



ANIMAL ADVOCACY AFRICA

Landscape research report (Summary)



Introduction

Animal Advocacy Africa (AAA) is a capacity-building program which aims to develop a collaborative and effective animal advocacy movement in Africa. AAA was initiated by Credence Institute and further developed during the Charity Entrepreneurship incubator program in 2020. The project received funding for its initial 6 month research phase in December 2020 which concludes in June 2021. Our research phase involved engaging with organisations and individual animal advocates within animal advocacy in Africa to inform our pilot implementation of possible capacity-building interventions in Africa for which we are seeking funding and starting by July 2021.

As part of implementing possible interventions, we are starting an internship program as well as hiring a Program Manager. Details on these positions can be found on our [website](#).

The purpose of AAA's research is to:

- Connect with existing African animal welfare organisations and individual advocates
- Better understand what these organisations' are doing, i.e. their interventions and focus areas
- Identify obstacles they have encountered, and what they need as an organisation to become more effective.

Apart from being a decision-relevant report for AAA's strategic implementation plans, we hope that the results can be useful to:

- Funders who are interested in identifying funding opportunities in Africa
- Participating organisations, who may better understand which difficulties are common and which unusual, so that they can better coordinate with other organisations and understand where it would be helpful to seek or offer advice

Details of the study

We conducted exploratory research in the form of qualitative interviews with African animal advocacy organisations, individual advocates, experts and funders. We initially looked for those working on farmed animal advocacy in Africa, but later selected a diverse range of animal advocacy work. Simultaneously, our prioritisation research identified which group of animals looked most promising to help from our perspective.

We reached out to 107 individual advocates and animal organisations in Africa, out of which 55 responded that they would be interested in completing the survey. Ultimately, we surveyed 22 animal advocacy organisations (a list of organisations we've spoken to can be found [here](#)), 11 individual advocates, 5 of whom identified as effective altruists, 10 experts, 7 of whom are experts based in Africa and 8 international funders.

For the survey that we conducted, questions were designed to be open-ended to enable interviewees to describe their experiences freely and share their views. We conducted semi-structured interviews where we used predetermined questions centered on specific themes.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the organisations, we looked at how animal advocacy organisations measure the impact of their work on animals. Some of the common measurements of their success included the number of animals saved, number of days animals are free from suffering, and policy and behavioural changes. We attempted to understand the obstacles that are limiting the movement's progress, which include the lack of awareness or understanding of animal welfare amongst individuals and communities, other third world issues that are considered higher priorities than animal welfare, and the lack of optimal legislation and the enforcement by local governments. Organisationally, a lack of funding and a lack of talent/capacity are common bottlenecks mentioned by organisations. We hope that if these obstacles are overcome, organisations will be able to scale up existing programs and expand their reach.

Findings about the organisations

The kind of work that the organisations we surveyed are involved in were categorised either into public outreach to influence public opinion, such as educational programs aimed at fostering compassion and empathy for animals and behavioural change; direct help, namely veterinary services; political outreach involving working with government to implement better animal welfare bills; institutional outreach such as the work done by Open Wing Alliance-funded projects; and capacity building, which includes conducting research and coordinating alliances.

The type of animals that the organisations work with are predominantly farmed animals, working animals and companion animals. Some of the less focused on animals are wild animals, animals used for entertainment, and animals used for experiments.

In terms of collaboration between organisations and their awareness of one another, the purpose of collaborating with other organisations is either to share infrastructure that exists to make advocacy and outreach easier, to increase the visibility and efficiency of their work and to increase knowledge about advocacy work, receive training and mentorship.

We also looked at why organisations were working on more than one project or intervention which was because one intervention will usually not work without the other. For example, treating animals without first educating communities about animal welfare is unsustainable. Similarly, some organisations claim mass education alone without direct implementation is less impactful as communities are unable to see demonstrable changes in welfare. They also mentioned that it was because there were no other organisations within the region that were solving the issues, existing organisations feel morally obligated to address them. Often, many animal welfare issues are observed due to the low awareness of animal welfare within communities. Therefore, many issues are highly neglected and need to be solved urgently

General obstacles

Obstacles mentioned by organisations and advocates that seem to apply generally across the animal welfare movement in Africa that we noted through the surveys were categorised into the following:

- **Lack of awareness or understanding of animal welfare.** It was reported that many individuals are brought up with unfavourable or neutral attitudes and behaviours towards animals. This stems from a misunderstanding that animals are unable to experience positive or negative experiences. Due to religious and cultural norms and traditions, animals are commonly regarded as food, tools or commodities.
- **Other imminent issues affecting humans.** A common bottleneck in the advocacy movement in Africa is that animal welfare gets deprioritised amongst communities and governments when they struggle with other issues such as poverty, infectious diseases, and food insecurity. Animal welfare is perceived as a eurocentric concept - that only wealthy individuals in developed nations can afford to care about. Therefore, African advocates find that it is difficult to advocate for animal welfare alone.
- **Lack of law enforcement and legislation.** Animals do not have legal protection in some countries. In countries where there may be legislation, some are unfavourable or lack enforcement. Relatedly, an expert mentioned there is a lack of policy advocacy at the national level, some at the regional level but progress is usually slow.
- **Obstacles imposed by the government.** Working with the government is sometimes challenging. Generally, there is a lack of cooperation from the government across many countries. The legalities and bureaucracy involved in gaining governmental approval for programs hinder or stop the progress or public acknowledgment of organisations and advocates. Some communities look to the government for guidance so advocacy efforts may be ignored by the public when they are not acknowledged by the government. Corruption or political instability may also impair the public outreach and political programs implemented by organisations.
- **Burnout, threats or compassion fatigue** from advocacy work. An advocate mentioned it is sometimes taxing being an advocate as individuals are hostile and may behave aggressively. Alarmingly, a few organisations have reported receiving external threats about incarceration or assassination if their campaigning efforts were to continue.
- **COVID-19.** A few organisations mentioned the COVID-19 pandemic impeding their progress, creating missed opportunities to engage with communities directly and form meaningful relationships.
- **Siloed movement.** Funders, experts and organisations perceive that the movement is disconnected, where organisations and/or advocates are not working as collaboratively as possible, interests between advocates seem varied, and there seems to be a small number of people working on a variety of projects

Types of support needed

The following is a brief summary of the support that organisations mentioned they require in order to develop and work more effectively.

- **Funding** (to employ competent staff, arrange program logistics e.g. vehicles), particularly channeled towards isolated communities where animals are completely neglected
- **Alliances and interactive platforms** to network, build connections, and facilitate communication such as sharing knowledge and resources about the movement, interventions, challenges, mistakes, successes and to form collaborations between similar organisations, to present a more unified front as a movement and avoid duplicating efforts
- **Mentorship or training** in broad and specific knowledge about animal welfare, technical and soft skills in running an animal advocacy organisation (e.g. accounting, EA concepts, advocacy, behavioural change communication, social media management/outreach, fundraising, project and people management, strategic decision-making)

- **Local research.** Technical and social research into the African context to inform strategic decision-making, identify sustainable and effective interventions, influence policy, and identify where resources should be channeled.

Broadly, the experts we interviewed also agree with most capacity building interventions to improve animal advocacy in Africa such as local research, building the talent pool and building alliances with governments, corporations and media.

Conclusion

Overall, the effective animal advocacy landscape in Africa is in its nascent stages and is growing. The majority of organisations and advocates we interviewed engage in a wide range of interventions and tend to advocate for more than one group of animal populations. There appears to be significant challenges that are holding the movement back in general as well as specific challenges faced by organisations. Subsequently, we think there is room for more resources and support to be channeled towards the animal advocacy movement. Furthermore, organisations we have engaged with have expressed interest in receiving external support.

As noted in our disclaimer, we are uncertain about making substantive claims about which of these organisations' direct interventions that these organisations are implementing look most effective or promising in Africa, particularly as this will likely vary across regions and countries. Similarly, we are uncertain about the tractability of preventing, slowing, or stopping the growth of intensive animal agriculture practices and which strategies will be most promising in achieving that.

Nonetheless, as animal agriculture continues to grow in the continent (e.g. in countries with low but growing animal production rates), we think now is an important time to help existing organisations and advocates grow the movement as much as possible through movement building and capacity building interventions.

We hope that the information collected regarding the African animal advocacy landscape will be useful to those who are interested in finding out more about the African animal welfare movement. Particularly, we think the research about organisational interventions and effectiveness may be valuable as a starting point to funders who are looking for promising funding opportunities in Africa.

We encourage readers who are interested in providing feedback, comments, or questions to [reach out](#) to us.