

Impactful Animal Advocacy: 2023 Year in Review

Thanks to our community members for providing their input and sharing their experiences with us. All published quotes are shared with their permission.

Thanks to Cameron King, Nicoll Peracha, and Vaidehi Argawalla for providing feedback on our write up. All errors are our own.

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Summary

This post is a review of Impactful Animal Advocacy's work in 2023 and our plans for 2024, outlining everything we did last year to connect and empower animal advocates, as well as reporting any outcomes we know of.

Why do we exist?

Started in 2023, Impactful Animal Advocacy has quickly grown to become one of the largest communities of highly engaged farmed animal advocates (that we know of). We work towards building a more coordinated and collaborative farmed animal advocacy movement through creating online spaces for advocates, enhancing knowledge sharing, and facilitating strategic connections for the movement.

What did we work on in 2023?

- We created the [Impactful Animal Advocacy Slack](#), which turned into our core program and within a year grew to 1,769 members in 2023, bringing professional animal advocates from around 80 different organizations as well as independent activists and students into one place.
- We sent out a [monthly newsletter](#) filled with the latest updates, open positions, funding opportunities and upcoming events in the movement, and grew our subscriber base from around 372 to over 1,261 people, with on average 60% of people opening the newsletter and 25% clicking on at least one link.
- We created a [knowledge hub](#) with resources for animal advocates, including a wiki about fundraising, a database of animal conferences, and an AI prompt library, receiving around 3,000 views in total.
- We started to bring AI and animal advocacy closer together, providing AI training to several individuals and organizations, first ourselves, later in collaboration with [NFPs.AI](#), as well as launching the [AI For Animal coalition](#), which has monthly meetings and around 60 members.
- We attended six animal advocacy conferences, including the [Animal & Vegan Advocacy \(AVA\) Summit](#) and [Asia Farm Animal Day \(AFAD\)](#), and two effective altruism conferences, hosting three networking sessions and one AI workshop. On the IAA Slack, we hosted multiple [online events](#) in collaboration with other animal advocacy organizations.
- We launched a global [peer-to-peer mentoring program](#) for advocates in collaboration with [Culture Canopy](#).
- We leveraged our personal network in the animal advocacy movement to connect more than 60 advocates with each other based on shared interests or needs.
- We took over moderating the [Effective Animal Advocacy](#) Facebook group, however, we haven't dedicated much time and effort to it due to competing priorities.

What are the results of our work?

- At the start of this year, we administered a community survey to all our members, and received 135 responses. According to these, as a result of our programs, 104 members (77%) made a valuable connection, 93 (69%) gained knowledge and 19 (14%) adopted an AI or online tool that (self-reportedly) made them more effective in their animal advocacy work, 12 (9%) started a new job, 5 (4%) started a new project or initiative, 5 (4%) started a volunteer or training position, and 3 (2%) received funding. The community survey also suggests that respondents made 469 valuable connections in total, or around 3.5 connections on average.
- The majority of respondents indicated that they feel more informed about what is going on in the animal advocacy movement (86%) as well as feel more connected to the movement (82%).
- Slack is the largest contributor to the above results (partly given that it has the most users), followed by the connections we personally facilitated. By contrast, the Effective Animal Advocacy group and the AI training have brought only modest benefits to users, at least as far as we know.
- Throughout the year, we collected anecdotal "impact stories" from people who benefited from our programs, as well as 46 public testimonials, which you can view [here](#). Some of our most prominent "impact stories" from last year include:
 - Nicoll Peracha at [The Mission Motor](#), a charity providing training and coaching on monitoring and evaluation to animal advocacy organizations, found her co-founder Blake Hannagan after posting the job ad on the IAA Slack. They now host monthly M&E office hours and talks via IAA.
 - After meeting Cynthia Schuck from the [Welfare Footprint Project](#) at EAG Boston 2023, we collaborated on an online workshop about the project, which then led to setting up a dedicated IAA Slack channel as well as a monthly meeting series aimed at discussing

and spreading their work. The meeting series currently has around 60 registered attendees.

- Kevin Xia, board member of EA Austria, was inspired to start an Effective Animal Advocacy group in Austria and received help designing a survey project, asking over 400 vegans in German-speaking countries about their views on impactful animal advocacy.
- A common piece of negative feedback was that the Slack and newsletter sometimes make people feel overwhelmed and afraid of missing out.

What conclusions do we draw from these results?

- Overall, we are very content with what we managed to achieve as a new organization in 2023, considering our very limited resources (in total, we had 1.8 FTE over 6 team members and spent \$52,000 in 2023).
- Our most promising program seems to be Slack, so building on and further improving it will be our main focus for 2024.
- Our newsletter and the knowledge hub are probably worth continuing because they take relatively little time for the outcomes that they produce. We are less certain about the online and offline events because we don't have enough data yet.
- We think that the Facebook group is likely to be less promising, so we will be making a decision about whether to continue it going forward soon.

About this review

Purpose

We are committed to learning and consistently improving our programs to better serve animal advocates. We want to be open and transparent about our organization, the services we provide, and our outcomes. With this report, we hope to provide information to fulfill both of these goals.

Approach

Since most of our work focuses on creating online communities, many of the platforms we use (Slack, Substack, Facebook) already collect a lot of data for us, such as the number of members and subscribers. Since automated data only very superficially tells us how our programs are going, we also actively collect data ourselves.

We maintain an internal database in which we track all of our activities as well as any anecdotal pieces of "impact" we come across. This includes manually logging the instances of people reaching out to us with updates, such as finding a new job through the IAA newsletter, encouraging folks to leave their stories as a testimonial or us seeing the outcome of a collaboration that started on the IAA Slack. We understand that this "impact collection" is not comprehensive and relies on people getting back to us, which means that this system has an inherent reporting bias.

We also sent out a community survey at the beginning of 2024, with the intention to more systematically collect data about outcomes and community members' experiences for 2023. All questions included in the survey can be viewed [here](#). All in all, we got 135 valid survey responses, which represents around 5% of our community.

Limitations and caveats

As with most surveys, we want to treat our survey results with caution as several biases could influence how well the results generalize to our whole community: People who responded to the survey might be more engaged with IAA, which in turn might mean they had a better experience or benefited more from our programs compared to people who engaged less with IAA. On the flipside, people who for a variety of reasons stopped using our programs are unlikely to have responded to our survey. For interested readers, we add more details about the limitations of our approach at the end of the report (see footnote)¹.

In general, since our community encompasses around 3,000 animal advocates, finding out about each and every kind of outcome and benefit they experienced as a result of our programs was impossible for us. A lot of the work we do consists of connecting people with each other, and facilitated connections often have an indirect outcome which still might be valuable. Nevertheless, we hope that the data we provide in this post gives a good enough insight into the general value we provided last year.

Through reviewing our work in 2023, we've identified a lot of opportunities for improvement, not only for our programs but also for our MEL processes and the way we intend to operationalize impact going forward.

Strategy, activities and outcomes in 2023

Strategy

We noticed a gap in online community building in farmed animal advocacy. Our main hypothesis was being able to facilitate connections that wouldn't happen otherwise, that could lead to faster/easier work for animal advocates or new projects being started. We were also excited about the diversity and inclusivity that the online community spaces can provide to neglected regions.

We decided to trial a number of programs to address this gap. Our first program was started in February 2023 and as it grew, we added more activities throughout 2023.

In August, when the co-founders started working full time, we set our core program goals for the remainder of 2023 as the following:

Goal 1: To create and actively cultivate online spaces that are conducive to strategic collaboration and coordination.

- Manage, grow, and improve a dynamic Slack community to connect advocates in between in-person gatherings and conferences.
- Manage, grow, and improve the Effective Animal Advocacy Facebook group.

¹ Several biases and limitations for the survey are:

- Respondents might indicate *more* benefits than they actually experienced because of social desirability bias.
- Respondents might indicate *fewer* benefits than they actually experienced because they struggle to remember.
- Respondents only recently joined our programs and haven't engaged with them sufficiently to experience any benefits (that may come only after some time engaging with our programs).

It is also virtually impossible for us to claim the counterfactual impact for any of the benefits respondents indicate. Although we ask people to state if the benefits they had were the result of engaging with any of our programs, we simply do not know what would have happened in the absence of IAA.

- Consider creating an MVP of a functional animal advocacy forum where content can reach broader audiences.

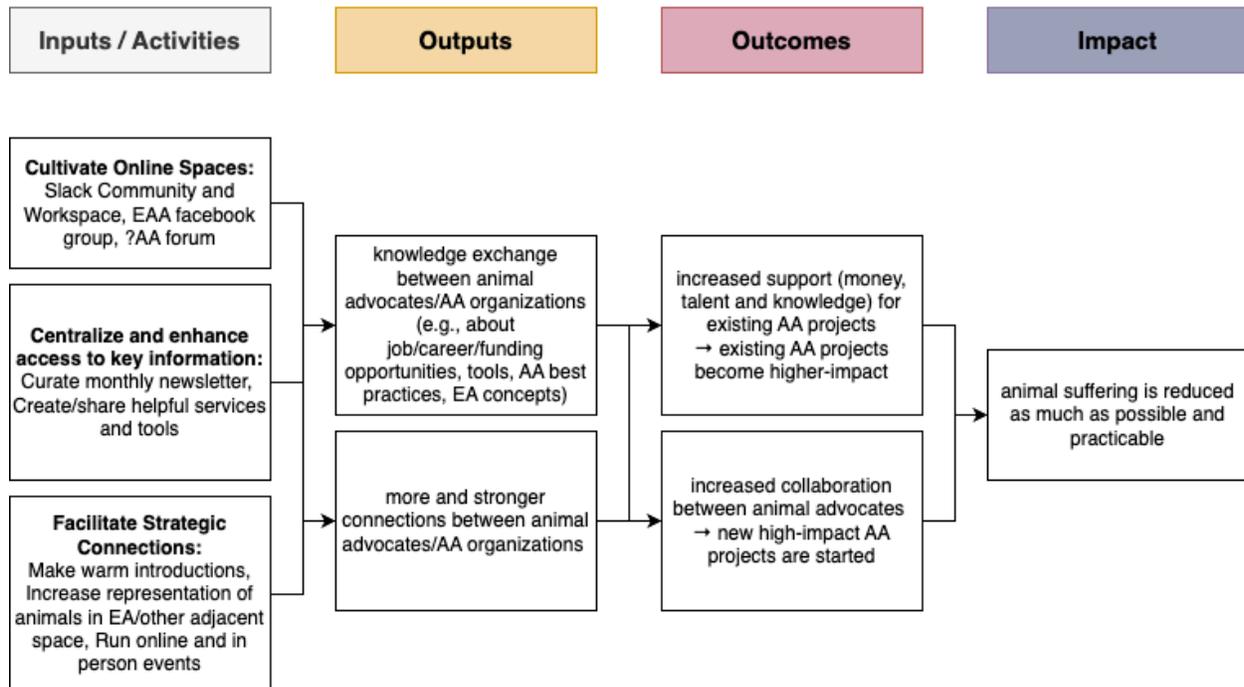
Goal 2: To centralize and enhance access to key information relevant to advocates' needs, ranging from opportunities to best practices.

- Maintain, grow and improve our newsletter to better deliver key information to professional animal advocates.
- Create/share helpful services and tools.

Goal 3: To facilitate strategic connections for the animal advocacy movement.

- Make warm introductions between advocates/animal advocacy organizations that would be mutually beneficial.
- Increasing representation of animal advocacy in the EA space.
- Run online and in-person events.

The following diagram shows our theory of change:



In the next section, we outline our activities and their outcomes pertaining to each of these goals.

Activities and Outcomes

Online spaces

IAA Slack

Activities

One of our core programs is our Slack workspace, which we created in January 2023.

Since then, we've created 84 public channels, catering to advocates in specific geographic regions (e.g., Africa, India, German-speaking countries), cities (e.g., DC, London, NYC), skill areas (e.g., research, fundraising, marketing), topics (e.g., wild animals, alt-protein, aquatic animals), as well as channels providing concrete support for advocates (e.g., sharing and promoting events, requesting and offering help, posting jobs, providing mental health support).

In May, we introduced Donut, a tool that makes biweekly random 1:1 introductions between interested Slack members.

To help advocates stay on top of Slack postings and help reduce overwhelm (a common piece of feedback we received from our community), we started publishing "[The best of IAA Slack](#)" in October, a monthly digest newsletter, which summarizes and links to the most relevant discussions, shared resources and tools, new channels, and job postings.

We also partnered with a few organizations for them to run part of their programs on our Slack. For example, [The Mission Motor](#) set up a Slack channel dedicated to MEL as well as for them to use our platform to host monthly MEL office hours. The [Welfare Footprint Project](#) also has a channel as well as a monthly meeting series aimed at discussing and spreading their work, with around 60 registered attendees.

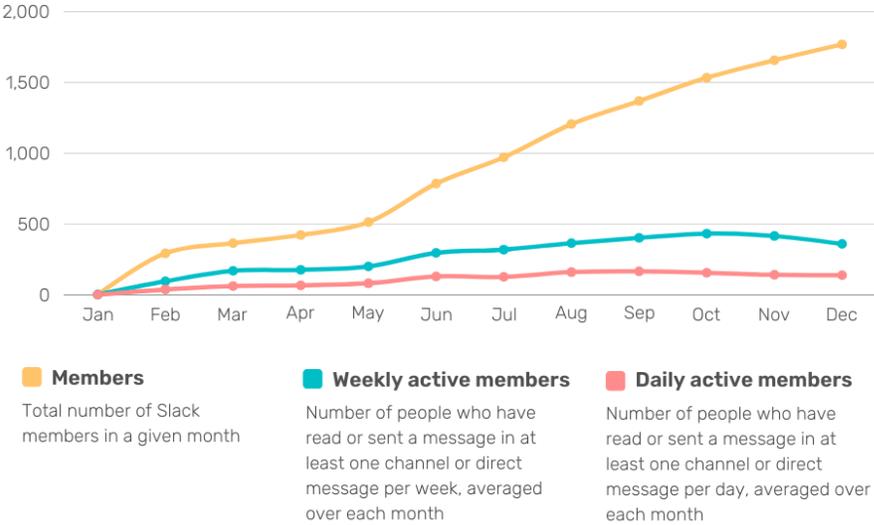
Lastly, together with some of our community members, we created an [AI For Animals](#) coalition for people interested in the intersection of these two topics, which is one of our Slack's specialized channels. Thanks to the leadership of Constance Li, one of IAA's co-founders, the coalition received Anthropic research API access. This means that we can [run experiments](#) on including animals for consideration in LLMs. The coalition has had its second meeting, attended by 15 highly involved advocates, and came up with [concrete project ideas](#).

Outcomes

Since creating the Slack workspace at the beginning of 2023, it grew to 1,769 total members by the end of last year, making it the largest community of animal advocacy professionals we know about. However, not all of these members are very engaged: while the number of registered members has increased each month, the number of weekly/daily active members (i.e. members who have read or sent at least one post or direct message within a given week) has not scaled with the number of total members. Nevertheless, 500 active members every week is still a considerably high number for Slack spaces² (based on the comparison between IAA and a few other Slack spaces in our movement).

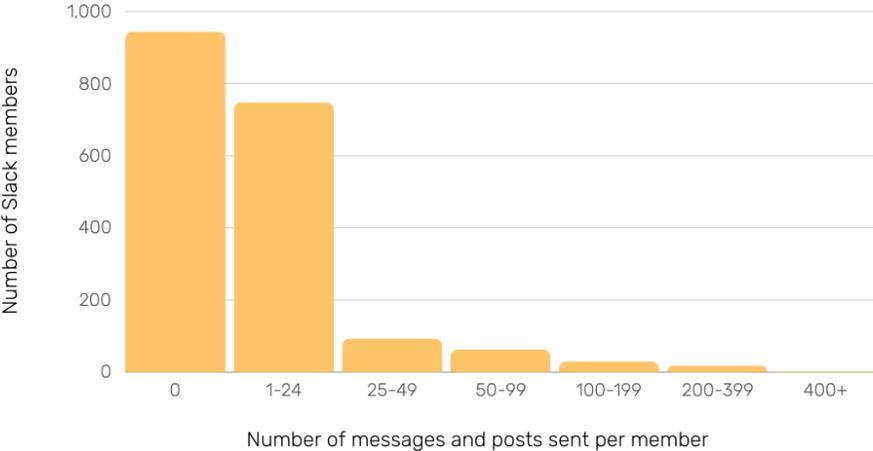
² We are currently at around 650 weekly active members.

Slack members



Likewise, when looking at the number of members who have sent a certain number of messages, we can see that a lot of members are passive users, while a small number of users are power users, having sent 200 or more messages. Overall, 32,000 messages were sent in 2023 on Slack, about 70% being private messages. We think that this may indicate that our community members, especially the most active ones, are using Slack for collaboration between organizations.

Slack posts and messages



Through [Donut](#), we facilitated 171 1:1 meetings between animal advocates (out of 594 introductions made by Donut). Outside of the survey, some participants of these meetings have reported to us that it

was like “having a conference in the comfort of your home, spread over the whole year”. Many participants have reported making new connections that they otherwise wouldn’t make, especially because they don’t always have a chance to go to conferences. We didn’t do a deep dive into what Donut connections exactly resulted in due to time constraints, however we heard about at least two collaborations as a result of these meetings.

Members posted over 150 open job positions in our job postings channel and we know of at least three people who found a job on this channel.

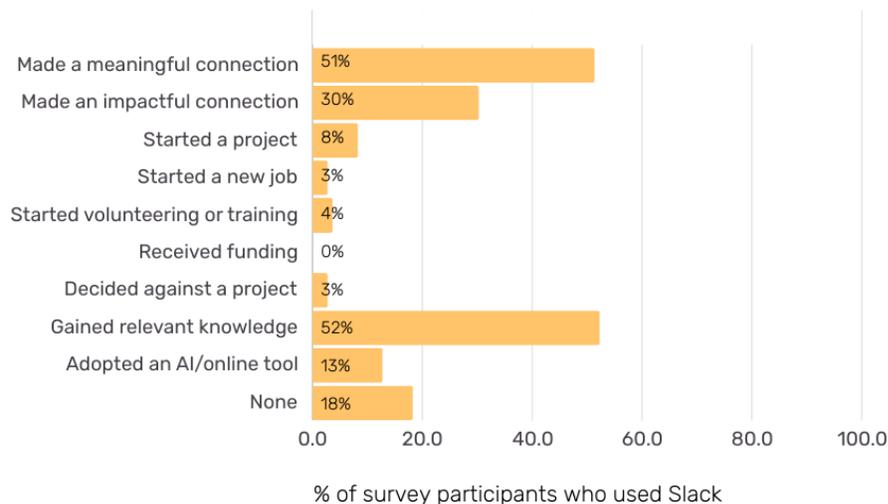
Members posted over 255 help requests, with 225 of them receiving an answer or input in public (sometimes members send a direct message to the help requester which may increase the latter number). While most of the answers seem helpful, we do not know if all of these answers ultimately helped solve the member’s request. Some examples of answered help requests include Jenny Chapman receiving support from multiple members to prepare publish her report “[Processing the discourse over plant-based meat](#)”, the [Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation](#) getting help translating animal welfare labels from French to English, and [Legal Impact for Chickens](#) receiving photo and video material about chicken for their social media.

In our community survey, out of the 109 respondents who engaged with Slack, 56 made a meaningful connection³, 33 made an impactful connection⁴, 9 started a new project, organization or initiative, 3 started a new job, 4 started a volunteer or training position, 1 received funding (of around \$63,000), 3 decided against pursuing a project (e.g., due to learning that such a project already exists), 57 gained relevant knowledge that (self-reportedly) made them more effective in their animal advocacy work, and 14 adopted a new AI or online tool that (self-reportedly) made them more effective in their animal advocacy work.

³ We define “meaningful connection” as someone they would feel comfortable reaching out to for a favor (e.g., if they were planning to publish a blog post, they’d be comfortable asking them to read over it).

⁴ We define “impactful connection” as a connection that has benefitted someone in a way that is important for their animal advocacy activities. For example, they connected with someone on our Slack that introduced them to an important stakeholder or that referred them to an open job position that they ended up getting hired for. We consider an *impactful* connection as more significant than a *meaningful* connection, so a connection someone has made can be either a meaningful *or* an impactful connection.

Slack outcomes



Anecdotes from our community survey include:

- *“As a result of the general feeling of connectedness and inspiration, I started an Effective Animal Advocacy group in Austria. Through help-requests, I found people to help us design a survey project, in which we asked almost 400 vegans in Germany, Austria and Switzerland about impactful animal advocacy.”*
- *“I got to know about the Mission Motors’ MEL Program. I applied on behalf of my group and now we are benefiting from [the] training. [B]efore I was struggling to get such connections.”*
- *“I’ve made a number of connections and some of these connections have led me to working in niche areas, like AI x animal welfare and cultivated meat. Though the work is unpaid, it is very impactful!”*
- *“I was fortunate enough to make a few impactful connections in the process of applying for jobs, drafting my master’s thesis, and pursuing a career. These connections proved to be extremely helpful as they helped me to clarify any doubts and uncertainties that I had. Their insights and guidance were invaluable, and I am grateful for their assistance.”*
- *“My highlight has actually been how I’ve been able to help others. When I see someone asking a question or for advice on a tool and I have used said tool[,] it is great to be able to give my experience. Equally it is great to hear others’ experiences before I decide whether or not to invest in tools/campaigns.”*

Testimonials about our Slack (collected outside of the survey, so please note that these may be more positive since there wasn’t an option for anonymity like with the community survey):

- *“I was heartened by the number of people in the IAA Slack community who reached out to me in response to a request I made for mentorship with internal impact evaluation for Animal Charity Evaluators. I received judgement-free support and enthusiasm. It made me feel lucky to work alongside such a generous-spirited community of folks. It’s not easy to admit our growth areas and ask for what we need, and my request was met with a sincere willingness to help. As a result of reaching out to folks in the IAA Slack channel, I now have an accountability buddy/co-learner, and several experts who have offered varying degrees of mentorship, coaching, and support. This also all happened within the space of about a week and a half, so using the IAA Slack*

channel has been an efficient way to get the support I was seeking.” – Elisabeth Ormandy (Programs Director at Animal Charity Evaluators)

- “[...] IAA also played a role in finding a co-founder for charity *The Mission Motor*. We are in a start-up phase and are setting up a specialized training program on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, which made it challenging to find a suitable co-founder. I posted the job ad on the IAA Slack channel, and a community member told their contact about this role. From the other side of the globe, *Blake Hannagan* applied and turned out to be the best candidate”. – *Nicoll Peracha, Co-Executive Director at The Mission Motor*
- “I landed my first ever paid animal-advocacy gig! I posted my editing services in the “offering help” channel in the community and received a message that very same day from an author who ended up becoming a paying client. I’ve never had an easier time finding work, let alone in the animal-welfare movement!” – *Eddie Jean, Freelance Copyeditor*

Conclusion

Slack seems to be our most promising program in terms of creating value for members. However it is also the most time consuming program that requires constant moderation and iteration. It is also likely that it can produce even more value with more active 1:1 member introductions and recommendations, and through creating additional specialized communities/channels.

Effective Animal Advocacy Facebook group

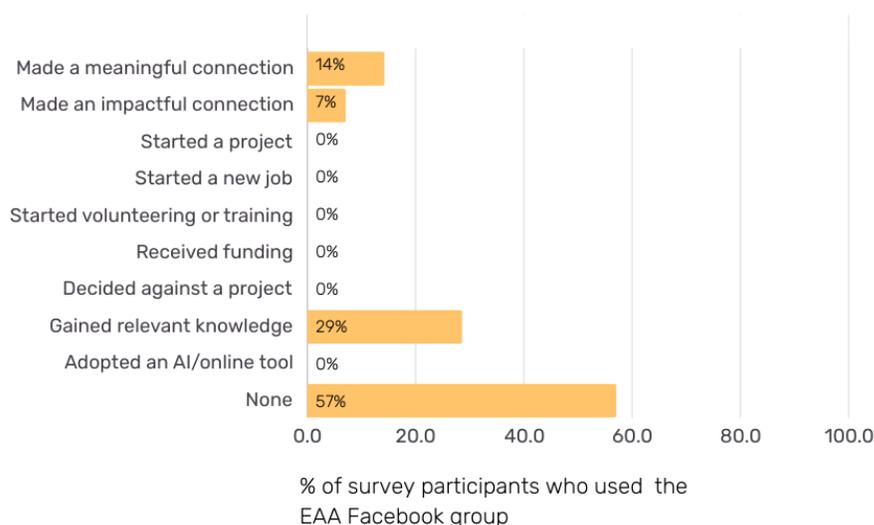
Activities

In July 2023, we took over moderating and managing the group [Effective Animal Advocacy](#) on Facebook, however, we haven’t dedicated much time and effort to it due to competing priorities.

Outcomes

From July on, the Effective Animal Advocacy group had around 120 new members, 43 new posts and 95 comments. According to our community survey, the 14 respondents (10% of total responses) who engaged with the Facebook group reported the following outcomes:

Facebook outcomes



Conclusion

It's unlikely that we will prioritize the Facebook group in the near future. At the moment we are approving members and posts and post very limited updates from our community.

Animal Forum

We considered creating an animal advocacy Forum in August 2023 because we realized that some people found Slack overwhelming and community members could benefit from longer-form threads and discussions. We were partly inspired by the [AI Alignment Forum](#) and thought the animal movement deserved its own space. We built a prototype of the Animal Forum in December and were hoping to launch it in the next two months. In February 2024, the FAST Community launched a [forum](#), so we decided not to duplicate efforts and instead focus on improving our other existing programs.

Resource and information sharing

IAA Newsletter

Activities

Our newsletter is our second core program, alongside our Slack space. It contains resources about news and updates in the animal advocacy movement, recent research, job openings, funding opportunities, and upcoming events. In 2023, we sent out a newsletter edition each month between January and October and switched to a bi-weekly rhythm in November in order to deliver content that is more timely and less overwhelming.

Outcomes

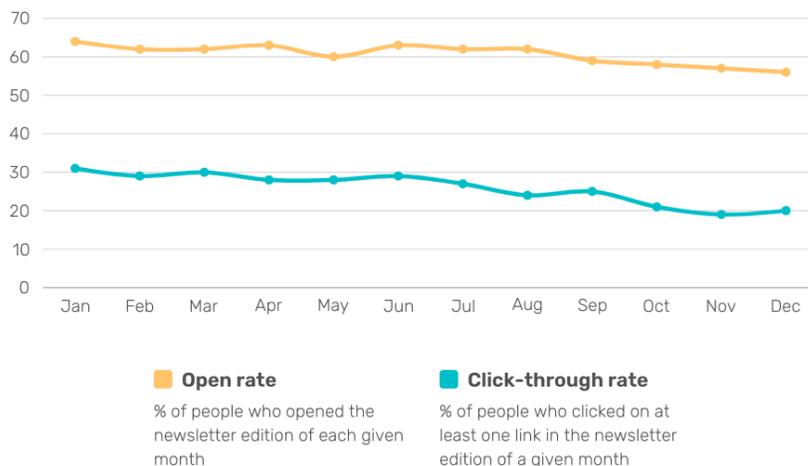
We grew the number of newsletter subscribers from 372 to 1,261, making our newsletter one of the largest informational summary-style animal advocacy related newsletters out there. We roughly doubled the number of views per newsletter in any given month. This was the result of publishing the newsletter biweekly as opposed to monthly, and promoting the newsletter more to view rather than to subscribe to, because there are people who are not subscribed but will view the newsletter content when it's posted on our spaces.

Newsletter subscribers and views



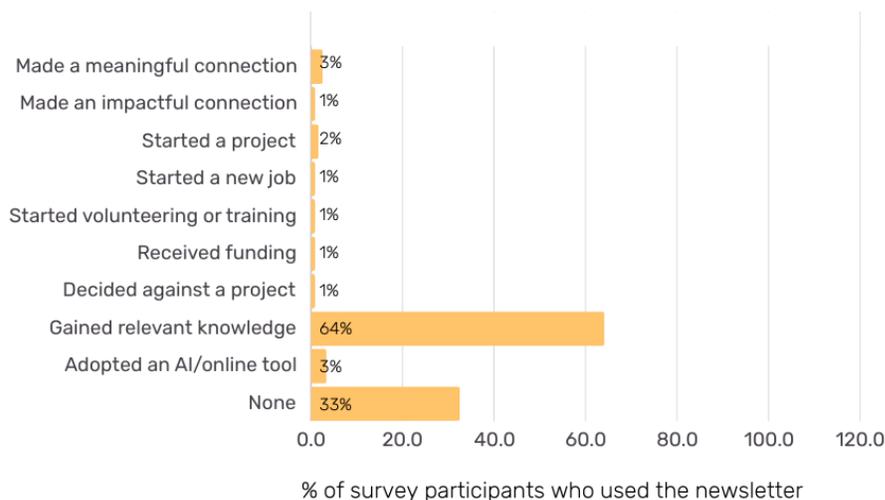
On average, 60% of subscribers opened the newsletter in a given month, and 25% of subscribers clicked on at least one link in the newsletter. In summer 2023, the acquisition of new email subscribers through conferences and automatic sign-ups for Slack users led to a less committed base with a higher churn rate, likely compounded by a professional audience prone to job changes, thus losing access to their email address. We address this issue by regularly removing emails, but email marketing maintenance is challenging due to Substack's limitations in providing data for managing bounces and inactive subscribers.

Newsletter open and click-through rate



In our community survey, the 117 respondents (87% of total responses) who engaged with the newsletter reported the following outcomes:

Newsletter outcomes



Anecdotes from the survey include:

- *“I’ve learned such a broad range of animal advocacy topics, ranging from alt protein to just transitions for animal agriculture - I particularly love the podcast recommendations, I get to listen to them at work and learn more about the space! Thank you so much for your time collating everything for us! :)”*
- *“My benefits were mostly informational—having the newsletter as a concentrated resource for news and updates is invaluable!”*
- *“We love the newsletter and the content provided. I am from an organisation which advocates for food systems/proteins change based on environmental, health and food security benefits. We don’t use animal welfare as a benefit, so as not to alienate meat eaters. Therefore your information is useful as context and peripheral information.”*

Testimonials collected in 2023 (outside the survey, so please note that these may be more positive since there wasn’t an option for anonymity like with the community survey).

- *“I love the summary of news and research in the Impactful Animal Advocacy monthly newsletter. I always find insightful stories and articles that I’d missed. I recommend it for any advocate looking to stay up to date.” – Lewis Bollard (Animal Welfare Program Director at Open Philanthropy)*
- *“Hey, I just thought I’d let you know that I find your newsletter EXTREMELY valuable. Thanks for putting it together. I really look forward to it every month. It’s hard to keep track of what’s going on and you do an amazing job at it. If you ever think of stopping because you’re too busy (which I assume you might be), I would beg you to find someone who takes it from you. It would be a shame to see it disappear” – Andres Jimenez Zorilla (CEO at Shrimp Welfare Project)*

Conclusion

While the survey showed modest concrete outcomes from the newsletter (except for gained knowledge), we think that it is possible that its benefit can’t be quantified like with Slack. Every month as of February 2024, the newsletter is read by around 750-800 highly engaged advocates. Based on anecdotal feedback, it likely helps a number of advocates to get updated in less time and learn new information to aid their decision making, so it’s worth doing, especially considering it takes us about four FTE days to produce two newsletters a month.

IAA Wiki and Resources

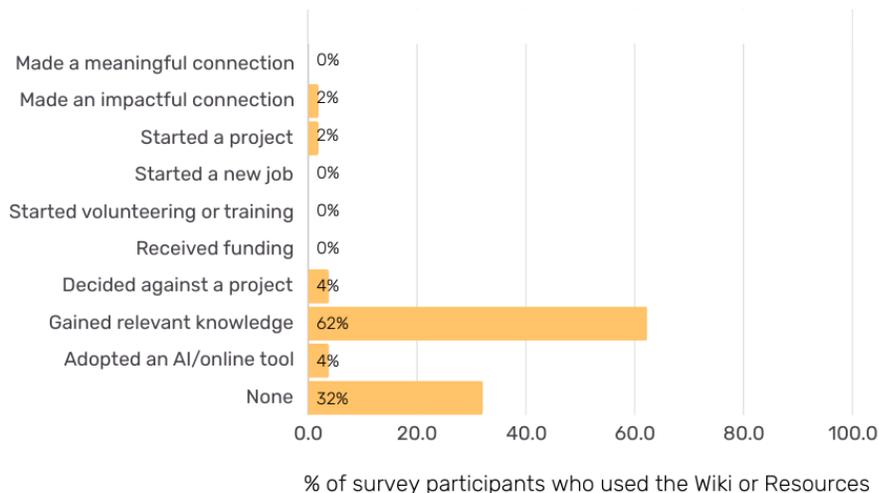
Activities

In collaboration with some of our community members, we created and published a [wiki](#) and [resource collection](#) on 15 different topics, such as resources about [fundraising](#), [MEL](#), [wild animals](#), [mental well-being](#), and [research](#), a library of [AI prompts](#) for animal advocates, and a [list of animal advocacy conferences](#).

Outcomes

In total, our Wiki got around 3,000 views, with the pages on fundraising, AI and animals, AI prompts and the conference database being the most popular resources. In our community survey, the 53 respondents (39% of total responses) who engaged with the Wiki reported the following outcomes:

Wiki and Resources outcomes



Here are some comments about the resource wiki by our community members (collected outside the survey, so please note that these may be more positive since there wasn't an option for anonymity like with the community survey):

- *“As a newer organization, the database of conferences is incredibly valuable, not just for identifying opportunities I did not know existed, but for saving me time conducting all of this research. Excellent resource.”*
- *“Your fundraising database of courses, skills, and grant ideas is fantastic. I will definitely send people to it. Really nice touch to add a section on how to use AI. I’ve also been incorporating that more and more.”*

Conclusion

While this program hasn't produced as many concrete outcomes as Slack, it is likely that it's still worth doing because it helps consolidate the resources shared on Slack (especially considering that some of our community members find Slack overwhelming). It also takes relatively little time to create and update (0.1 FTE), and with our movement growing, it may help to avoid project duplication and provide resources to movement newcomers faster.

AI Training

Activities

At the [Animal & Vegan Advocacy \(AVA\) Summit](#), we held an AI workshop, introducing advocates to several AI tools, how to use them and how to benefit from them.

We provided around 10 AI consultations to advocates and organizations ourselves and later partnered up with [NFPs.AI](#), to which we referred advocates and organizations interested in adopting AI tools.

Outcomes

We, unfortunately, do not have any reported outcomes for our AI workshop held at AVA other than that 70 advocates attended the event.

Two organizations which we referred to NFPs.ai adopted AI to automate some of their workflows, allowing the organizations to save time.

Conclusion

This program resulted in some organizational time saved, which is valuable, considering that we outsourced the training to NFPs.AI. We will continue to connect advocates to them whenever we deem valuable, now as a part of our facilitated connections program. We will not focus on the AI training ourselves, but will direct our efforts to running our [AI For Animals](#) coalition instead.

Mentorship program

Activities

In collaboration with [Culture Canopy](#), we launched [Global Connects: Uniting Animal Activists Across the World](#), a 6-month peer-to-peer mentorship program for advocates around the world based around this [curriculum](#).

Outcomes

The program is currently ongoing in its third month, with 36 participants in total.

Strategic connections

Facilitated connections

Activities

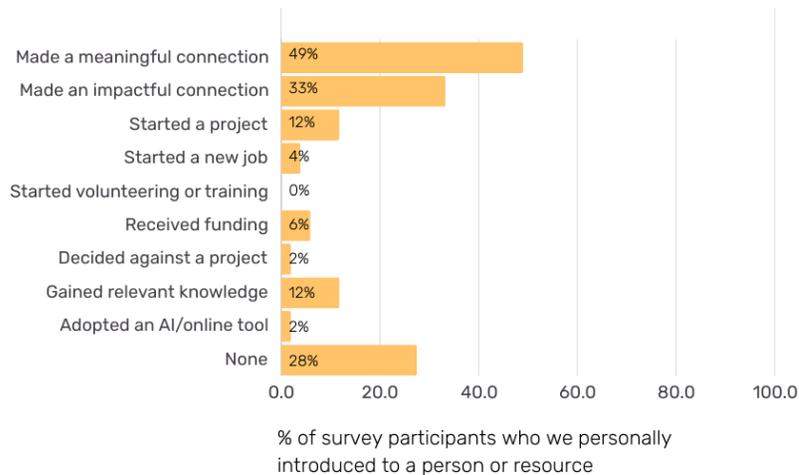
We started logging any warm introductions we made in August. From then on to the end of 2023, we recorded making 61 warm introductions (i.e., connecting two advocates based on shared interests or complementary needs) and providing 36 advocates with a resource or tool based on their needs. We likely made many more introductions, but the numbers above are the ones we actually logged.

Two examples of such connections would be us having introduced 6 organizations to the [Beans is How](#) campaign from SDG2 and referring [Vegan Thesis](#) to contacts at [Faunalytics](#) and [Bryant Research](#) for research-related input.

Outcomes

In our community survey, the 51 respondents whom we personally connected with other advocates or resources reported the following:

Facilitated connections outcomes



Two anecdotes from our community survey say:

- *“Constance has connected me with a few people - one of which ended up giving a talk on AI for our staff and it has significantly improved the way our team uses generative AI tools and our efforts are more effective because of it!”*
- *“[W]hen someone has the drive, but is lacking direction or a critical connection, the IAA co-founders are often well-positioned provide that missing piece.”*

Conclusion

This is one of our most promising programs because it has achieved several concrete outcomes, especially considering it's not as time consuming compared to managing Slack. The downside of this program is that it's hard to track, because following up on each connection makes it more time consuming for both parties. This program also relies on our co-founders' networks, which makes it less sustainable in the future should our leadership change. Overall, we believe that the movement needs a super connector who will make counterfactual connections faster.

Events

Activities

Our comparative advantage is connecting advocates online, but we've learned that partnering with other organizations that provide physical events such as conferences can be beneficial for participants, and the participants can continue networking in our online spaces after the conference. We have also started running a limited number of specialized online events at the request of our community members.

Our in-person events last year included a networking event and an Effective Altruism meetup at both the [Animal & Vegan Advocacy \(AVA\) Summit](#) in Los Angeles and the [Asia Farm Animal Day \(AFAD\)](#) in Kuala Lumpur, in addition to the AI workshop held at AVA as mentioned above. At the EA meetup, we facilitated a discussion, which resulted in publishing [Criticisms of EA in animal advocacy blog post](#). At AVA, we also

partnered with [Charity Entrepreneurship](#) to distribute 500 of their books “How to Launch a High-Impact Nonprofit” in all AVA goodie bags.



IAA networking session at AFAD



The IAA team and volunteers at AVA

We also represented Impactful Animal Advocacy at the [Reductarian Summit](#) in Denver, the [CARE](#) in Warsaw, the [Artificial Intelligence, Conscious Machines, and Animals: Broadening AI Ethics](#) conference at Princeton University, and the [American College of Lifestyle Medicine](#) conference in Denver.

Lastly, we had an IAA meetup in NYC, including presenting IAA and networking with local advocates.



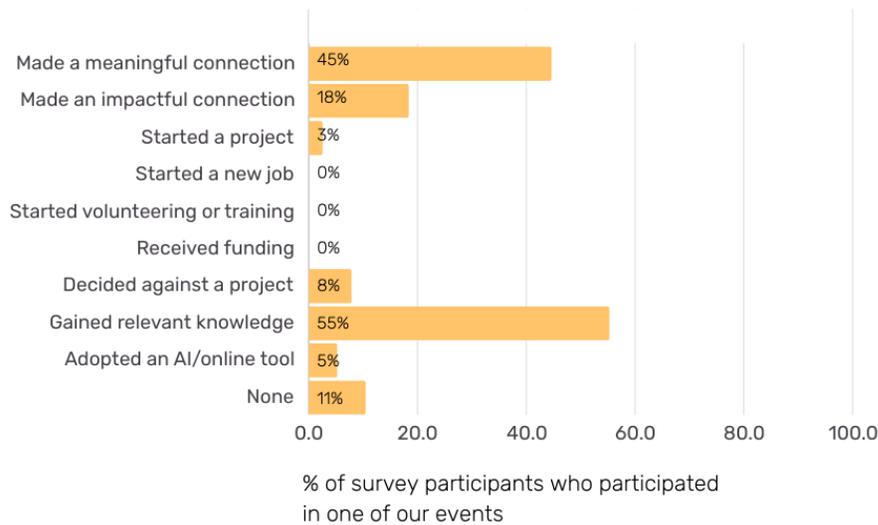
IAA presentation and networking in NYC

Our online events included an AMA session with Rick Holland from [Confident Philanthropy](#), hosted on the IAA Slack; as well as a presentation and workshop by and about the [Welfare Footprint Project](#).

Outcomes

Our networking sessions at AVA and AFAD led to nearly 400 connections in total (being based on speed-meeting sessions). Apart that, we do not have outcomes for each individual event, however, in our community survey, the 38 respondents who attended one of our events reported the following:

Events outcomes



One anecdote from our networking session we organized at AVA:

- *“I loved the networking event at the beginning, Impactful Connections. The people I met there were the ones I ended up hanging out with most of the time. Some of us still refer to each other as Conference Besties. The organizers of this event really helped start this off for me in a positive direction. I felt like I had a clan rather than going in blind and alone.”*

Conclusion

We are uncertain about how this program compares to others in terms of expected impact, partly because we haven't got enough data and haven't run many events yet. Our networking events at conferences may be replaced by the conference organizers, and if so, it's worth it for us to focus on online events. In the user interviews we conducted in September 2023, many community members have noted that they will appreciate specialized events, including networking with advocates with similar interests to them. This is something we will trial this year as a part of the Slack program when building specialized channels.

Animal advocacy representation in the EA community

Activities

We published three posts about animal advocacy related topics in the EA Forum, including [Critiques of EA in animal advocacy - A discussion with advocates](#), [Animal Advocacy in the Age of AI](#), and [Resources for farmed animal advocacy: 2023 roundup](#).

IAA was an active participant at EAGxVirtual, an online conference around Effective Altruism, hosting several opportunities to connect with fellow animal advocates. We had 16 visitors to our office hours, 10 at the organization fair booth, and 39 participants in the farmed animal meetup.



Farmed Animal Welfare Meetup at EAGxVirtual

At EAGxNYC, we stepped into an unmet need to get attendees to take legislative action for animals. Our table also helped engage over 20 participants to call and/or email their legislators to oppose the U.S. EATS Act.



EATS Act tabling at EAGx NYC

Conclusion

We don't have enough data to conclude whether this is potentially an impactful program. We have had quite a few people joining our community after interacting with us at EA conferences, but we haven't received reports of any concrete outcomes from this.

Other outcomes and metrics

Meaningful and impactful connections

The community survey suggests that in total, the 135 respondents made 350 meaningful and 119 impactful connections, or 5 meaningful and 3 impactful connections on average per respondent.

Subjective experiences

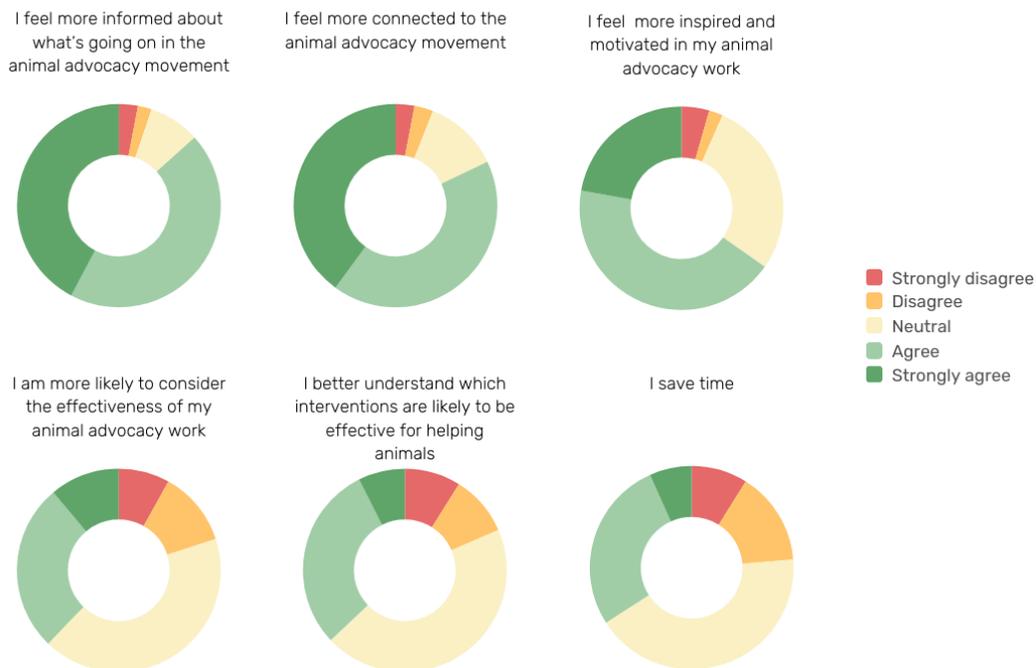
Overall, survey respondents indicated that they feel more connected to the animal advocacy movement, more informed about what's going on in the movement, and to a lesser extent, more inspired and motivated in their animal advocacy work.

In contrast, respondents feel more neutral about whether our programs save them time. We assume that this is due to several people feeling overwhelmed by the amount of content being shared on Slack and in our newsletter (see more details [in this section](#)).

Respondents also feel mostly neutral about being more likely to consider the effectiveness of their advocacy work and better understanding which interventions are likely to be effective for helping animals.

Given that many of our community members are at least moderately engaged in the effective altruism movement (see [here](#)), we think it is likely that many people already have an effectiveness mindset when coming into our community. However, it could also be that our programs fail to encourage people to approach their animal advocacy work from an impact perspective. In fact, two survey respondents pointed out that they didn't feel like our Slack was particularly impact-oriented.

All programs



More testimonials about our work

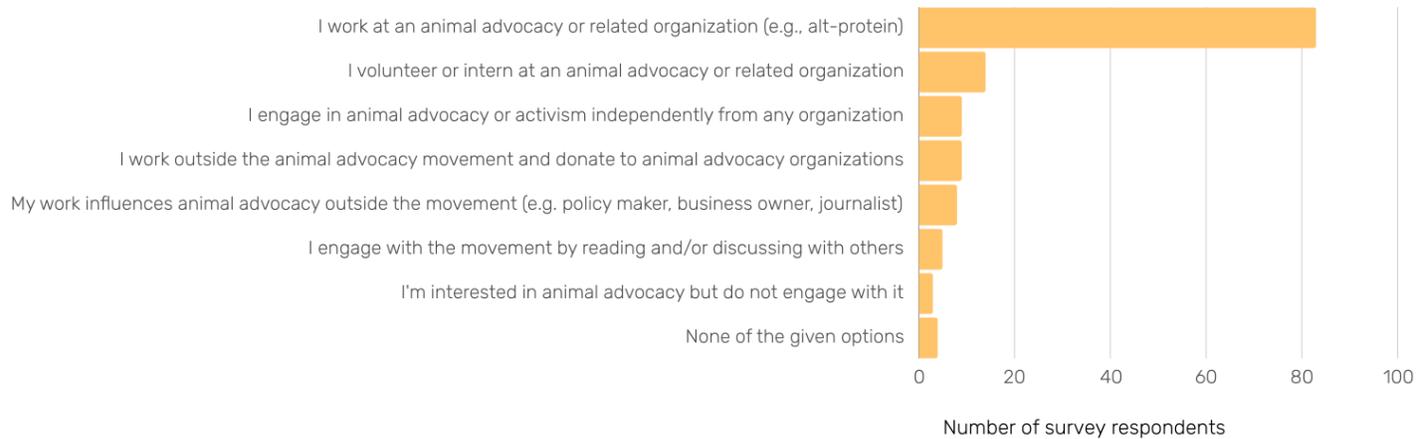
Over the course of the year, we received 46 [testimonials](#) from community members. Note that testimonials are usually more positive than quotes coming from our community survey and are not anonymous. However, we think that the people writing testimonials are still sincere in their opinion about IAA.

Reaching our target audience

Last year, we defined our target audience to be 90% engaged animal advocates (e.g., non-profit employees and funders, independent animal advocates, and other animal welfare and rights professionals) as well as 10% potential animal advocates (e.g., people in adjacent fields and people interested but not yet engaged in animal advocacy).

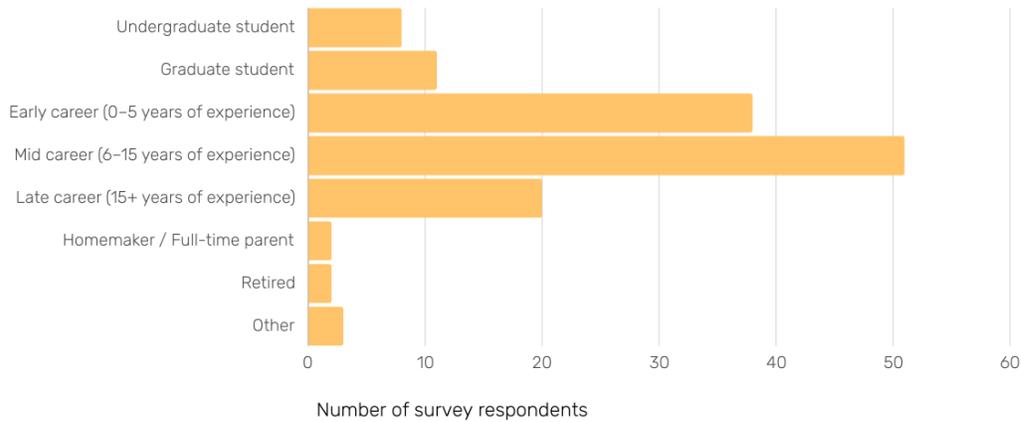
From our community survey, we gathered that we seem to be targeting the audience we intend to target, with the majority of community members being actively engaged in animal advocacy:

Engagement with animal advocacy



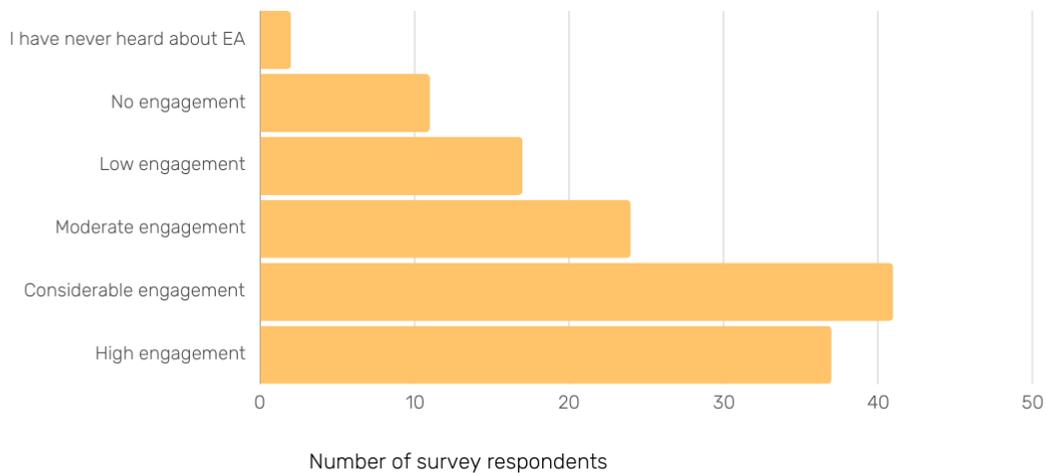
Relatedly, most of our community members appear to be working professionals:

Career stage



In addition, most of our members seem to be at least moderately engaged with EA:

Engagement with effective altruism



And most of our members seem to come from the US (~35%) and Europe (~20%), followed by the UK (~12%), Australia and New Zealand (~12%), and Canada (~8%), although we also have some members coming from Asia (~8%), Africa (~4%), and Latin America (~4%).

Lastly, our Slack has members representing around 80 different animal advocacy organizations, many of them also being EA-adjacent organizations. This and the last statistic is also supported by our [Slack onboarding form](#), which people wanting to join fill in before getting access to Slack, and which asks for their location.

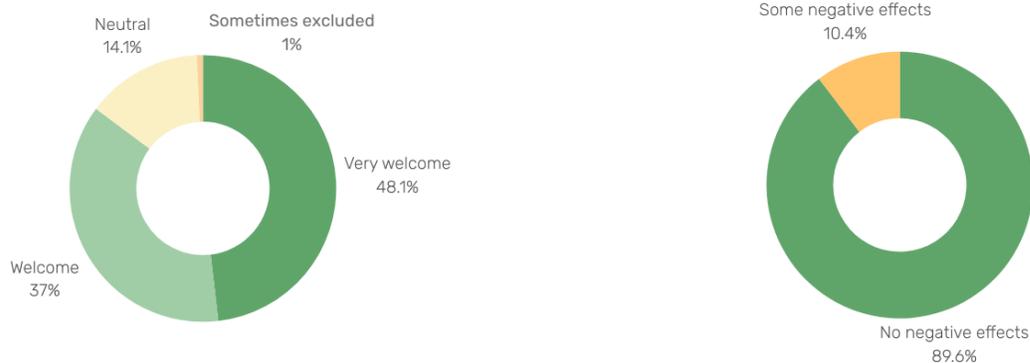
Of course, as [outlined above](#), we are uncertain how representative our community survey is, and therefore how representative the animal advocacy background of survey respondents is compared to all of our community members.

Community health

Since IAA is, at its core, a community-building organization, we care a lot about the health of the communities we are creating, as well as people's well-being when engaging with them.

Our community survey suggests that overall, most IAA community members feel welcomed or very welcomed and that the majority of members didn't experience any negative effects when engaging with our programs.

Community health



We gave survey respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their experience in case they felt unwelcome or experienced any negative effects (even if they were small or offset by positive ones). Analyzing and summarizing these answers shows that most members' negative effects stem from them being overwhelmed by the amount of content in our Slack and newsletter. A few people also expressed feeling unwelcome since they perceived to hold different opinions than the majority of community members. We are working on addressing both these issues.

Importantly, nobody indicated that they felt excluded or alienated or that they experienced major negative effects. However, as we pointed out at the [beginning of this post](#), our survey likely skewed towards community members who are considerably engaged with our programs, and therefore probably had good experiences with our programs. This means that community members who might have felt alienated or who otherwise had bad experiences with our programs probably already left our community and thus did not fill in the survey.

Mistakes and areas for improvement

Trying to do too many projects at the same time

We were very excited about positively impacting animal advocacy, and as a result, we overcommitted to too many initiatives and significantly underestimated how much time various programs will take. This was especially challenging between May and August 2023, when there was increased interest in our programs and the co-founders were not yet working at IAA full-time. This mistake resulted in us failing to deliver some projects to the high level of quality that we hold ourselves to (e.g. neglecting the Facebook group). This was a helpful lesson, and we plan to improve on this in 2024. As well as hiring additional help in 2024, we are focusing on select core programs, setting realistic expectations, and staggering the planned projects across the year to accommodate team capacity.

Hiring too fast & poor team member onboarding

Since we originally overcommitted, we hired extra team members to help us deal with increased demand for our work. We didn't have the time to run a proper hiring process and instead hired contractors. While we were generally very happy with the work of our team as their work has helped us become a better,

more professional organization, this resulted in one instance of a mismatch between a hire's desired role and our expectations of them. We could also have addressed this mismatch faster by creating a concrete list of agreements at the start.

Since we are a community-building organization, hiring from our community is quite easy because it filters for value-aligned and we get to see their work in action. However, we acknowledge that this is likely to result in biases, lack of diversity, and ultimately not selecting the best possible applicant. We are seriously considering running a full hiring process for any future roles.

Our new team members have also reported that the onboarding process wasn't ideal (e.g. they weren't added to some of the tools we use or didn't fully understand how to submit their invoices). We fully agree and have made some improvements, although we can definitely improve further in this area.

We could improve our community member onboarding and address information overwhelm on our spaces further

Our focus in the fall of 2023 was to reduce the overwhelm on our Slack space. We introduced default and non-default channels, provided information on how to mute channels and launched a [Slack digest](#) to allow people to still participate on Slack without having to frequently check it. We have also significantly improved our member onboarding process which allows for a customized experience on Slack. This has helped to a point, but according to the feedback we've received, we can do even more to provide value to community members.

Operations and financials

Staff

As IAA only officially launched last year, it also held quite a few personnel changes:

- Sofia Balderson started working full-time on IAA in August 2023.
- Cameron King stepped down as co-founder into an advisory role in order to focus on his work at [Animal Advocacy Africa](#).
- With the role of co-founder being open, Constance Li, originally our Strategic Advisor, stepped up, joining Sofia in leading IAA full-time.
- We had two part-time team members join our team: Allison for marketing and communications and Helene for M&E and operations. We also worked with Quinn as our Slack Manager from August till November.

Income and expenses

All in all, our expenses in 2023 round up to \$52,000, with around 60% going towards staff costs of a total of 1.35 full-time equivalent spread over 6 team members over 2023 (note: Constance is a full-time volunteer) and the remaining 40% being used for travel, program expenses like a Slack subscription, and conference sponsorships.

In turn, we received around \$56,500 in donations, of those \$30,000 in grants, \$26,000 from a private donor, and around \$500 from our paying Substack subscribers.

We were also excited to receive fiscal sponsorship by the Humane America Animal Foundation, enabling us to accept charitable contributions that are tax deductible in the US.

Outlook for 2024

To act on our improvement points, this year we are leaning into what we already do best: our core program, the IAA Slack space. In addition to improving and automating our onboarding process, we will partner with others to host specialized communities (such as operations and marketing) in our Slack workspace to help neglected areas thrive. According to the feedback of our community members, we are likely to host more specialized events, both for networking, discussion, lecture-style and workshops (depending on what our community members are interested in). We will also work on improving our IAA resource wiki to make sure it's well-organized, comprehensive, and useful. We will also work to promote it and our other services better so that more advocates are aware of its existence. Finally, we are planning a big rebrand—[subscribe to our newsletter](#) to be notified about it first!

How to support us

Donate to us

Because our programs show promise, we have hired more team members, including our first full-time hire. We thus have a funding gap of \$168,000, having already raised 44% of our budget. If you like the work we do and want to support us, we welcome donors of all sizes! You can make a tax-deductible donation where 100% of your donation goes to Impactful Animal Advocacy through our fiscal sponsor Humane America Animal Foundation [here](#).

Give us feedback

We are always eager to learn and improve, and we value any input or feedback that helps us with this. If you have any suggestions for improvement, either in general or about this review specifically, please [reach out to us](#) or leave anonymous feedback via [this form](#)!

Connect with us

If you have not yet subscribed to our newsletter, you can do so [here](#). If you want to join our Slack, please [fill in this form](#). You can also follow us on [LinkedIn](#) to stay up to date about our progress.