on collective advocacy. However, despite promising early policy successes, PAAWA has not yet received the support it needs to reach its full potential.

National

- *National Federations/Alliances*

There are clear benefits to the establishment of national AP federations/alliances in terms of strong collaborative advocacy. These help member organisations to agree on national priorities and effective advocacy strategies; and to reach common positions on issues, so they can speak with one voice to their Government and legislators. Also, each of the 180 member countries of the OIE now has a national AW Focal Point, who is the country's main point of contact for AW issues and – if their role is carried out effectively – the coordination point or hub of AW expertise and implementation planning. APO coordination can help to use this focus more effectively. For example, in countries where the OIE's international standards have not yet been implemented into national legislation and enforcement, there should be a strong national lobby to make sure that this happens - as an absolute minimum.

However, as this list of existing [collaborations](#) shows, there are currently very few national federations/alliances across the world. WAN strongly supports the formation of national federations/alliances, and currently provides the Secretariat of the National Council for Animal Protection ([NCAP](#)) in the United States.

Issues

- ***Stray Dog Control***

The main principles of humane stray control have been known for over 15 years, and there is now an international OIE standard on stray dog control which outlines those responsible for this work – including the veterinary authorities, government agencies and local government; and also dog owners and private veterinarians. APOs are only mentioned as 'potential partners' – important because of their work on education and awareness, as well as their knowledge and expertise, and ability to harness resources. Yet the majority of APOs still focus on practical stray control programmes. There is more about this in the WAN [blog](#) and [report on stray control](#). The International Companion Animal Management Coalition (ICAM) has excellent expertise and resources in this field, but has not yet included collective advocacy in its remit. Stray control advocacy would be a cost effective and viable approach to this massive global AW issue, with the potential to achieve lasting institutional change.

- ***Factory Farming***

There are now many well-funded APO initiatives working on factory farming issues in terms of corporate advocacy – including those tackling food businesses and investment banks. However, there is far less strategic and concerted APO advocacy working on factory farming policy issues (although there are excellent initiatives by individual APOs, such as Compassion in World Farming). Strong concerted advocacy is needed to capitalise on some of the relevant new policy considerations and initiatives coming from international organisations such as the FAO (as mentioned above) and national development organisations (such as the German development organisation, GIZ, which is funding work on [Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training \(ATVET\)](#) across Africa – for example, an international campaign against factory farming. There is real scope for change on this front, given the range of policy concerns affecting food and farming (including climate change, antibiotic resistance and the sustainability of feeding a burgeoning global population that is becoming wealthier (and greedier).

- ***Neglected Issues***

Historically, some issues have been badly neglected – especially where the species concerned do not readily evoke a compassionate response (and are difficult to raise funds for). These include fish and “pest control”.

Aquaculture is the fastest-growing animal-based food production sector, and is promoted in development programmes (and with little available expertise on fish welfare in such circles, many of these lead to severe fish welfare problems and deaths). Yet with rare exception (notably, Fishfeel.org in the U.S., Crustacean Compassion in the UK and fishcount.org.uk) there is a severe absence of APOs principally dedicated to promoting the recognition of fish as sentient beings deserving of respect and protection. However, with awareness of the importance of this issue beginning to grow there are signs that more APOs are beginning to include work on fish (for example, the Eurogroup for Animals recently [advertised for a fish welfare programme leader](#)).

With animals perceived to be “pests”, control measures often use inhumane methods, such as rodenticides, cruel leghold traps and glue boards, which cause immense suffering (prioritising expediency over animal welfare). The rodenticides market alone approaches a billion dollars a year and the effects are felt far beyond the target animals, such as when poisoned rodents are consumed by raptors or other wildlife. Progress such as glueboard bans and contraceptives as a substitute for much rodenticide use seem achievable; however APOs' attention is disproportionately more greatly devoted to many other areas where far fewer animals are harmed by human activities.

Approaches

- ***Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)***

In the past, M & E was largely missing from APO's work. Now it is increasingly being developed to prove the worth of our own work – but there is also scope to use policy M & E in advocacy work. The Animal Protection Index made a good start on this, covering 50 countries, and using a range of comparative measures. WAN's own [constitutions project](#) is another initiative using M & E, specifically its [world constitutions chart](#) focussing on the inclusion of AW in country constitutions. Other areas where the approach would be useful would include charts recording:

- Countries with/without national AW strategies
- Countries with/without modern AP legislation
- Countries that have/have not implemented the OIE international AW standards
- Countries policy records i.e. recording voting and policy interventions on AW (the same has been done on UN voting behaviour to great effect, and this would prevent some countries – such as the United States – from consistently taking policy positions against AW interests with impunity (even when the citizens and the prevailing government were supportive).

Such initiatives would help national and international advocacy, and could advance cooperation between national and international APOs.

Way Ahead

It would be beneficial for the movement as a whole to examine these potential gaps, and to consider how we can pool the work and resources needed to address them. The more APOs continue to work in isolation, each focussing on our own issue silos, then the farther away our goal of lasting social change for animals will become.

Our conclusion following this analysis was that the single most significant gap is the lack of a common sense of mission and purpose. We urgently need this to unite around, to build a

movement that is a powerful and compelling force. Without it, we will never reach the critical mass we need to achieve the change that is long overdue for the animals.