

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL THAILAND

National Youth Strategy 2018-2021

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INTRODUCTION

Activism through Amnesty International Thailand (AI Thailand) usually takes place in an ad hoc manner. Generally, activism is carried out for the particular purpose of furthering a particular campaign. AI Thailand campaigns focus on specific issues and activism often becomes the method of achieving campaign goals. Activism, considered by AI Thailand to be the mobilisation of people, is a vital component of successful campaigns.

However, AI Thailand wishes to move away from the use of activism as solely an end tool for campaigns. When activism is carried out in this way alone, mobilised people can be like hanging fruits; just used when needed. Striving for growth and a sustainable future for the section, AI Thailand believes it is time to invest in individuals and allow them to take their own actions. People can carry out a personal form of activism, either individually or in a group, building their own projects instead of following instructions of others to support a campaign. AI Thailand hopes to organise spaces for people to think of their own interest topics and take relevant actions.

AI Thailand follows *Youth Power Action! International Youth Strategy 2017-2020* in its definition of “youth” as those under the age of 25. As a section, AI Thailand has a relatively strong youth voice. Nearly 90% of AI Thailand activists are youth. In addition to youth making up the majority of volunteers, there is a significant number of young workers in the Thailand office, a number of youth groups, an active youth representative on the Board and connections with various schools and universities. Nevertheless, AI Thailand aims to increase and develop youth activism further. The majority of young people are “Digital Natives” and their technological skills and experience combined with enthusiasm and creativity can be instrumental in carrying out AI Thailand’s goals. Furthermore, the presence of empowered youth is vital for the future of the organisation.

PROBLEMS

The growth and development of youth activism within AI Thailand is hindered by six key problems. These are listed and explained below:

- 1. Youth do not know about Amnesty International and Human Rights.**
 - The general lack of Human Rights knowledge and awareness of Amnesty International in Thailand as a nation is very evident in younger age groups. The majority of youth, like many other age groups in society have little exposure to human rights awareness and Amnesty International. They do not fully appreciate the human rights issues existing in Thailand or in other places around the world.
- 2. It is difficult to build Amnesty groups for young people.**
 - Students with heavy academic workloads and other commitments struggle to take on board further commitments, including those involved with Amnesty groups. Much coordination, time and many resources are required for youth or university groups to be set up successfully and sustainably.
- 3. Youth do not know about the opportunities that can be brought about from involvement with AI Thailand.**
 - In addition to the personal skills and experiences that can be gained from working with AI Thailand, youth can be offered multiple local, national and even international opportunities, but this is not known by most young people.
 - A further issue of language barriers arises in respect of international opportunities, as students can find it difficult to speak confidently in English around native speakers.
- 4. It is difficult to attract young people or keep them involved during the transition from university to working life.**
 - There is no obvious way to target youth who have left educational institutes and are beginning their working lives. Young people at this stage of their careers find it difficult to juggle their careers and personal lives, making it a difficult stage to introduce activism or keep them involved.
- 5. There is a lack of communication with and about young people.**
 - More effective channels to regularly communicate with young people through a two-way dialogue are required.
- 6. Barriers to AI's growth generally also affect the numbers of youth involved with the movement.**
 - Lack of awareness about human rights issues and little motivation to bring about change from Thai society influences young people.
 - Growth within AI as a whole would likely increase youth involvement, and demonstrates future pathways for young activists.

GOALS

AI Thailand has set one overarching goal for youth activism for the period 2018-2021. This goal can be broken down into two sub-goals, as written below.

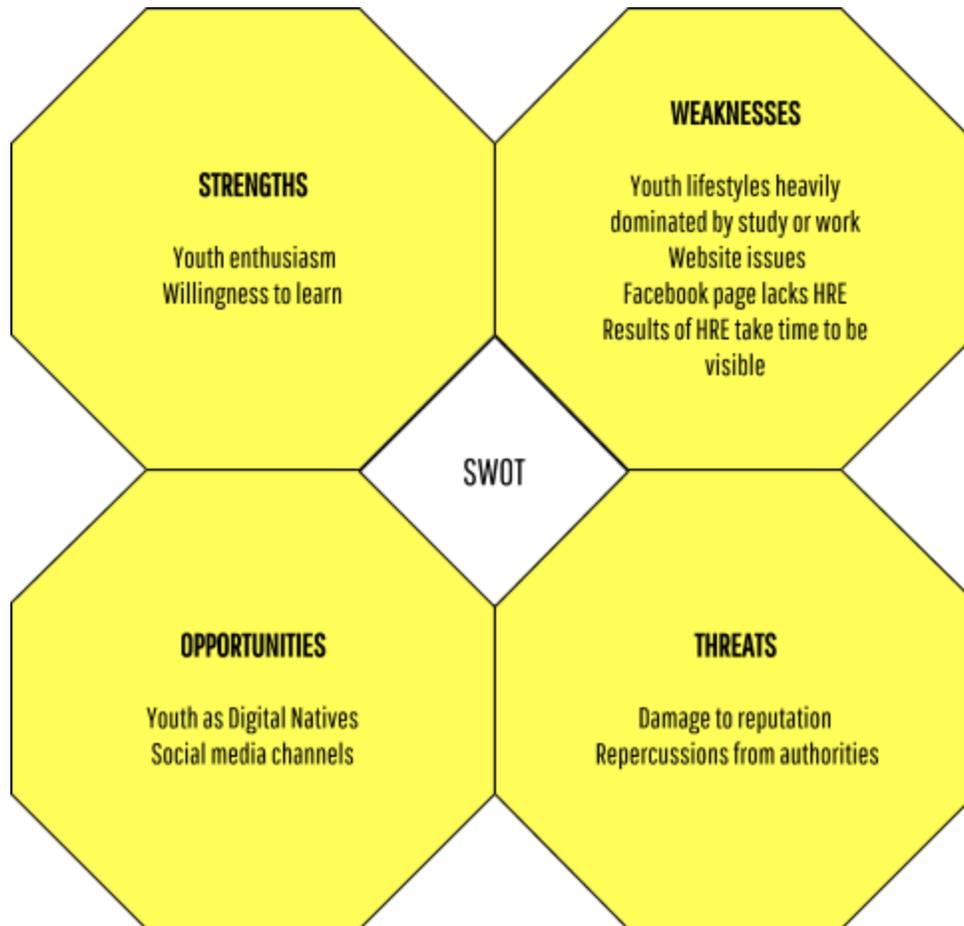
Youth Activism Goal 2018-2021

By 2021, we want youth in Thailand to increase their human rights knowledge by increasing youth oriented communication for Goal 5 (Growth). This requires:

- I. Prioritising human rights education to be the centre of activism and youth work in order to raise human rights knowledge.
- II. Increasing effective communication channels for young people to engage with Amnesty.

SWOT DIAGRAM

In order to carry out these goals, an understanding of the broader context of Thailand as well as Thai young people is required. A brief analysis can be seen in the SWOT diagram below:



The strengths of pursuing an increase in youth activism through increase human rights education (HRE) and youth-focused communication are that there is already much youth enthusiasm for the movement and experience suggests youth previously unaware about AI's goals, can become inspired fairly quickly. There also appears to be an open-mindedness and a willingness to learn and adapt within the younger generations which is beneficial for AI Thailand in this area.

Despite these positives, there are difficulties. Youth lifestyles are heavily dominated by study and in the cases of those entering the workforce, their careers. This makes it difficult to attract young people as they likely do not feel they have the time to commit fully to activism. There are also issues concerning AI Thailand's website, which is not working as effectively as intended. Adjustments are required to make it more simple and the relevant information

more accessible for those interested. It is also problematic that AI Thailand's Facebook page is largely focused on news and campaigns and lacks sufficient human rights education resources. This means Facebook is not utilised as a mechanism for human rights education. Furthermore, human rights education even when carried out does not result in immediate changes. Carrying out human rights education is like growing a plant; it takes time. This means there may be some delay in the increase in human rights education and clear, observable changes in youth awareness and consequently activism.

Although there are difficulties, the current situation in Thailand does offer significant opportunities for raising youth awareness and increasing youth activism. This is particularly the case when it comes to technology and online communications. "Digital Natives" is a term used to classify those with at least 5 years in online and internet experience. The majority of young people fit this mould, and their skills and experience can be valuable contributions to the movement. AI Thailand already makes the use of social media channels, and Instagram in particular is employed to attract young people. Informative in a friendly and open way, AI Thailand's Instagram profile effectively releases updates on news and events in Thailand and around the world. This space is easily accessible to the youth and provides a good starting point for attracting and communicating with a younger audience.

As with any action, there are risks involved with AI Thailand's intended plans. Firstly, failure to effectively communicate messages and ideas may cause damage to AI Thailand's reputation. There are various potentially injurious images that could be portrayed, for example that AI Thailand is less professional, opposes the government, causes trouble and the like. Leading on from this is the threat from authorities. In the light of the current political situation in Thailand, any attempts to publicise activism must be done so carefully to avoid negative repercussions.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

The success of AI Thailand's overall goal to increase the human rights knowledge of young people by increasing youth oriented communication can be illustrated if success indicators are met. These may be, but are not limited to those listed below. The indicators have been separated into the subgoals of the overall goal. The years concerned are 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Subgoal One:

Prioritise human rights education to be the centre of activism and youth work in order to raise human rights knowledge.

- Success indicators:
 - An increase in school visits at international schools and Thai schools by 10% each year
 - An increase in the number of visits to universities and other educational institutions by 10% each year
 - An increase in the number of HRE resources produced for physical access, to be given out at school and university visits (e.g. merging campaigns to HRE, training)
 - Development of HRE resources for online access (e.g. on Website and shared to Facebook and Instagram)
 - Develop different channel of participation for youth (e.g. competition)
 - Future school competitions to be run, with an increase in the number of participants from the previous year
 - Encouragement and guidance of young persons for peer teaching (TOT), to be developed and increased each year
 - An increase in youth participation and decision making within clubs and Amnesty structure

Subgoal Two:

Increase effective communication channels for young people to engage with Amnesty.

- Success indicators:
 - Discussions and collaboration with youth to find effective channels for communication
 - An increase in Instagram following by 20% each year
 - An increase in Facebook likes and followers (of youth) by 20% each year
 - An increase in youth-oriented posts on Instagram and Facebook by 20% each year
 - Increased communication with youth groups at schools and universities
 - Development of mechanisms for youth groups to interact
 - The holding of meetings between AI workers and youth groups for guidance, support and two-way feedback, the number of which to be increased each year