

A conversation with Jaya Bhumitra and Sharon Nuñez Gough, February 9, 2017

Participants

- Jaya Bhumitra – International Director of Corporate Outreach, Animal Equality
- Sharon Nuñez Gough – Executive Director, Animal Equality
- Lewis Bollard – Program Officer, Farm Animal Welfare, Open Philanthropy Project
- Nicole Ross – Research Analyst, Open Philanthropy Project

Note: These notes were compiled by the Open Philanthropy Project and give an overview of the major points made by Jaya Bhumitra and Sharon Nuñez Gough.

Summary

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Ms. Bhumitra and Ms. Nuñez Gough of Animal Equality to get an update on its 2016 grant. Conversation topics included Animal Equality's work on corporate cage-free campaigns, its budget, and its goals for the future.

Establishing the corporate outreach department

Hiring

Ms. Bhumitra joined Animal Equality in September 2016 as the International Director of its recently-created Corporate Outreach Department. From the end of September through the middle of November, Ms. Bhumitra worked on staffing corporate outreach teams in Mexico, Brazil, Spain, Italy, and India. Some members of the Mexico team were hired in October; most of the members of the other country teams were hired in November.

Training

Animal Equality was able to hire talented and hard-working people. Some new staff members had not previously done corporate outreach and campaign work, but they had the necessary skills. All department staff attended a week-long training which included a crash course in corporate outreach and campaigning. By the end of November, everyone hired for a corporate outreach team had been onboarded and trained.

Departmental structure

Most of the country teams have a corporate outreach manager and a campaign coordinator, who work closely together. The corporate outreach manager researches, vets, and communicates with companies. The campaign coordinator

develops campaign strategies and tactics based on the interactions that the corporate outreach manager has with companies.

Ms. Bhumitra manages the five corporate outreach teams, and participates in all strategy development.

Animal Equality has an Executive Director for each country it works in. The Executive Director is not part of the Corporate Outreach Department, but does review the department's materials and strategies. The Executive Directors have been involved in the corporate outreach process to different degrees in different countries; these differences are reflected in a process document which has been customized for each country.

Language

Language barriers have been a challenge in onboarding and collaboration. The campaign coordinators in Spain and Mexico predominantly speak Spanish, and are in the process of learning English. In the meantime it is helpful that the corporate outreach managers in both countries are fluent in English. It has also been helpful to follow up on spoken conversations in writing.

Building campaign infrastructure

In the past few months Animal Equality has developed templates for campaign materials, which will help ensure quality, consistency, and efficiency in future campaigns. Templates were created in English and are now being translated and adapted for each country.

Outreach to companies

Animal Equality identifies the top restaurant chains, food service companies, consumer packaged goods companies, and retailers in each country. In December and January, it contacted approximately 370 companies in total: approximately 50 in Mexico, 70 in India, 100 in Spain, 60 in Italy, and 90 in Brazil. It has identified additional companies to contact in the near future.

Many conversation with companies have been promising.

Policy successes

International Meal Company, a large Brazilian company that operates fast food restaurants, committed to a cage-free policy in Brazil. Two other companies in Brazil, one company in Mexico, and a few companies in Italy will probably commit to cage-free policies soon.

Organización Soriana campaign

Animal Equality launched its first corporate campaign in October. The campaign targets Organización Soriana, the largest national retailer in Mexico.

Investigations

Animal Equality's investigative work is not funded through its corporate outreach budget. In Mexico, Animal Equality released investigation results in October. It is considering additional investigations.

Country climates

Animal Equality has found dialogue effective in Brazil and in Italy. In Mexico, dialogue has been challenging; campaigning may be more effective. In India, Animal Equality plans to focus on positive campaigns.

Future plans

In the coming months Animal Equality will continue to move companies towards adopting 100% cage-free egg policies. Animal Equality hopes to secure one major policy approximately every two months (two months is a typical campaign length) and one smaller policy approximately every month.

In each of Brazil, Spain, Italy, and India, the country team has identified several possible campaign targets, and hopes to launch a campaign by early March.

Budget and spending

From October to early February, Animal Equality spent approximately \$70,000 of the Open Philanthropy Project's grant. Wages have been the largest expense. Some funds have gone towards equipment, and some towards training, including a week-long group training in Los Angeles, an upcoming training in Warsaw, and training with a campaigner from Amnesty International.

Animal Equality will soon be launching more campaigns. Campaigns are not necessarily expensive to run, because they can be conducted mostly online. However, in Mexico many people are not online, and so Animal Equality may hold protests and buy billboard advertising, which would be more expensive than an online campaign.

Animal Equality expects that by the end of July it will have used almost all of the \$250,000 budget.

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