



ANIMAL ETHICS

2018 STRATEGIC PLAN

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Every year Animal Ethics prepares a strategic plan for the forthcoming year before the end of the fall, and revises it within half a year. This is the revised version of our Strategic Plan for 2018.

There were several motivations behind the creation of Animal Ethics, which included the need to connect academic and scientific work with animal advocacy, providing resources to animal activists, and promoting more speciesism-focused work.

A key reason why Animal Ethics was formed is the need to promote concern about wild animal suffering and helping wild animals. During our first few years, our focus was on spreading these concerns among people involved in animal advocacy. We believe we have been relatively successful in this respect. Just a few years ago, there was only a tiny minority of people who cared or knew about this issue. In the interim, the number of animal activists aware of its importance has grown considerably. While there are other people who have been involved in raising this awareness, Animal Ethics is the only animal organization that during the last three years has been consistently working on this issue (publishing texts about it on our website and in academic journals, speaking about it continually in our social media, giving and organizing dozens of talks about it at universities, conferences, and other places, and distributing leaflets and factsheets about wild animal suffering), which means we're likely to have been responsible for a large part of this change.

By the end of 2017, we shifted our efforts to focus on the second stage of our work, promoting the creation of welfare biology as a relevant field of research in biology. Welfare biology is the science of the negative and positive wellbeing of animals in relation to their environment, and of what affects it positively or negatively. In 2018 we will continue to work in this direction, with the largest part of our resources being used to promote research and interest among researchers about wild animal suffering.

In 2017 we started a qualitative research project aimed at assessing the attitudes of ecologists and animal welfare scientists about wild animal suffering and helping wild animals. We will finish this project during the first months of 2018 and then carry out a quantitative study aimed at assessing this. The purpose of this research is identifying promising potential lines of research in welfare biology. We will then fund research on these topics, with the aid of other institutions willing to finance research on wild animal suffering. We will provide different funding opportunities in the academic world, especially for postdocs and graduate students, that is, scientists at the beginning of their careers.

In previous years, we were involved in street outreach in different countries, both as a way of reaching the general public and because of its potential for movement building and getting volunteers involved. This will change from this year on as we enter this new stage in our work.

In addition, we will continue our work to expand in other languages (and the ones that do, usually do it in just a few languages, such as Spanish and Portuguese). We will continue to work in this area. Right now our website is likely to be the main source of information about animals and ethics, animal exploitation, wild animal suffering and related issues available internationally, given the amount of information and the fact that it's available in many different languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Italian, Polish and, since the beginning of 2018, Chinese). Moreover, in 2018 we will also start distributing leaflets in Chinese to reach Chinese-speaking communities in Western countries and Chinese students. We might be able to start working in China by the end of 2019. For that to happen, however, we want to have done substantial research about what may be the best ways to do animal activism in China. We also

intend to start doing similar research in the future about how to work in other Asian countries with large populations such as Japan, South Korea, and India.

To carry out all these activities in 2018, we aim to significantly increase our income through grants and external funding for research on wild animal suffering. Our activities plan below explains our aims for this year.

GOALS FOR 2018

Our general goals for 2018 will be the following:

1. Initiate the development of welfare biology in academia with some biologists and animal welfare scientists starting to work in the area
2. Increase our impact in terms of promotion and production of research on animal issues in general
3. Reach a larger audience online and refine our ways to direct them to the most relevant content
4. Continue to expand our activism network globally
5. Start working in Chinese
6. Raise more funds for research on wild animal suffering
7. Continue developing our internal organization internationally

ACTIVITIES PLAN 2018

1. PROMOTING ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON WILD ANIMAL SUFFERING

Creating welfare biology as a respected field for biologists to work in was already considered in our 2017 strategic plan as a priority. This will continue to be a priority going forward. In 2018, we will complete the research we started at the end of last year assessing the attitudes of biology and animal welfare scholars about different interventions to help wild animals, and use it to inform where to focus when it comes to promoting academic research. In addition to promoting the topics we identify as relevant through this study, we will also promote research linking wild animal suffering with practical research on improving the wellbeing of animals living in areas where humans have a significant impact, such as urban, suburban, and industrial zones, since it is more likely to become acceptable. We will also promote research linking knowledge about compassionate conservation and about wild animal suffering. Our assumption is that concern for the wellbeing of wild animals who live close to humans and concern for animals affected by conservationist efforts in the wild can lead to research about the wellbeing of wild animals in general affected by natural conditions. These seem plausible starting points for research on welfare biology.

In addition to this, a potential course of action consists in promoting research about ways of intervention in nature currently carried out for anthropocentric reasons that can also significantly help wild animals. The clearest example may be vaccination. Wild animal vaccination is a respected area of research. Connecting this research with considerations regarding the wellbeing of animals could be a way to promote research on wild animal wellbeing.

For this new field of work to develop, it seems that it would be necessary for a group of researchers committed to helping wild animals to open new lines of research. These lines of research should concern not just diagnoses of the wellbeing of animals but also ways of improving it. Researchers in these areas needn't be fully committed to the views on wild animal suffering (and their prevalence and importance) that Animal Ethics has

(which are presented on our website). Rather, they just need to be interested in ways to improve the situation of animals. If they do research on issues that can be realistically assessed and that can have some impact, it can encourage other scientists to work on them.

Our promotion of research on these issues will be carried out differently from the ways we have done it before. The first and second Animal Ethics Essay Prize on the suffering of animals in the wild and intervention in nature didn't meet all our expectations in terms of promoting high quality research, although some good essays were received. Due to this, we will no longer be awarding this prize in the same way. Instead, we will invest more money in promoting research by graduate students and postdocs on promising lines of investigation on wild animal suffering. We will seek external funding to supplement the funding we provide directly. Our intention is to do this by looking for partnerships with university departments, as well as with other organizations willing to support this research.

2. PROMOTING RESEARCH IN ANIMAL ISSUES IN GENERAL

In addition to the promotion of work on wild animal suffering mentioned above, we will be working on producing materials to aid researchers in carrying out their work. We will provide a tool for scholars in different disciplines to work on this by producing syllabi in different disciplines that can be useful to professors who may have the opportunity to lecture on these topics, especially those who have only recently started to teach. We will also include more information for researchers. We will produce bibliographies using the lists of references we have included in the articles we have already published.

3. CARRYING OUT RESEARCH

In previous years, we published extensive and previously unavailable information on our website about speciesism and its consequences for exploited animals, as well as on wild animal suffering, sentience, and related issues. In 2018, we will publish more texts in these areas, although not at the same pace at which we have published in previous years, given the focus our work will have on promoting academic interest in the factors that affect wild animals.

In 2018, we will publish more material on wild animal suffering, a topic on which we already have published many texts. We will also publish a general introductory page on wild animal suffering which will summarize the content of the other pages on the subject.

We will also publish more work based on new research on wild animal suffering. This work will be focused on the conditions that can increase or decrease wild animal suffering. Our intention is to publish more on this topic in the following years too, though our focus won't be on doing research ourselves, but on promoting research by scholars. The material we will publish in 2018 will examine the different estimates of the proportion between suffering and wellbeing for different types of animals depending on their life history traits.

In addition to this, we will publish articles about other topics too. The bulk of this work will be carried out by our network of volunteer researchers. Among other issues, such topics will include (i) animal sentience, especially in the case of invertebrates, (ii) effective animal activism from a viewpoint concerned with wild animal suffering and the importance of future sentient beings

4. WEBSITE WORK

Right now our website has about 150 articles in English about speciesism, animals and ethics, animal sentience, wild animal suffering, animal exploitation, and veganism. In addition, our work on website translations during previous years has been very productive. At the beginning of January 2018, we launched the Chinese version of our website, which has been our first step in our plan to do outreach to reach Chinese

speakers. It is in standard simplified Mandarin Chinese. This is the eighth language our website is available in. In 2018 we'll also be working on the Russian and Romanian versions of the website. Work on the translation of the website into traditional Chinese (which is prevalent in areas such as Taiwan and Singapore) will begin as well. Doing this will be easier once the website is in simplified Chinese.

In addition, we will be looking for volunteers to translate our website into other languages. We will explore, in particular, how feasible it may be to have it translated into Japanese. Other options may be open depending on volunteer work availability.

In 2018, we will also prepare a microsite in several languages, explaining the basics of speciesism for the general public. It will contain information about veganism and encouraging behavioral changes, but the focus will be on achieving attitudinal changes. It will, due to this, be focused on speciesism more than on veganism. It will also include information about wild animal suffering, presented in a way that is simple and engaging. This microsite will serve as a landing page for some of our Facebook ads and for our leaflets.

We will also be improving our website in terms of usability, adding new ways of finding content and emphasizing its function for capacity building.

A significant part of all this work will be volunteer work, so our expenses will be low.

5. SEMINARS AND TALKS

2016 and 2017 were very active years for Animal Ethics in terms of talks. Our representatives gave seminars and talks in many countries, including the US, the UK, Canada, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. In 2017, we gave or organized close to 60 talks. In 2018, our representatives will give at least 30 talks and seminars in total. In 2017, we organized two series of talks in Spain and in Brazil aimed at reaching people with an interest in animal activism. In 2018, we will carry out a similar initiative in the US and will also give a large number of talks in other countries in areas where we expect to have the greatest impact. We will also try to attend conferences where we can reach influential people and animal advocates, such as the Minding Animals Conference and effective altruism events.

6. SOCIAL NETWORKING

By the end of 2017, our Facebook page in English had over 175K followers, our page in Spanish over 165K, and our page in Portuguese over 95K, making a total of over 435K. Our aim for 2018 is for this figure to reach more than 500K, with our English and Spanish pages each reaching over 200K.

We've been publishing content usually once a day. In 2018, we may reduce the number of publications per week in order to improve their average quality.

We will also keep using Facebook ads to direct potentially interested people to the issues we think are most important to spread concern about. Once we have the new introductory page about wild animal suffering, we will run Facebook ads leading to it. We will also run ads leading to our microsites to (i) spread concern about speciesism, (ii) introduce the question of wild animal suffering in relation to speciesism and (iii) spread veganism in a way that connects it with concern about speciesism. We will be measuring our results in order to assess to what extent this is an effective way of spreading concern for these topics.

7. STREET ACTIVISM

This year we will start distributing Chinese materials in Europe and North America, but for the rest we will reduce to a minimum the efforts spent in street outreach.

Leafleting and tabling was an important part of our budget when we started to work a few years ago, for several reasons. First, it was then argued that this is a rather cost-effective intervention. Second, it is a way to ensure that a message focused on changing attitudes towards speciesism and addressing it together with animal exploitation and wild animal suffering gets through to the general public. Third, it is a way to raise concern among animal activists that wild animal suffering and speciesism should be an integral part of their focus, creating an antispeciesist culture within animal advocacy that includes concern for wild animal suffering. Fourth, it is an activity many people who would not be willing to do something else are willing to carry out, thus allowing us to make use of volunteers who otherwise wouldn't be involved in animal activism (some activists end up helping with other tasks too).

Due to all this, we produced printed materials that, while taking into account the knowledge gained by studies about how to increase the effectiveness of leaflets, stressed changes of attitudes towards speciesism more than changes of behavior (though our leaflets advocate clearly for veganism) and addressing wild animal suffering. We're the only animal organization we know of that has done this. These materials have been distributed in several different countries, including the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK, Finland, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and South Africa. Through time we've been able to optimize the resources spent in this activity. In this way, during 2017, we distributed around 280,000 leaflets all around the world.

However, in order to be more successful in our work aimed at promoting welfare biology we have decided not to invest any further significant resources in leafleting and tabling. No paid staff is currently working on these activities, although we will continue to support the work of volunteers who want to engage in this during the coming months using materials that have been printed already, and to participate in some special events with a high potential impact such as festivals.

An exception to this will be our work in Chinese given that we don't yet have a clear vision of what would be the best ways to work in China. Influencing Chinese nationals living in Western countries (especially university students) seems to be a good starting point. We will be researching in detail what may be the best courses of action to carry out research in China, and don't rule out options that they may have more impact than they do in Western countries.

8. PARTNERSHIP WITH SMALL ANIMAL ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Part of the street activism and events organization that we will carry out will be done in collaboration with small local organizations located in different places. We will engage in different partnership relationships with them, organizing activities together with them. In this way, we help these groups to carry out their work while we promote a form of activism concerned with speciesism and wild animal suffering.

FUNDRAISING, INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION WORK

1. FUNDRAISING

In 2018, we plan to increase our fundraising efforts in order to get financial support for our projects aimed at promoting work in welfare biology. In addition to reaching individuals who might want to support our work, we intend to get financial support from funds aimed at promoting high impact causes. Part of this work will also involve trying to create partnerships with other groups concerned about wild animal suffering to increase both our impact and our capacity to raise funds.

2. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Our investment in outreach work in previous years, especially in 2017, led us to grow significantly in terms of volunteers, and to hire four people (two of them part time). This also led us to invest time in 2017 working on our internal organization, designing working and coordination protocols. In 2018, we plan to continue this work to maximize our efficiency in using volunteer work in all fields. We aim to have a paid staff of 5-6 people with at least three of them working full time, who together with the Board will be in charge of the main tasks of the organization. Our paid staff will include at least (i) the director and two general coordinators, who will be in charge of making sure our activities are carried out and of recruiting and coordinating volunteer work in the English, Spanish, and Portuguese speaking world (in 2019 we will consider whether to hire a general coordinator in China), (ii) one person in charge of graphic design and social media, and (iii) one person or two (depending on our resources) focused on developing our effort to promote work about wild animal suffering in academia and on assessing attitudes towards wild animal suffering.

3. ADMINISTRATION WORK

Our administrative duties have to do mainly with our finances and legal requirements. They will be carried out by our board and the direction of the organization.