

Strategy

2018-2020

International Humanist and Ethical Union



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Current situation, challenges, opportunities and 2020 vision

International Humanist and Ethical Union is the voice of the global humanist movement and an influential, highly reputable player in the broader human rights movement. We are a very small International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) in terms of staffing and turnover, but punch well above our weight in influence and impact. This is down to our dedicated and highly strategic Board, motivated and hard-working staff, an engaged and supportive membership, and a network of active volunteers. International Humanist and Ethical Union is a unique democratic organization, growing all the time. We have decades of experience campaigning on human rights issues and humanist ethical concerns and a bright future.

This strategy is framed within the context of rapidly changing political settlement around the world. The re-emergence of reactionary populism, nationalism and politicised religious authoritarianism poses a threat to the core values of the humanist movement. The rise of a well-funded and influential anti-humanist and anti-secularist movement of international religious organisations, supported in many cases by academics and states themselves, is having a regressive effect on the development of many governments' foreign policies

and a destructive effect on international institutions. The principles of universal human rights and liberal secularism seem under more pressure now than at any time in the last 50 years. There is a significant risk that the fracturing of the principle of universal human rights (that they apply to everyone equally and that the individual's autonomy and dignity comes before any 'group' rights) could undermine many of the world-leading achievements of the post-war humanist movement.

In an increasingly crowded international market for both publicity and funding, the International Humanist and Ethical Union will have to work creatively to ensure that our important work attracts the support it deserves. But the International Humanist and Ethical Union is a unique voice in the world: the reputable, professional, and respected umbrella organisation advocating on behalf of the humanist movement globally and which is democratically governed by its membership. Demographic secularization in all societies will benefit our movement as more and more people discover that humanism is the word for their ethical and responsible non-religious worldview. Increasing economic development and sense of social responsibility around the world should mean whole new audiences are both

willing and able to support our work, if we can reach them and engage them.

As an advocate for progressive values and a driver of change, the International Humanist and Ethical Union has a reputation, at all the institutions where we work, as a source of clear, principled, and evidence-driven policy leadership. We provide unique and high-quality research, information, and leadership on key humanist issues. Looking towards 2020 we must improve the service we deliver to our members, so that they value membership with the International Humanist and Ethical Union as a cost-effective way of influencing the global agenda. Communicating the value of the International Humanist and Ethical Union membership and devising new and creative ways of supporting our members will be crucial to achieving our mission.

There are many exciting opportunities. We will continue to work flexibly and adapt to them as they arise, at the same time working to achieve planned and structured growth for our network.



Thank you for your support in this endeavour,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Copson".

Andrew Copson
President

A message from our CEO

This strategic plan will see the International Humanist and Ethical Union continue to lead the international movement as an advocate for change. With increased resources from a more diverse range of sources we will have expanded our professional staff team and recruit more volunteers.

In 2020 the International Humanist and Ethical Union will be a larger and more professional organisation, with a noticeably more international feel whose content will be available in more languages. Our advocacy work will be strengthened by an expanded and reinvigorated team of delegations led by the Director of Advocacy. We will be including more of our members and supporters in our campaign work, in a more planned and thoughtful way, led by our Director of Campaigns and Communications. We will have more members in priority regions in the global south. These members will be engaged and active, led by our Growth and Development Officer. This team of staff will be lead by a dynamic and effective Chief Executive.

The Board of the International Humanist and Ethical Union will continue to give high-level strategic direction, ensure compliance and scrutinise the work of the staff team.



Thank you for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary McLelland". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gary McLelland
Chief Executive

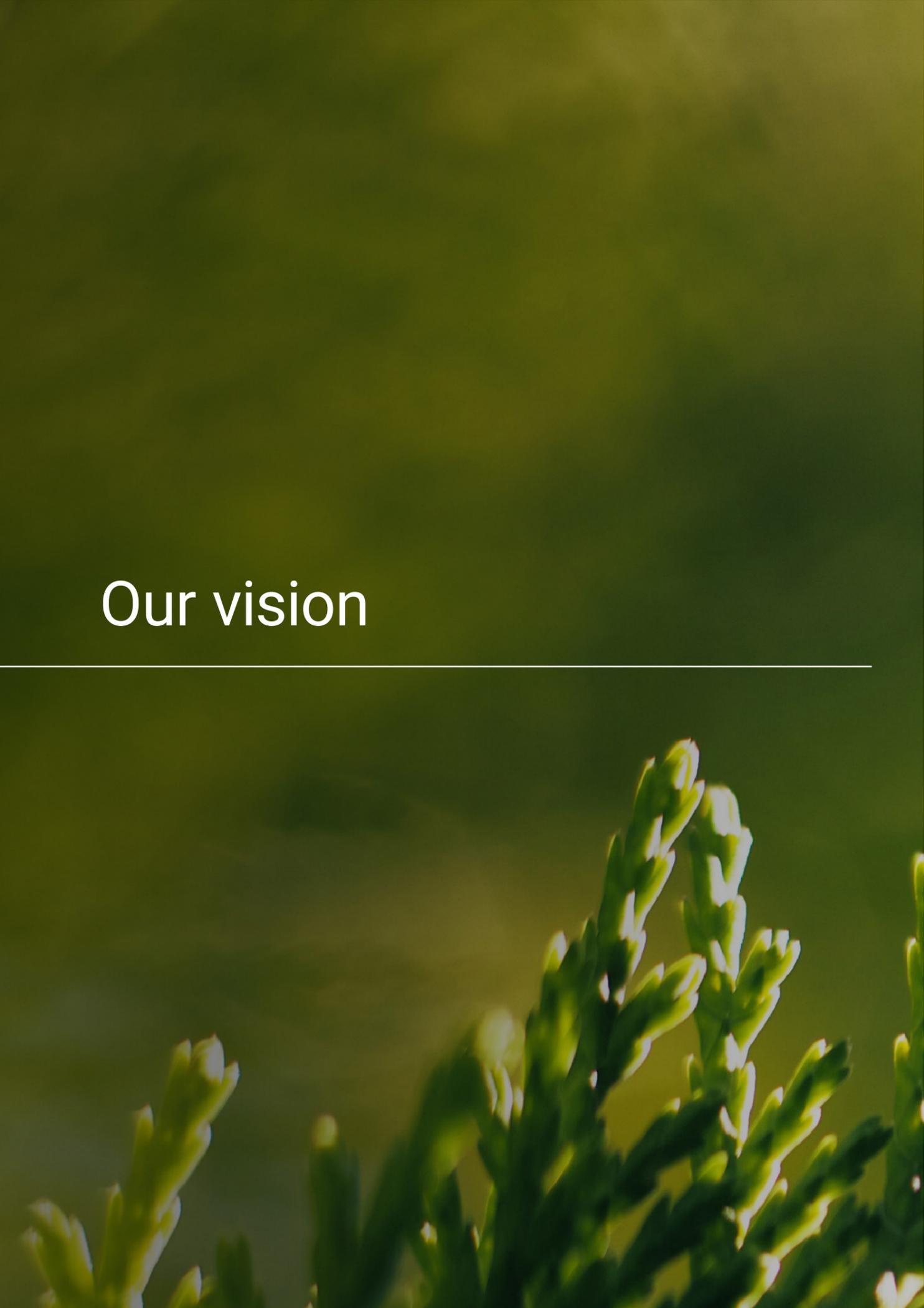
Our Vision, Mission and Aims

International Humanist and Ethical Union

A hand holding a white paper airplane against a blurred cityscape background. The hand is wearing an orange wristband. The text "Our mission" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Our mission

“Our mission is to be the **global representative body of the humanist movement**, uniting a diversity of non-religious organisations and individuals.”



Our vision

“We want everyone to live a life of dignity **in a world where universal human rights are respected and protected**, and where states uphold secularism.

We work **to build, support and represent the global humanist movement**, defending human rights, particularly those of non-religious people, and promoting humanist values worldwide.”

Aim I

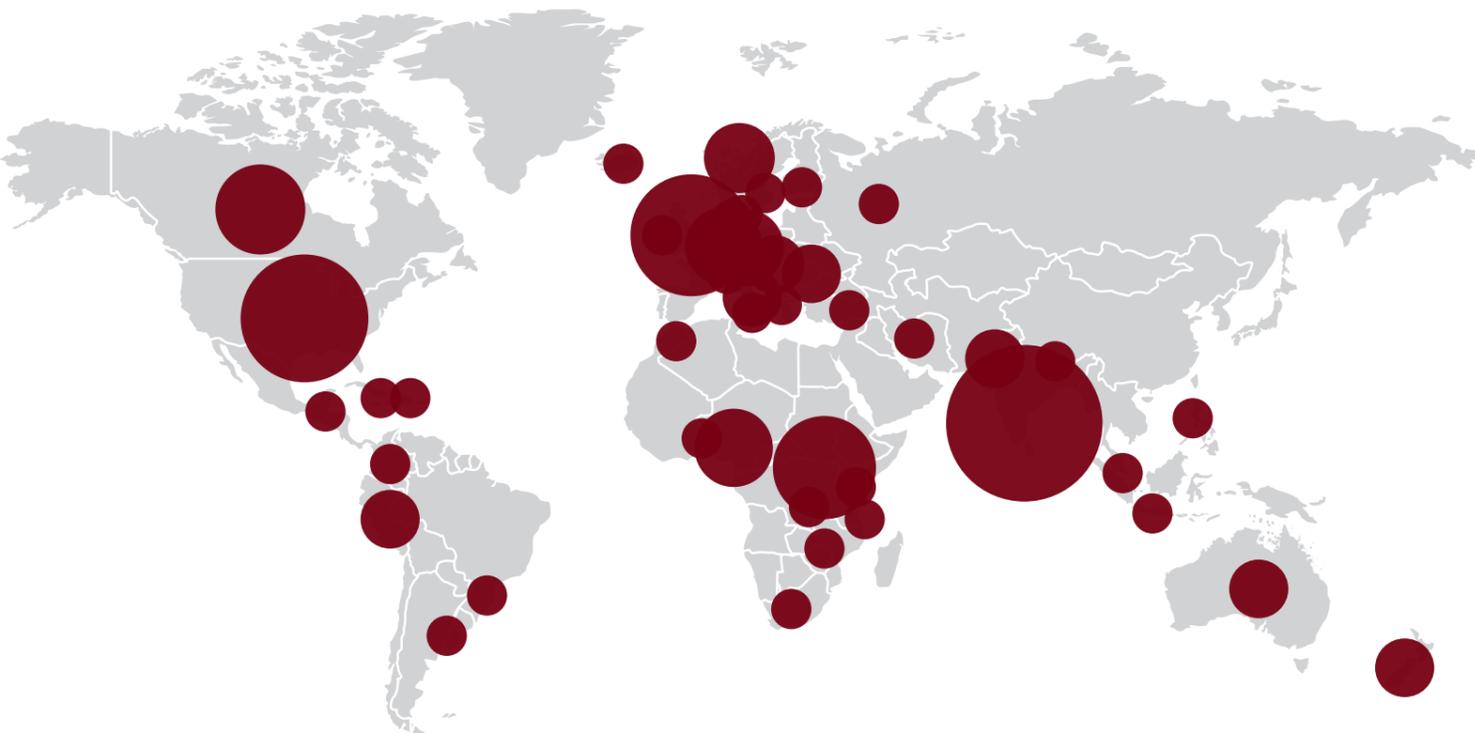
We will have successful and sustainable member organisations in every part of the world

Description

We will provide funding, training, intellectual resources and other support to stimulate, encourage and foster new and emerging humanist and other relevant organisations. We will concentrate our efforts in priority regions, but also operate opportunistically to support organisations as and where they arise.

Strategic objectives

- 1.1 We will increase the number of member organisations
- 1.2 We will have member organisations in every region of the world
- 1.3 We will provide funding to our member organisations
- 1.4 We will support our member organisations to be more effective, resilient and sustainable
- 1.5 We will have a clear and transparent process for membership applications and fees
- 1.6 We will engage with online and informal groups



Map of the membership presence of IHEU.
Circle size indicates the number of Member Organizations present in a country.

Aim II

We will create **a coordinated global movement** by **supporting and developing our network**

Description

We will bring together organisations of all non-theistic traditions, and the individuals engaged in the work of those organisations, to share experiences and good practice. We will support our member organisations to learn from each other, take joint action and become more involved in our work. We will support humanists at risk around the world, and encourage others to do so.

Strategic objectives

- 2.1 We will lead joint campaigns within our network
- 2.2 We will facilitate twinning programmes between member organisations
- 2.3 We will have a successful youth section
- 2.4 We will be a more recognisably international organisation



The IHEU brings together Member Organization representatives and individual humanists to cooperate on global issues. Here is for example a photo of 2014 World Humanist Congress in Oxford.

Aim III

We will influence and shape **international and regional government policies**



The IHEU works at the United Nations Human Rights Council, pictured, and other international institutions, to promote human rights and humanist values

Description

We will maintain delegations at priority international institutions to represent the global movement and advance our policies. We will work in cooperation with other NGOs and mobilise our member organisations to lobby their governments in support of initiatives that advance our policies.

Strategic objectives

- 3.1 We will review our current policy and create new policy on relevant matters
- 3.2 We will be the voice of the global movement at international institutions
- 3.3 We will support existing and new volunteer delegations around the world
- 3.4 We will promote an awareness and understanding of the global situation of law and policy regarding the non-religious
- 3.5 We will communicate effectively with our key audiences

Aim IV

We will have sufficient reputation, resources, and effectiveness to achieve our objectives

Description

We will expand our staff and volunteer team. We will secure funding from multiple sources, including individual donors, member organisations, national and regional governments and grant-making bodies.

Strategic objectives

- 4.1 We will raise more money
- 4.2 We will develop and sell merchandise
- 4.3 We will be a recognisable brand within the global movement
- 4.4 We will be governed by a diverse and effective Board
- 4.5 We will ensure our finances are managed effectively
- 4.6 We will increase our staff team
- 4.7 We will recruit more volunteers to support us



A panel event in parallel with the IHEU General Assembly, 2017. Our Member Organizations come together every year to form the democratic core of the IHEU and to elect our Board.



The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization incorporated in New York, USA. And registered in England, number FC020642.

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