

Movement Bottleneck Survey

**A look into the needs of social movement
organisations**

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Movement Bottleneck Survey: Analysis

Executive Summary

- Social Change Lab surveyed 16 individuals from 13 different social movement organisations, working on climate change or animal advocacy, in Europe and the United States.
- We asked them about their organisational details (budget size, number of FTE staff, etc), as well as what they believed to be their key limiting factors, and what support they need the most.
- This was an exploratory, and non-exhaustive, attempt to understand the needs of social movement organisations (SMOs). External actors, such as funders, should consider using some findings from this analysis to best support the impact of promising SMOs.
- Similarly, we find some common pain points for SMOs, for which they can take steps internally to correct, and reduce risks to the organisation.

Key findings include:

- Of the 13 organisations we surveyed, the median organisational budget was approximately \$250,000 USD.¹
- The mean number of paid volunteers or staff was 17 people, with the median being 10 people.
- The mean salary across all the organisations was roughly \$29,000, with the median being \$24,000.
- The top 3 reported limiting factors for SMOs to have greater impact were:
 - 1) A lack of qualified and capable unpaid activities and volunteers
 - 2) Lack of public awareness about the issues they were campaigning on
 - 3) Difficulties with internal culture and conflict.
- The roles that were reported to be the hardest to hire for fundraising, legal, and finance-related roles.
- The main reasons why SMOs believe that they find it hard to attract talented (paid) volunteers is due to unattractive work conditions, stemming from low pay, unhealthy work cultures and high-stress environments.²

¹ It's worth noting that we had one organisation that was a large outlier, which means our mean is often substantially higher than our median.

² Note: It's common amongst SMOs to pay people to work full-time as volunteers, whilst not being official employees, as it provides labour with minimal administrative burden.

- Funding is extremely consolidated in several big donors, and the number of philanthropists or foundations willing to fund social movement activities is extremely small.
 - To illustrate, on average, 67% of an organisation's total funding came from their single largest donor.
- 70% of organisations met their funding targets for 2021, but almost 75% of organisations think they could spend additional money even more cost-effectively than they currently do, due to being able to take on larger projects, particularly around mobilisation and comms.
- The mean size of funding gap was just over \$1 million, with the median result being \$110,000. Every organisation except one reported that they could productively use more money than they currently expect to receive, which is what one might expect for organisations in the charitable sector.
- With additional funds, SMOs would focus primarily on recruitment, in hiring more staff to help with their work, and communications and mobilisation, to recruit more activists for their campaigns.
- There is a clear need for movement trainings, particularly in campaign design and volunteer mobilisation, as well as operational support with fundraising, finance and other administrative tasks.
- You can also view this work in a [summarised presentation format](#).

Recommendations for funders

To diversify funding streams:

1. Creating a public list of which funders will fund SMO activities, or which particular activities - to aid SMOs to understand the funding landscape better
2. Encouraging new funders to join the social movement funding landscape. We recommend potential and existing funders read [this comprehensive report](#) on funding social movements by the [Ayni Institute](#).
3. Having open applications for funding (rather than not accepting unsolicited applications)
4. Testing new funding mechanisms (e.g. regranting and matched funding)

To build organisational capacity, funding the following:

5. A movement infrastructure organisation to provide:
 - a. Workshops and trainings, particularly in campaign design, strategy and volunteer mobilisation
 - b. Support with fundraising (e.g. assistance writing grants, running crowdfunding campaigns and a list of potential funders)

- c. Support with administrative tasks (e.g. fiscal hosting, finances, legal reporting, etc.)

Recommendations for social movement organisations

Some of these recommendations will require investment up-front, however, I believe they will more than pay dividends in the long-term.

- 1. Adopt processes early-on to mitigate potential internal conflict e.g. onboarding & offboarding, compensation, conflict, etc.**
 - a. Rather than reinventing the wheel, these processes should be shared openly, or amongst other SMOs, to promote best-practice policies more widely.
 - b. For example, see the [Sunrise Movement conflict resolution guide](#), and [their hub](#) where many other policies are listed.
- 2. Dedicate resources (time, money and effort) to find skilled fundraisers**, who can act as impact multipliers for the rest of the organisation.
 - a. Specifically, they could focus on crowdfunding and individual giving, to diversify away from relying on major donors.
 - b. One skilled fundraiser has the ability to raise funds to hire 5-10x other needed staff, hence providing a vital service to the organisation.
- 3. Adopt a streamlined volunteer integration system**
 - a. This will hopefully aid to increase volunteer retention, a common issue in SMOs. CRMs such as [NationBuilder](#) might assist in this.
- 4. UK organisations - consider offering higher levels of compensation.** There were five organisations paying less than £13,000, on average, for a full-time volunteer. This is around 70% of the UK minimum wage.
 - a. Even when taking into account the cost-of-living in the Bay Area vs London, the average UK SMO paid only 70% of the lowest US SMO, and 50% of the US SMO average (but this was inflated due to a large outlier in the US).
 - b. This will likely aid volunteer retention and reduce financially-induced burn-out, or other anxieties around personal finances, reported most by the UK SMOs.
 - c. For example, the US organisations (albeit only 3) reported less difficulty in finding qualified candidates for paid roles, relative to UK organisations, as well UK organisations specifically saying that they thought it was due to low reward or otherwise unattractive working conditions.
- 5. Move towards a more healthy working environment:** Whilst this is easier said than done, burnout is also one of the most common reasons for people to leave the movement.

- a. This could be implemented via leaders modelling healthy culture, scheduling organisational breaks and encouraging individuals to take time off.
- b. This is also something that might be aided by having additional resources to hire staff, or train up more volunteers such that the workload is spread across more people.
- c. As above, paying full-time volunteers/staff more will likely help with reducing burnout and increasing long-term retention.
- d. Providing longer-term stability (e.g. promise of pay for 3-6 months, rather than 1 month, which is common) will likely also improve stability and reduce burnout within organisations.

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Introduction

Based on a previous literature on [protest outcomes](#) and work examining the [cost-effectiveness of Extinction Rebellion UK](#), we believe that social movement organisations (SMOs) can have significant positive impacts. However, this is not sufficient to say that we should direct a larger amount of philanthropic spending towards these organisations. For this to be true, they should also have a high marginal impact, meaning that our additional donations lead to them having levels of cost-effectiveness above other interventions we are comparing them to. One indicator for high marginal impact is how funding constrained an organisation is, which roughly means do they have sufficient funding to pursue their core work programs. Another indicator might be understanding which activities they intend to carry out with additional funds, and understand how cost-effective this might be.

To estimate how funding constrained SMOs were, we designed and solicited a survey asking SMOs for their top limiting factors to more impact, amongst other things. The key research questions we asked in the survey were as below:

- What are the limiting factors hindering SMOs from being more successful?
- What is the funding situation for SMO?
 - Are there large funding gaps?
 - What would they do with additional funding?
 - Do they have diversified finding streams?
- What are the key knowledge and talent gaps within SMOs?
- What are the most useful services an external movement infrastructure organisation could provide?

A full list of all the survey questions can also be seen [here](#).

Why is this relevant?

We've spoken with a range of funders, philanthropists and foundations who have expressed varying degrees of interest in the activities of social movement organisations, as potential grant recipients. However, there are also several large unanswered questions, such as how useful marginal donations are to SMOs relative to other highly effective charities, and what those potential donations should be focused on. We hope this work will add clarity to philanthropic decision-making to the social movement space. Specifically, it might highlight to funders what the most pressing bottlenecks are, so they can support initiatives in that space, whether that's organisation incubation, workshops & trainings, or higher unrestricted funding for volunteer retention or recruitment.

Methodology

We contacted approximately 25 organisations asking them to complete the [attached survey](#). We focused on groups tackling climate change and animal agriculture, in Global North countries (i.e. Europe and North America), as we believe this is the most relevant context for our work.

We found these organisations mostly via [James'](#) personal networks so there will be some bias, particularly towards UK-based groups that use direct action or civil disobedience as tactics. Otherwise, we also used a list of relevant organisations shared by one of the groups who responded to our survey, and another umbrella group.

This is far from all the relevant SMOs working on these issues, so we encourage readers to not generalise to all other similar SMOs. However, we do believe we captured responses from some of the more active and well-known SMOs currently advocating for the issues we're interested in. For future surveys, we would like to reach a broader set of organisations, and have approximately 25-40 respondents.

Overall, we received 16 responses, from 13 unique organisations, as there were 3 organisations who had two people respond. The list of organisations that responded and were happy to be named are:

- [Direct Action Everywhere](#)
- [Animal Rebellion UK](#)
- [Just Stop Oil / Insulate Britain](#)
- [Animal Think Tank](#)
- [Pax Fauna](#)
- [Renovate Switzerland](#)
- [Animal Rebellion Germany](#)
- [Extinction Rebellion UK](#)
- [Sunrise Movement](#)
- [Youth Climate Swarm](#)
- [Wild Card](#)
- Two others who wanted to remain anonymous

Again, one can [see here the list of questions](#) we asked.

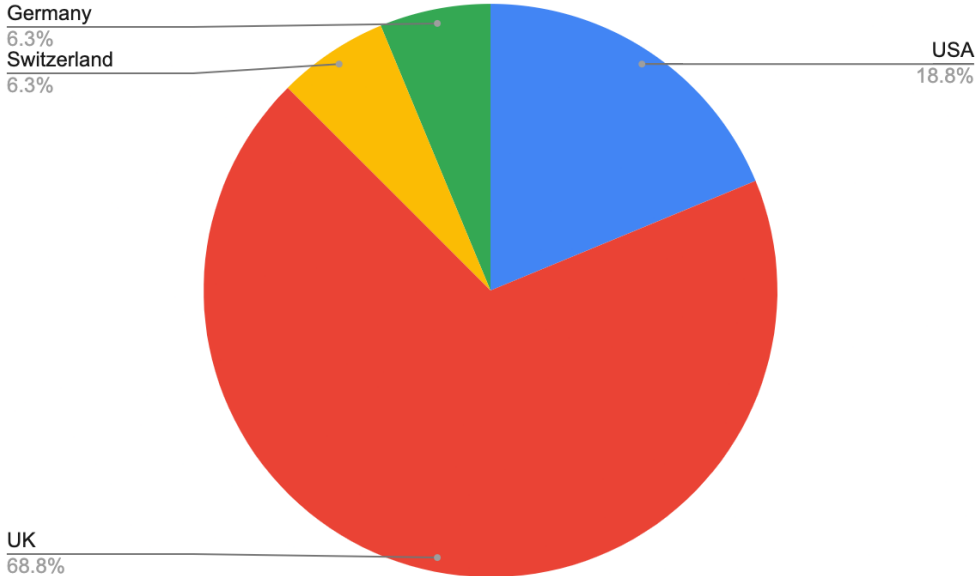
Full results

Organisational details

What is the primary issue you work on?

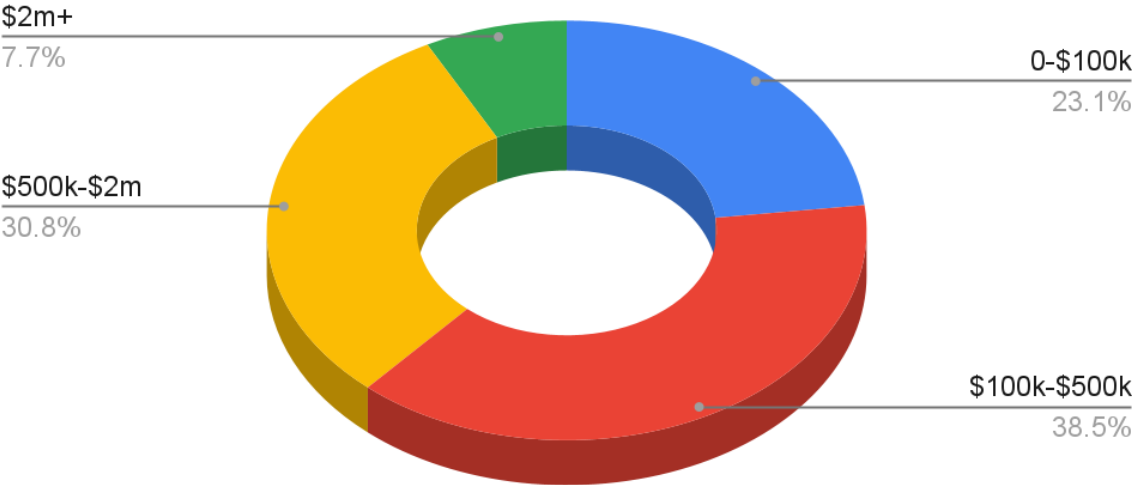
- 64% of organisations focused on environmental issues
- 36% of organisations focused on animal advocacy

Which country do you primarily operate in?



What is the yearly budget of your organisation, in USD? For 2022

Yearly budgets of organisations



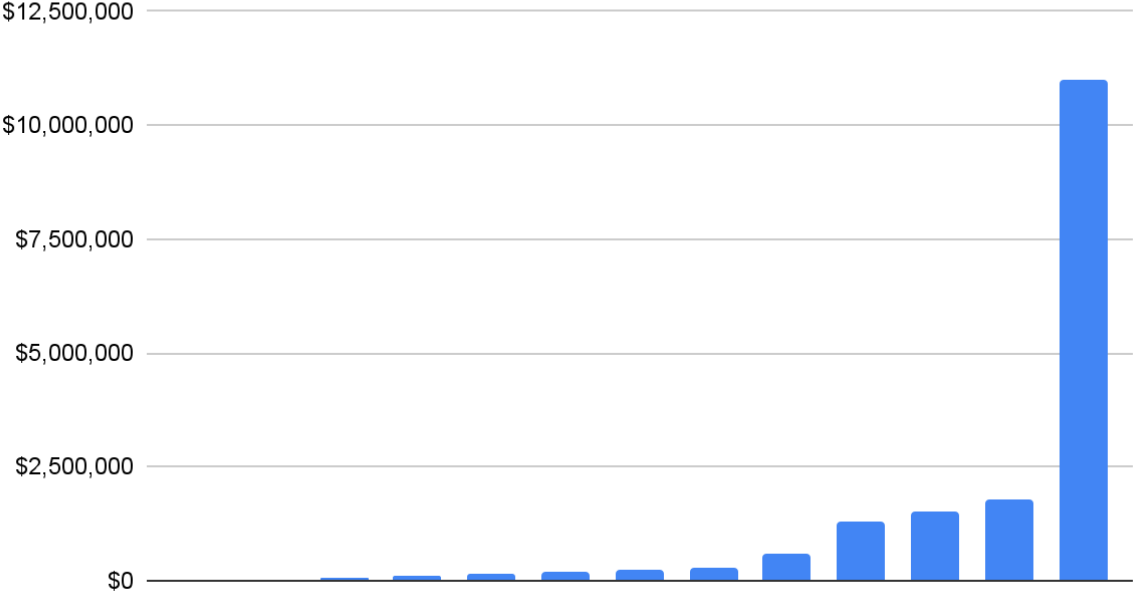
Size of organisations relative to total funding:

- Very small organisations (<\$100k) make up 23% of respondents but only 0.5% of total expenditure of the 13 organisations
- Small organisations (\$100k - \$500k) make 39% of respondents and 6% of total expenditure
- Medium size organisations (\$500k-\$2m) make up 31% of respondents and 30% of total expenditure
- Large organisations (over \$2m), of which there was one (7.7% of the total respondents), makes up 63.50% of total expenditure.

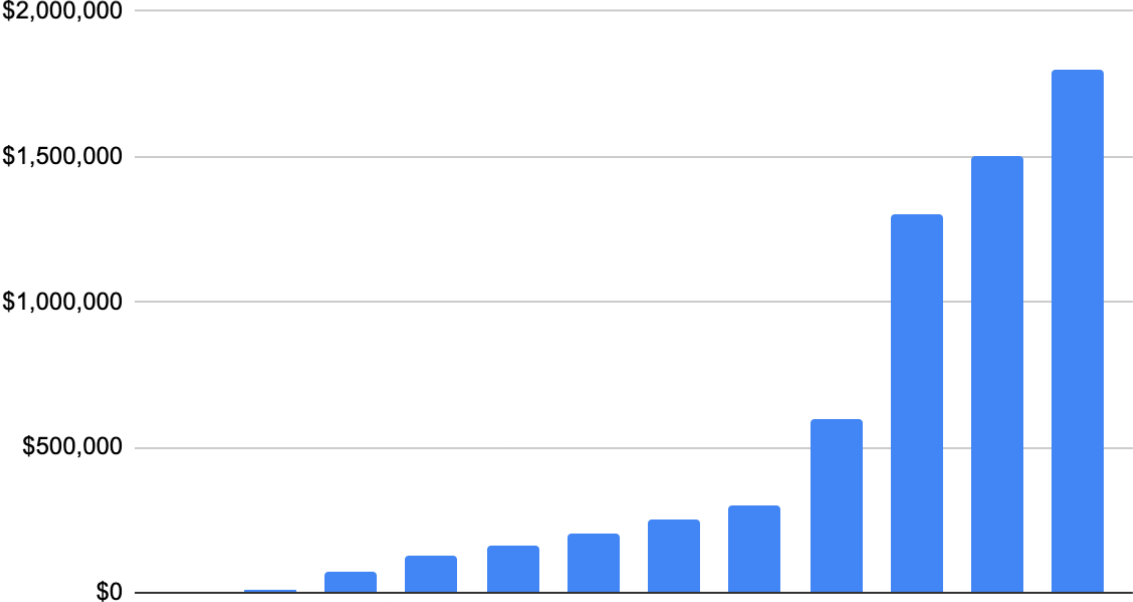
It's worth noting that we had one respondent with a budget of approximately \$11 million dollars, over 5x bigger than our next organisation, which might lead to this disparity in results. Despite this, we see that even well-known or somewhat successful SMOs operate with budgets far lower than traditional charities in the same sector.³

³ For some other analysis on SMO funding compared to traditional charity funding, this can be seen in [this article](#) James wrote for Stanford Social Innovation Review.

Annual Budget (USD)

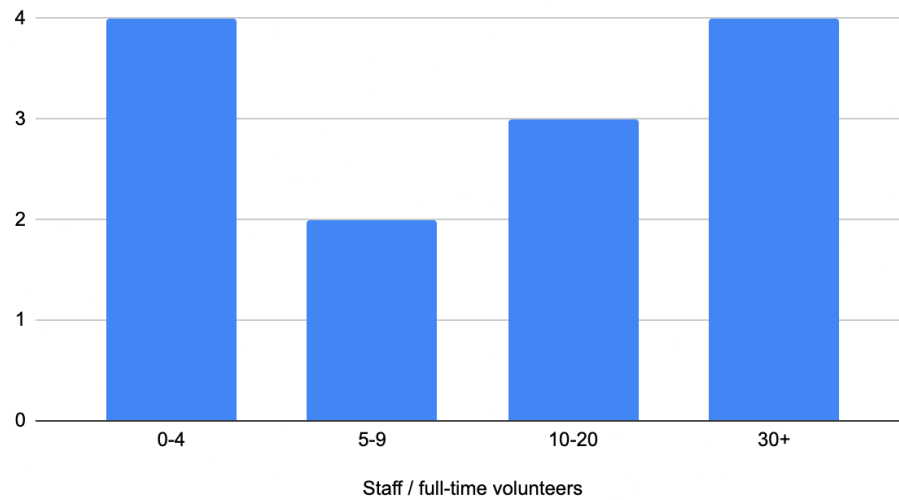


Annual Budget (USD) without outlier



How many full-time staff or paid team members do you currently have?

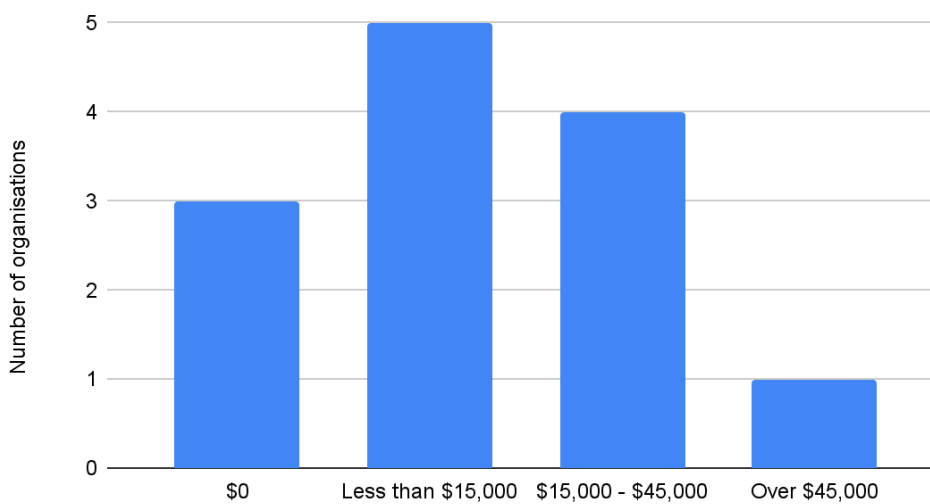
Number of staff / full-time volunteers



FTE Staff or volunteers	
Mean	20
Median	10

What is the rough average annual salary of staff / paid volunteers in your organisation, in USD?

Average annual salary for paid staff / volunteers (USD)

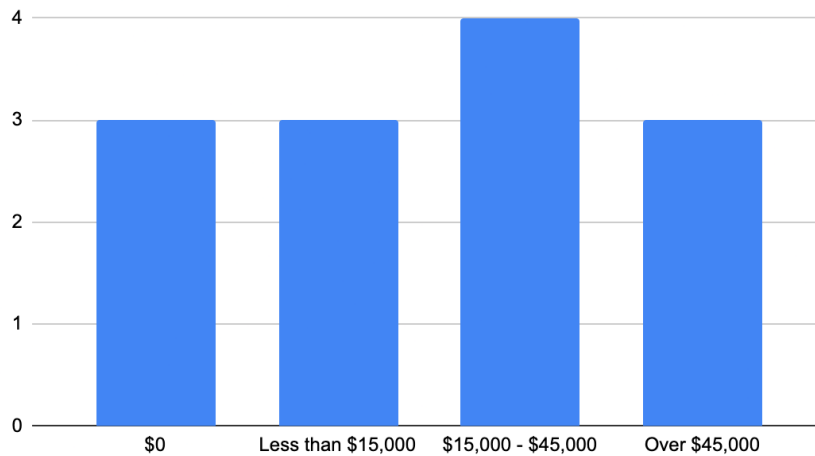


Average Annual Salary (USD)	
Mean	\$29,378.00
Median	\$24,300.00

Note: these averages are after I removed the bucket of “\$0”, as these organisations had no paid staff.

What is the highest salary in your organisation, in USD?

Highest salary in organisation (USD)



Highest Salary (USD)	
Mean	\$32,745
Median	\$18,079

Note: these averages are after I removed the bucket of “\$0”, as these organisations had no paid staff.

Limiting factors (text analysis)

Question: Elaborate on what you see as your top three limiting factors from the list above. What do they look like in practice and how much do they limit your success?

The numbers below represent the mean score on a Likert Scale, from 1-5, to what degree respondents perceive the factors to be the top three limiting factors to their organisation achieving their aims.

Lack of (qualified and capable) activists and volunteers (unpaid)	3.20	Lack of funding	2.56
Lack of public awareness of key issues e.g. factory farming	3.13	Difficulties coordinating internally	2.56

Difficulties with internal culture e.g. conflict and member satisfaction	2.88	Difficulties with internal strategic decision-making]	2.50
Lack of (qualified and capable) applicants/staff for paid roles	2.85	Lack of public awareness about the work of your organisation	2.13
Unfavourable laws e.g. restrictions on protest	2.60	Difficulties coordinating with external partners	2.07

Lack of unpaid volunteers / activists

Finding 1: The (perceived) importance and need to build a volunteer-based movement. Select quotes from interviewees:

1. Our main obstacle at the moment is finding enough committed volunteers to work on issues concerning [our organisation's] structures, strategy and actions. With enough motivated activists or even paid staff we would be able to connect and coordinate our existing network of active locals groups much more effectively.
2. Lack of volunteers is a big issue because we could just say that we're limited by funding and by having qualified staff, but I know that at the end of the day we need to scale massively and we need to be volunteer-based.

Finding 2: It's hard to retain volunteers long-term

1. There is a high turnover of people, and this leads to movement memory loss. Engaging volunteers for long periods of time [is a significant limiting factor].
2. Burnout and living in high stress for extended periods of time [is a significant limiting factor]. It leaves the organisation lacking energy at times and people not at full capacity.
3. Burn out due unhealthy work culture and hours
4. Who gets paid roles and how they are paid is a limiting factor. Not having it clearly set out how people get money, and not having pay scales to retain the best and most dedicated people is a challenge. **A major reason people move on from social movements is because they are completely broke, which is a shame as they are often the most experienced. Financial pressure is also a major but largely unspoken reason for activist "burnout".**

Finding 3: The difficulty in absorbing new volunteers

1. It's not so much that we lack volunteers, but that our integration of those volunteers doesn't work effectively enough. Our iterative recruitment campaign is evolving well and solving problems as they arise - but this work is not

supported by a functional integration process. We can get people through the door, but then they slip away again. In 2019 we had a simple process - sign up online, get a phone call, get a job. Somewhere along the line that got bureaucratized, to the point that now there is not a really clear route in for people ready to do the work.

2. The cost of living in the [X] which is where we are trying to build a hub, but it's very difficult for people to live here while having enough free time to volunteer.
3. People join but they don't follow through e.g. they sign up to volunteer, but most of these people don't take on volunteer roles.

Lack of public awareness

1. Lack of public awareness just means that it's much harder to mobilise people, get media attention without having to do extreme actions, and be taken seriously by politicians.
2. Of course a lack of public awareness is a main issue in that culture change is our primary objective.
3. It would be easier to create tangible wins and shorten the time needed to get to our milestones and goals if the public knew more. A lot of the work we need to do is raise that awareness.
4. Lack of public awareness about our work and the ties of animal agriculture to ecological breakdown are other problems for us that keep us from achieving more success and more cooperation with other climate/environment movements.

Difficulties with internal conflict and culture

1. **Without a doubt internal conflict has been and will likely continue to be the biggest threat to [our organisation].** I believe this is common in most social movements. Not being able to get disruptive/damaging people out, and then it becoming very hard to get things done has boiled up about 3 times in the 1 and a half years I've been at [our organisation] . This results in needing huge amounts of emotional labour from the key people to address it, resulting in nothing getting done and people feeling demotivated.
2. **Internal conflict cost us a lot of time and energy,** delayed recruitment significantly, and ultimately led to someone leaving.
3. People often say they are discontent. **People leave the organisation and there is a high turnover of volunteers** (paid and unpaid).
4. **Internal conflict and differing opinions have also played a big role in pushing people away from the movement.**

Additional answers to this question can be seen in the [Appendix](#).

Hard to hire for roles (text analysis)

Fundraising	3.81	Marketing or communications	3.14
Policy, lobbying or legal	3.50	Technical skills (e.g. web or software development)	3.00
Finance & budgeting	3.33	Volunteer management / mobilisation	3.00
Leadership or management	3.29	Campaign design and strategy	2.57
Governance	3.29	Research	2.50
Operations, administration or HR	3.14	Other (outline below)	2.50

A caveat is that I put “policy, lobbying and legal” together, but one comment from a respondent noted that:

- “Legal is lumped into policy and lobbying above, but for us it's a HUGE part of our work and goes way beyond that. We have over a dozen active criminal cases that require a massive amount of work.”

Due to this, I think most of the demand for “policy, lobbying and legal” is actually due to interest in getting people with legal experience.

Question: What are the main reasons why you might find it hard to attract the people you need most? (Optional)

Reason	Number of mentions
Unattractive work conditions	7
Volunteers lack time / we ask a lot from volunteers	4
Coordinators & staff don't have time to upskill volunteers	3
People don't want to do certain roles	3
Difficult hiring environment (expensive job websites, lots of other good roles)	2
Lack of clearly designated roles	1

Lack of skills in applicants	1
No information on good recruiting practices for SMOs	1

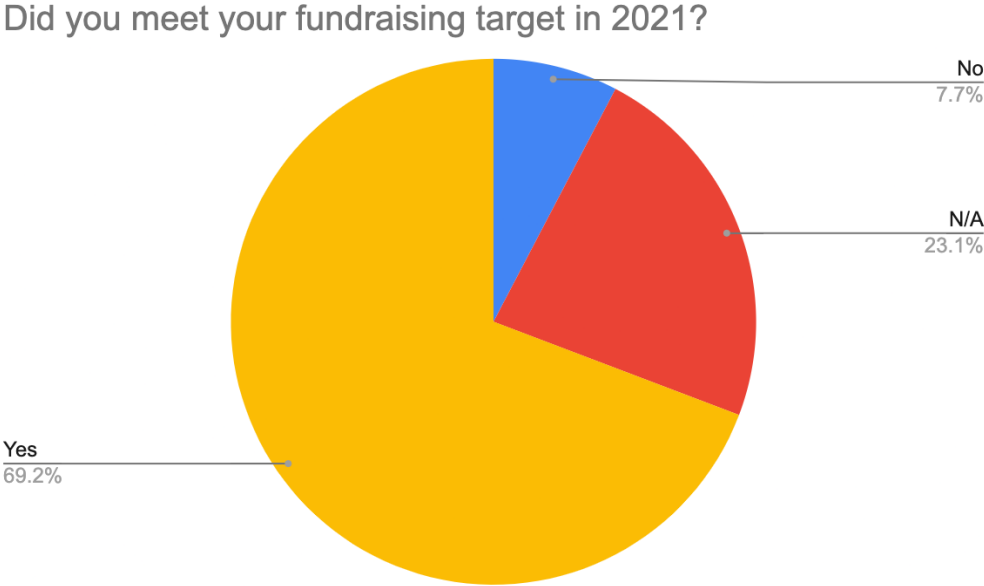
Answers that were coded as “Unattractive work conditions” were made up of the following reports:

1. Financial compensation level is low
2. Heavy work commitment - little reward
3. High responsibility
4. Unhealthy work culture
5. Location
6. Roles appear intimidating to young people
7. Needs-based salary system means it’s hard to attract candidates for certain advanced roles (e.g. finance or Director)

A full list of responses to this question can be seen in the [Appendix](#).

Fundraising

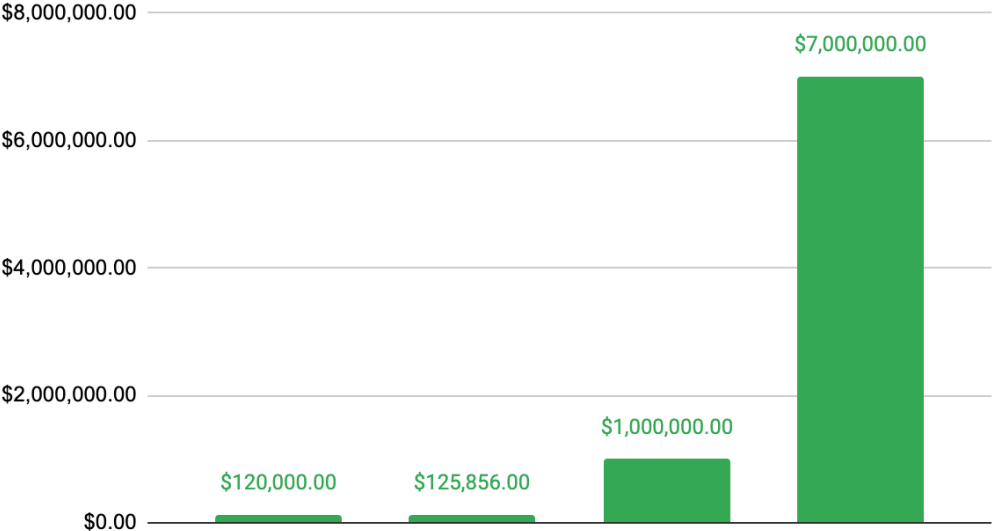
Did you meet your fundraising target in 2021?



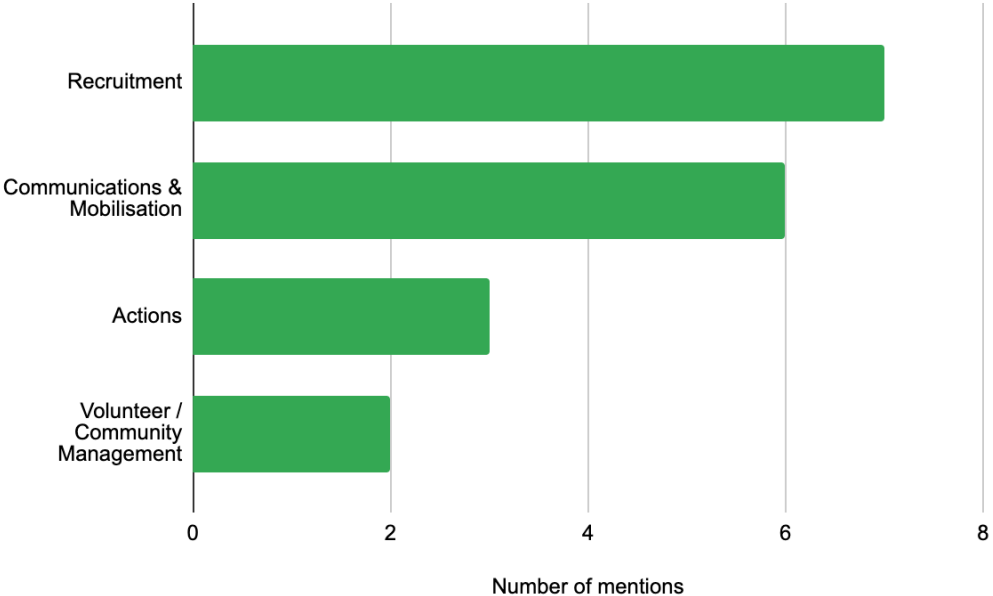
N/A in this context refers to the group not having a fundraising target for 2021, due to them being a new organisation.

What is your anticipated funding gap for 2022? (At the end of 2022, how much of your budget do you expect not to have filled?) - in USD

2022 funding gaps



What activities are you unable to engage in due to a lack of funding? How would these activities have supported your overall mission?



Comms and mobilisation

1. If we had more funding, we would likely take more risks and spend more on marketing, communications, brand stuff.
2. Large scale promotion and communication > would bring more people to our events,
3. Media & Advertising
4. Hiring more youth mobilisers
5. Mobilisation campaign. This campaign will help to raise awareness of the issue, change mainstream conversation and push for tangible wins.
6. Maintenance of important communication channels, more impressive and bigger action design, fundraising, mobilisation etc.
7. Building out training and mobilising programs in multiple states. we're trying to spread our resources while also trying to make sure our support isn't too watered down

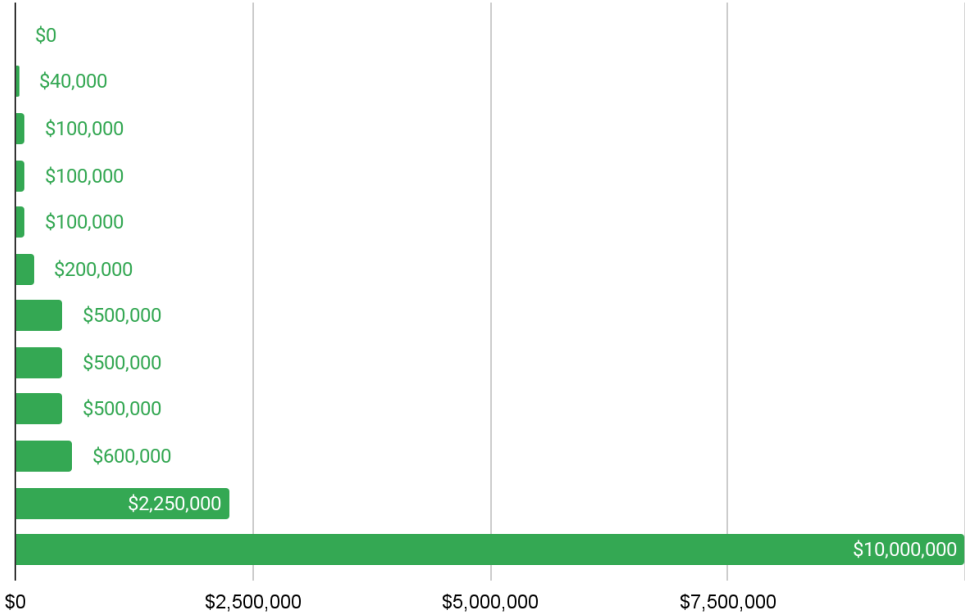
Recruitment

1. General speed of the campaign, and overall impact across the country with more localised campaigners
2. Paid full time staff
3. Higher pay: Increase very minimal pay of each activist to make the campaign more resilient.
4. More stipends for low income volunteers, expanding into different states, sending more resources out to hubs, adding staff capacity
5. Recruitment to additional roles in social movement building of local groups
6. More staff hours for major campaigns
7. Being able to bring in volunteers with guaranteed funding to mobilise thousands of people for a campaign
8. We are unable to fund someone who can work full-time on just developing others and building a scalable program.

Actions

1. We could pay legal costs of activists and therefore increase the support we can offer to campaigners which would boost numbers of people willing to take action.
2. Equipment and expenses for actions
3. Big creative direct actions

How much more money, above your expected budget, do you think your organisation could productively use?

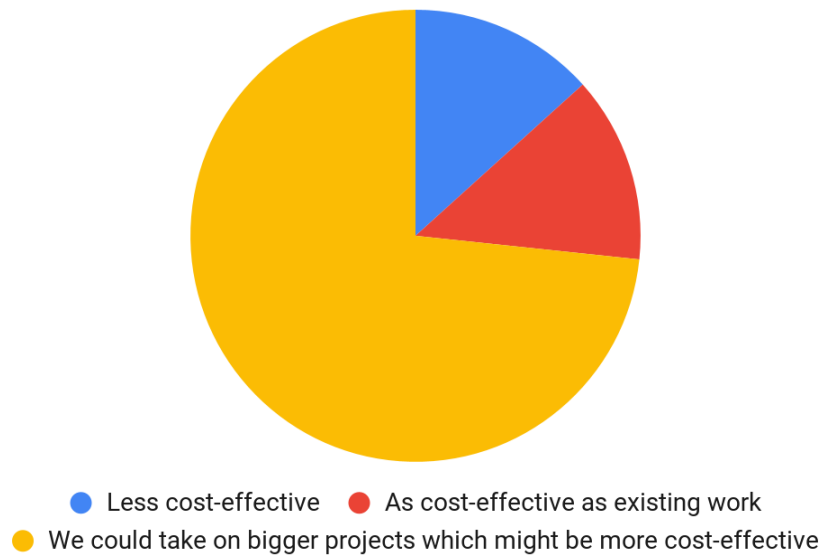


Mean	\$1,006,057.07
Median	\$125,856.00

Only one organisation who thought their expected budget covered all the money they could productively use - and they had a funding gap!

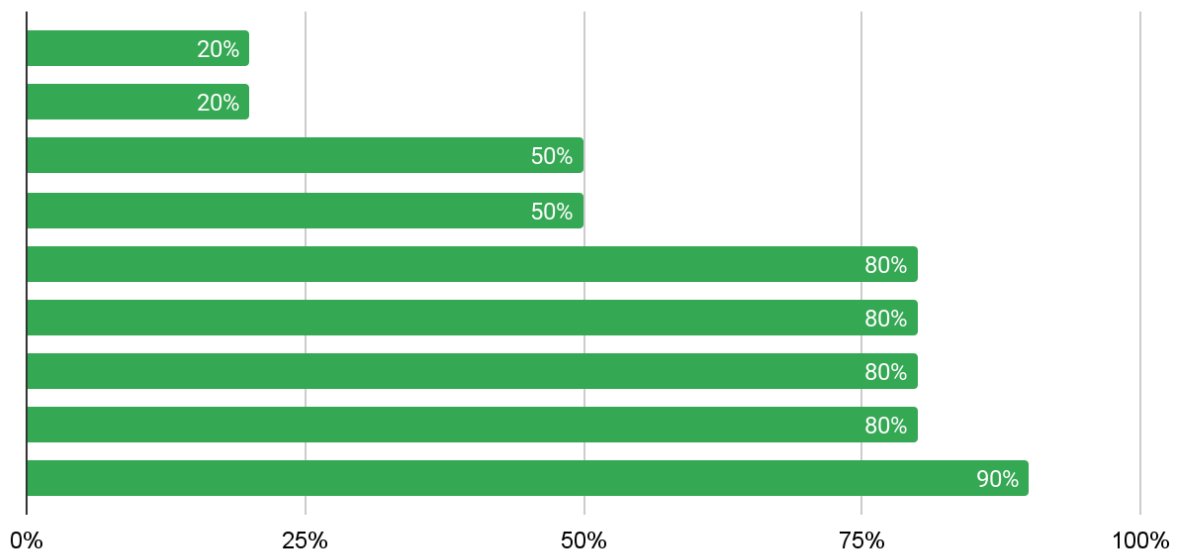
If you were offered a grant worth an additional 50% on top of your planned budget for this year, but it would only be available if you spent it on activities (e.g. you could not spend it on further fundraising or building your runway) how effectively do you think you'd be able to spend it? Choose the option that best matches your answer.

It is interesting to note that most leaders think their organisations would be more cost-effective per dollar with more money. Based on these responses, this seems largely down to being able to take on more high-risk high-reward projects, or develop certain weak areas (e.g. comms). However, take this with a pinch of salt as it's self reported!



How much of your total funding comes from your single biggest funder

How much of your total funding comes from your single biggest funder?



	Percentage of total funding from single largest donor
Mean	67.09%
Median	80.00%

Responses show that most organisations rely significantly on a single large donor, which is often the same individual across a range of organisations. This hints at worrying

dynamics for the stability and longevity in these organisations - due to their dependence on a single funding source.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Statement	Mean score
We have a diversified funding base	1.57
We would like to diversify our funding sources	4.43
Securing funding is a major drain on our top staff	3.00
Securing funding is a major challenge for us	3.27

Additional training

If your organisation could have all-expenses paid, high-quality training for all the staff members whose job descriptions refer primarily to tasks in one of the following categories, which type of training would you be most excited about?

Role	Votes	Role	Votes
Campaign design and strategy	3	Government, policy, lobbying, or legal	1
Volunteer engagement and mobilisation	3	Operations, administration, or HR	1
Middle or junior managers	2	Decolonising campaign work and developing an anti-racist approach	1
Fundraising or development	2	Other technical skills, e.g. web or software development	0
Leadership or senior managers	2	Marketing or communications	0
Research	1	Governance	0

- Clear need for campaigners, and those who can mobilise/engage volunteers
- Additionally management seems important, both at junior and senior levels

Which of the following specific interventions would you be most optimistic for [a social movement support organisation] to offer?

Intervention	Votes	Intervention	Votes
Workshops & trainings in one or more of the above topics for current staff or volunteers (see prior question)	7	Access to networks of other movement organisations	5
Fundraising Support	6	Fiscal hosting (i.e. sharing charitable status to open up doors to foundations that only give to charities)	4
Pro bono administrative services such as legal, HR, and accounting	6	Free consulting to help design your movement or campaign strategy / comms / recruitment system	4
Accessible research on which tactics, strategies and methods are the most effective	5	Mentorships between people with more experience and less experienced in social movements	3

- Based on this answer and the previous question, workshops & trainings in campaign design and volunteer mobilisation seem particularly high-value.
- In addition to this, support with fundraising and operational activities (e.g. legal status, finances, etc.) seem useful to support SMOs.

(Optional) Is there anything that might prevent your organisation from participating if another organisation provided these services?

1. Capacity for people to attend / prioritise it over existing workload
2. The politics and expectations of the organisation
3. Some organisations like Powerlabs, Moblabs understand the conditions of SMOs; most orgs, conferences, funders, etc offering services/access to 'leadership' etc don't understand SMO conditions so their input has no value. Many of the trainers are more junior and have less experience than the delegates.
4. I don't think so. Having this network of support would also make people in social movements feel that their work is being valued and that they are supported.

Conclusion

We think there are several notable bottlenecks amongst grassroots social movement organisations, namely a lack of qualified, capable and willing (unpaid) volunteers, low levels of public awareness on key issues, as well as difficulties with internal culture. Additionally, SMOs report that they find it hard to attract talented (paid) volunteers due to unattractive work conditions, stemming from low pay, unhealthy work cultures and high-stress environments. We present some key recommendations for both funders and social movement organisations, highlighting potential solutions to these bottlenecks to greater impact.

Recommendations for funders

To diversify funding streams:

1. Creating a public list of which funders will fund SMO activities, or which particular activities - to aid SMOs to understand the funding landscape better
2. Encouraging new funders to join the social movement funding landscape. We recommend potential and existing funders read [this comprehensive report](#) on funding social movements by the [Ayni Institute](#).
3. Having open applications for funding (rather than not accepting unsolicited applications)
4. Testing new funding mechanisms (e.g. regranting and matched funding)

To build organisational capacity, funding the following:

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 - a. Workshops and trainings, particularly in campaign design, strategy and volunteer mobilisation
 - b. Support with fundraising (e.g. assistance writing grants, running crowdfunding campaigns and a list of potential funders)
 - c. Support with administrative tasks (e.g. fiscal hosting, finances, legal reporting, etc.)

Recommendations for social movement organisations

Some of these recommendations will require investment up-front, however, I believe they will more than pay dividends in the long-term.

1. **Adopt processes early-on to mitigate potential internal conflict e.g. onboarding & offboarding, compensation, conflict, etc.**
2. **Dedicate resources (time, money and effort) to find skilled fundraisers**, who can act as impact multipliers for the rest of the organisation.

3. **Adopt a streamlined volunteer integration system**
4. **UK organisations - consider offering higher levels of compensation.** There were five organisations paying less than £13,000, on average, for a full-time volunteer. This is around 70% of the UK minimum wage.
5. **Move towards a more healthy working environment:** Whilst this is easier said than done, burnout is also one of the most common reasons for people to leave the movement.

Appendix

Additional answers from top limiting factors, outside of the top 5 factors

Talent / having qualified (paid) staff:

1. Talent - asking people to become full time social movement organisers is a big shift. We're assessed against 'job' criteria and salary, rather than the opportunity to join a cause. We're learning how to do this and this limited advice on this. We seem to do no worse though than NGOs in Animal Advocacy, talent is hard to find whatever.
2. Lacking qualified capable people with enough time to commit to the project and take on key roles. Lots of our systems are very manual which make them more accessible but which increases labour time per task.
3. If I knew there were loads of staff members who'd be really good at roles it would feel the sky was the limit in terms of reaching out for funding but that feels a major issue
4. We have a severe lack of people stepping up into coordination roles, possibly for several reasons; lack of funds, fear of burnout, fear of workload, fear of responsibility.
5. Too few volunteers who can join full time (4)

Government repression or legal risks:

1. New laws, restrictions on protest and fear of heavy sentences and fines in regard to protest are going to be the largest factors in restricting our movements effectiveness and possibly growth.
2. We are obviously limited by government's desire to restrict our activities.
3. Unfavourable laws - we're in discussion with the Royal Family to pressure them to rewild (as one of UK's biggest landowners) so we have to be careful to not do anything too risky for the moment, so as to not cut the line of communication
4. The messed up legal system in the USA

Lack of funding / culture of low-pay:

1. Who gets paid roles and how they are paid is a limiting factor. Not having it clearly set out how people get money, and not having pay scales to retain the best and most dedicated people is a challenge. A major reason people move on from social movements is because they are completely broke, which is a shame as they are often the most experienced. Financial pressure is also a major but largely unspoken about reason for activist "burnout".
2. Lack of funding (with more money we could grow quicker)
3. We sometimes fall between being too big for some funders and too small for the major ones
4. Lack of funding to invest in internal infrastructure which supports our external work to fight climate change (funders aren't as invested in giving general operating services funds as they are with contributing to fund protests or trainings)
5. Funding - we're a small unpaid team, so having to split time between other work and the campaign work. Within that there is the split between the actual campaigning and work on developing funding applications. We still manage successful press coverage but overall could be moving faster, with more impact.
6. Funding -

- a. Funders apply NGO criteria to assessing SMOs. Funders don't appreciate the complexity of managing 'volunteers' where one has no coercive power and you have to rely on influence and generating a structure that provides them with a voice.
- b. Most funders don't understand the Theory of Change, or how protest and especially polarising and backfire effect works.
- c. And most seem to apply more demanding standards on SMOs than NGOs, eg wanting to know they're backing the winning racer before the starter guns been fired. Measuring incremental campaign success of NGOs is very different to measuring social movement success which hinges on a long term binary objective.

Difficulties coordinating internally:

1. The top limiting factors all have their origins in not having a clear enough/effective enough governance structures. Losing the ability to coordinate the "big four" decisions (who's in, who's out, money decisions and what work we are focusing on/strategic decisions) has resulted in [the organisation] losing focus a couple of times.
2. Difficulties coordinating internally - relying heavily on zoom post covid has meant that team morale and connection is not as strong as it would need to be to create a reliable and cohesive community, which would increase confidence of activists and longevity of campaign.
3. Our main obstacle at the moment is finding enough committed volunteers to work on issues concerning [our organisation's] structures, strategy and actions. This in turn leads to difficulties with internal coordination as there's not enough staff for key roles. With enough motivated activists or even paid staff we would be able to connect and coordinate our existing network of active locals groups much more effectively.
4. Working out how to do 'staffing' is quite tricky at the moment - how do we not professionalise, but still support people.
5. Technology - having inadequate systems or knowledge of the systems for our needs - means we waste time and also don't reach some of our full potential

Difficulties with internal strategic decision making

1. Internal decision making around strategy is perhaps a matter of confidence- there's a lot that we can't know about how to move forward and some of it feels like guesswork.
2. [Repeat] Internal conflict is linked to the internal strategic decision making, as it again boils down to of "who gets to decide".
3. [Repeat] The top limiting factors all have their origins in not having a clear enough/effective enough governance structures. Losing the ability to coordinate the "big four" decisions (who's in, who's out, money decisions and what work we are focusing on/strategic decisions) has resulted in AR losing focus a couple of times.
4. We have a lack of wanting to follow processes when making decisions and clearly communicating where and when decisions are made. Decisions can be made informally by one or two individuals that have big impacts overall. Also sometimes a lack of priority on internal strategy.
5. Re strategic decision making: for the past few years this has mainly suffered for the same reasons stated above (lack of leadership, misuse of the SOS, mistrust of each other and internal conflicts). Now this is getting better, but we have another huge hurdle in the way - the changing external context. Our strategy hasn't changed since 2018, but the world has. We need to be able to respond to the PCSC Bill, the cost of living crisis, the unfolding climate emergency and everything else with a clear vision that will unite & inspire us. This takes time, and we are constantly chasing a 'rebellion' meaning this work has fallen by the wayside. The current shared wisdom is essentially that XR still holds the best shot at a 'mass movement'

and sits in a wider ecology with JSO, GNDR and the rest. But what that means tactically, what it means for disruption and mass arrest, is still not clear.

6. internal pushback on investing in operations work. fear of incorporating too much of the traditional non profit culture into a prog. grassroots org

Lack of ability of current leaders to develop and leaders volunteers effectively

1. I would say the third might be the lack of ability of current leaders to develop and train volunteers effectively.

Pains from growing quickly:

1. We have grown quickly and face natural growing pains - coordination, onboarding new people, setting up systems and processes, keeping up a flow of funds. We are obviously limited by the government's desire to restrict our activities.

Lack of knowledge within movements (4)

1. Robust knowledge, frameworks and guidance on Social Movement structures, decision making, policies both for local groups, and a national coordinating body
2. Robust knowledge, frameworks and guidance on Social Movement culture both for local groups, and a national coordinating body. Again relying on volunteers with no formal authority or coercive power means how we work together as an org and movement is fundamentally different.
3. lack of understanding of the strategy and tactics of civil resistance (4)
4. Setting up core functions has been a challenge for such an untraditional, risky campaign. But we've survived. We could certainly do with more help and advice in how best to constitute and manage our finance, governance, operations.

Infrastructure (4)

1. Infrastructure. Movements of the past have often relied upon church facilities, libraries, working mens clubs etc to gather, meet, socialise, facilitate supporting individuals with food, housing, etc
2. Lack of affordable space for people to stay overnight in London = 5

Leadership (3)

1. Leadership Development. It's generally young people who join SMOs and a lot of time/money resource needs to go into coaching and developing them

Movement strategy (4)

1. Strategy. Most orgs have a campaign, campaign objective and a campaign strategy, but don't have a longterm political strategy with Grand Objective, Strategic Milestones, and associated campaigns, and importantly 'how' they're going to achieve their objectives. This leaves us with a lot of work to do internally rather than piggy back on the movement.

Cancel Culture (4)

1. Cancel Culture. It's much easier to cancel people and orgs within the SMO space than NGO as there's limited or no repercussions to false/exaggerated accusations in the SMO space.

Why are certain roles hard to hire for

Volunteers lack time

1. The work we are doing is hard and complicated and takes a long time to understand sometimes. People in the Bay Area have to work so much to sustain themselves.
2. We need a large time commitment from each volunteer in a key role
3. need for people to give tons of free unpaid labour to get to the level they need to be for us to hire them
4. Lack of time for people to give to the campaign (full time roles)

Coordinators / staff don't have time to up skill volunteers

1. We don't have the bandwidth to train and support volunteers. And mostly we are looking for people who can really own and manage a project, which requires a lot of time and experience
2. People tend to join and are then completely unsupported. I think this is because people are usually too "in the trenches" to do the slower organisation work, or properly support new people.
3. Not the mentoring / knowledge available inside the organisation

Lack of clearly designated roles or clear campaign strategy

1. We don't have clearly designed roles and needs in [our organisation] so it's hard to recruit. At the times when we've lacked direction it is the hardest to recruit and retain people, as opposed when we have just done something inspiring or have a good campaign plan.

Age gap in volunteers / people don't want to do certain roles

1. We seem to have a gap of volunteers in the 30-40 year age group (would need to check?). I.e, people who are not students, not retired - therefore in fulltime work most probably. This means we miss out on certain 'professional' skills. People also want to do the sexy stuff? Campaigners don't typically spend much time thinking about governance and finance? The roles are less visible and require certain 'hard' skills that probably require the involvement of people who have done such things 'professionally' (and therefore, by temperament, may be engaged in other activities).
2. HR / Fundraising and some of the other roles can be boring, and we are volunteer led admin heavy roles aren't what people expect from volunteering with a direct action group.
3. Specific to young people - some roles are way more fun than others

Unattractive work conditions:

1. Compensation level
2. Location
3. Heavy work commitment - little reward
4. High responsibility
5. unhealthy work culture
6. Roles appear intimidating to young people
7. We have a needs based salary system that we are considering moving away from because its difficult to hire someone (esp in advanced finance or director roles) who would want to work for the amount of money we offer in our pay scale. we recently started offering a slightly higher pay for the cfo, upper director positions to see if that helps bring more people into the fold but most staff members are happy with having a scale in order to ensure no one is getting paid an unlivable wage

Solo items

1. Our current brand
2. Joining an SMO is not part of most people's mental model of life
3. No specific advice on recruiting to SMOs. We've used good quality NGO/corporate practice, but that's limited
4. Expensive jobs sites
5. Lots of saturation in the market
6. lack of skills / niche

What activities are you unable to engage in due to lack of funding?

Comms and mobilisation

1. If we had more funding, we would likely take more risks and spend more on marketing, communications, brand stuff.
2. Large scale promotion and communication > would bring more people to our events,
3. Hiring more youth mobilisers
4. Mobilisation campaign. This campaign will help to raise awareness of the issue, change mainstream conversation and push for tangible wins.
5. maintenance of important communication channels, more impressive and bigger action design, fundraising, mobilisation etc.
6. building out training and mobilising programs in multiple states. we're trying to spread our resources while also trying to make sure our support isn't too watered down

Volunteer / community management

1. And also we are unable to fund someone who can work full-time on just developing others and building a scalable program.
2. Hiring stronger support teams.

Hiring:

1. General speed of the campaign, and overall impact across the country with more localised campaigners
2. Paid full time staff
3. Movement recruitment
4. More staff hours for major campaigns
5. being able to bring in volunteers with guaranteed funding to mobilise thousands of people for a campaign
6. [Repeat] And also we are unable to fund someone who can work full-time on just developing others and building a scalable program.
7. [Repeat] Hiring more youth mobilisers

Actions

1. Large direct actions with tailor made infrastructure and Building a runway which makes us less vulnerable
2. paying all legal costs so that people can do civil disobedience independent of their financial situation
3. [Repeat] More impressive and bigger action design

Solo items

1. With more funding, we could do a higher quality research project and more research, but we're expecting to get what we're asking for.
2. international solidarity to the extent that we'd like to