



GUIDELINES FOR SHARED LEADERSHIP

Adopted by the Board of Directors
April 9, 2010

I. Vision for Shared Leadership

A pillar of AIUSA's success in advancing human rights around the world is the effective partnership between volunteer leaders and staff. Through shared leadership, AIUSA can better tap the talent of all and inspire all to work hard. One way to improve the process of shared leadership is to have clear expectations, and the following Guidelines for Shared Leadership are intended to provide them. These Guidelines are aspirational goals. Even with the best intentions and efforts, AIUSA will never achieve perfect processes and outcomes. But even with imperfect implementation, these Guidelines will move the organization closer to those ideals and ultimately serve those on whose behalf AIUSA advocates.

II. General Principles

A. Definition of Shared Leadership: Shared leadership is the process by which AIUSA volunteer leaders and staff together guide AIUSA. The central concept is communication and collaboration in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. The following principles are fundamental:

1. Volunteer leaders and staff are in AIUSA together and work best for the cause of human rights when we empower each other and consult in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.
2. Volunteer leaders and staff recognize that decisions within AIUSA are made in three ways: those that staff should make alone, those that volunteer leaders should make alone, and those that staff and volunteer leaders should make jointly.
3. Volunteer leaders and staff consult on the process for decision-making and on the division of labor.

B. Values: The core values that make shared leadership work are:

1. Empowerment: AIUSA encourages everyone to develop and use their full talents in working for Amnesty International's mission.
2. Integrity: Staff and volunteer leaders should be honest with each other and keep agreements or acknowledge the failure to do so.
3. Openness: Staff and volunteer leaders should be open with each other and communicate clearly.
4. Respect: Staff and volunteer leaders should operate in an atmosphere of mutual respect and show courtesy to each other.
5. Knowledge: Staff and volunteer leaders should strive to understand Amnesty International's organizational policies, structures, and processes.

C. Coverage: These guidelines apply to relationships between and among volunteer leaders and staff, and are meant to work in conjunction with the Guidelines for Steering Committees, the Guidelines for Task Forces, the Guidelines for Appointment and Removal of Volunteer Leaders, and the conflict resolution guidelines and the process for working with the Ombudsperson. Together these documents form a framework guiding relationships among staff and volunteer leaders throughout AIUSA.



D. Accountability: All staff are accountable to the Executive Director. All volunteers are accountable to the Board of Directors.

III. Decision-Making

A. Presumption of Shared Leadership: Unless otherwise mandated (by the AI statute or policy, AIUSA Bylaws, New York State law, other guidelines, AGM or Board decisions, or addressed below), AIUSA seeks to make appropriate decisions through shared leadership and consultation between staff and volunteer leaders.

B. Areas Reserved to Staff Decision-Making: The AIUSA staff shall have the final decision-making authority over decisions that the AI statute or policy, AIUSA Bylaws, New York State law, these or other guidelines, or AGM or Board decisions reserve to staff and for expenditure of AIUSA resources, Human Resource decisions, and AIUSA public statements. The staff shall consult with volunteer leaders as much as practicable.

1. The staff shall consult with volunteer leaders, RPGs, steering committees, and task forces on the proposed budget for each program and leadership group and on the expenditure of funds pursuant to the approved budget (in accordance with 1998 AGM Decision 7 and 1997 AGM Decision C-2).
2. There shall be significant membership input in hiring decisions for all positions at the director level or higher with significant program responsibilities, including (a) soliciting input from the relevant volunteer group (e.g. Steering Committees and Regional Planning Groups, country specialists and networks) and leaders about the needs of the program, criteria for evaluating applicants, and possibly particular candidates, and (b) participation in interviews by at least one volunteer leader to be chosen from among leaders suggested by the relevant volunteer groups and leaders (in accordance with 2004 AGM Decision M-1).
3. The staff shall issue all press releases in the name of AIUSA, in conformance with the "Guidelines for National Media Work Governing Staff, Board Members, Country Specialists and Other Volunteers" (Media Guidelines), and approve all statements that volunteer leaders make in the name of AIUSA.

C. Areas Reserved to Volunteer Leadership Decision-Making:

Subject to the overall supervision of the Board, appropriate volunteer leaders shall lead the membership through AIUSA's resolutions process. During working parties and general voting plenaries at the regional conferences and the AGM, staff's role is to provide background and other clarifying information and the financial and programmatic implications of proposed resolutions. Additionally, staff who are AIUSA members in good standing may vote on resolutions.

IV. Communications

A. Responsiveness:

1. Volunteer leaders and staff should acknowledge communications (whether phone, email, or correspondence) promptly, wherever practicable within 72 hours.
2. If a staff person or volunteer leader will be unavailable, he or she should inform key contacts who rely on his/her availability to carry out AI work (e.g., by posting an "away" message on email and voicemail).



3. All requests for input should give a specific time frame for when the requester needs the input, and that time frame should be reasonable in light of the complexity and urgency of the matter. In general, for requests for input on major policy issues or papers, the process should allow for at least two to three weeks for comment.

B. Confidentiality:

1. Volunteer leaders and staff should respect requests for confidentiality.
2. Even without a request for confidentiality, volunteer leaders and staff should use discretion in forwarding communications (particularly emails) without permission.

V. Conflict Resolution:

Shared leadership may result in disagreement. The key is to disagree in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

A. Early and Direct Resolution: AIUSA seeks to address conflicts as they arise and encourages all to express their dissatisfactions early, directly with the person(s) involved, and in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Staff may need to consult with their supervisors about conflict with volunteer leaders. On the other hand, complaining to third parties about a staff member or volunteer leader may exacerbate rather than resolve conflict.

B. Third Party Conflict Resolution: Where the parties cannot resolve conflict directly, it may be helpful to involve a third-party (such as another AIUSA staffer or volunteer leader, the Human Resources Department, or the ombudsperson) to help resolve a conflict. The parties should act in accordance with AIUSA's conflict resolution, grievance, and other appropriate policies.

VI. Implementation:

A. Dissemination: Initial training/orientation of volunteer leaders and staff will include receipt of these Guidelines, a brief discussion of their importance and any tips for implementation, and the opportunity to ask questions about shared leadership.

B. Job/Role Descriptions and Performance: All staff job descriptions and volunteer leader role descriptions will state the importance of shared leadership and incorporate these Guidelines by reference. Staff annual reviews will consider performance working with volunteer leaders and activists. Staff should give feedback to volunteer leaders on their work with staff and other volunteer leaders.

C. Flexibility: These Guidelines are intended to be flexible and staff and volunteer leaders should apply them to facilitate their working relationship. Staff and volunteer leaders should discuss their work and communication styles when they commence working together and at least annually thereafter.