



Humanists
INTERNATIONAL

**At the heart of
a vibrant global
humanist
community**

Annual Report 2018







Contents

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
The Objectives of Humanists International	4
Global highlights	6
Our people	10
Key figures in 2018	12
Highlights	14
Successful and sustainable Member Organizations in every part of the world	18
Member Organizations which are networked together as a coordinated global movement	22
International and regional government policies are shaped by our policy agenda	26
Sufficient reputation, financial and human resources, and administrative effectiveness to achieve our goals	33

Foreword

2018 was an extraordinary year of change for Humanists International

We began to see the results of our decision in recent years to invest more resources into supporting the growth and development of humanism in the global south and also to make our central organization more representative of global diversity. This was a very welcome development, a strong personal mission for me, and is thanks to the generosity of our Member Organizations, supporters and donors.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, we were working to prepare the organization for its change in name, a full re-brand, and a new website built from the ground up to serve the needs of Humanists International and our members.

In 2018 our General Assembly took a stand against the politics of division that we see spreading around the world. This carefully crafted resolution was over two years in the making, to set out a thoughtful and considered way forward for humanist organizations. You can read more about this on page 9 of this report.

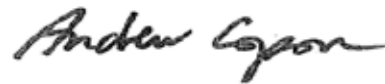
With the spread of partisan media and social media manipulation, the rise of a violent new right-wing extremism, and nationalist politics around the world - humanism is needed more now than ever before.

Looking to the future, the Board will be looking to widen the support it offers to humanist organizations, to include not just developing organizations in the

global south, but also to more organizations which are more established but could stand to benefit greatly from being helped to reach the “next step” of their development. We want to do what we can to share good practice, and source new training and support options for all our members.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support of Humanists International.

Thank you,



Andrew Copson
President



“In 2018 our General Assembly took a stand against the politics of division that we see spreading around the world.”

Introduction

A year of strong growth and key achievements

In 2018 a significant focus was placed on fundraising: we have to ensure that the finances of Humanists International are stable, diverse and secure for the future. In 2018 we worked to increase the income we receive from individual donors, and organizations, in addition to the valuable funds we receive from our Member Organizations.

I'm very pleased to say that this year we have taken important steps towards realising this goal. 2018 saw us increase our income by over 17% on the the previous year. This is to be celebrated, but we must ensure this continues, so that we can plan effectively for the future.

I'm sure you will agree with me that one of the most visible changes within the global humanist movement in recent times was the launch of our new branding early in 2019, for which a great deal of work was done throughout the past year. This is an exciting, welcoming and energetic new brand, and I'm sure you will agree with me that this is a much better fit for our organization.

This report will give you a helpful overview of our main activities in 2018, and give you a flavour of exciting things to come.

In particular we saw excellent progress on our advocacy programme, reestablishing our presence at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights after many years. We also saw the highest number of new Member Organizations in any year previously, with 23 new members of our international family. Our Humanists At Risk campaign helped us raise £20,000 to support over 60 individuals at risk of persecution around the world.

I would like to thank all my colleagues, the Board and our wonderful volunteers for all their hard work!

Thank you,



Gary McLelland
Chief Executive



The Objectives of Humanists International

Since 1952, Humanists International has been the global representative body of the humanist movement, uniting a diversity of non-religious organizations and individuals.

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.

Global Highlights



“Humanists International members and supporters in Ireland were vocal in supporting the “YES” campaign”



Ireland removed 'blasphemy' law from constitution

Humanists International members and supporters in Ireland were vocal in supporting the "YES" campaign to remove "blasphemy" from the constitution in a much-anticipated referendum. Member organization Atheist Ireland in particular had campaigned for the change for many years, making the case, lobbying the government, and highlighting the anachronism and injustice of "blasphemy" laws internationally. Victory was declared on 28 October 2019.

hmnts.in/victory-ireland

Growing global Support for ending blasphemy laws

The good news from Ireland follows a similar campaign in Canada, where in 2018 British Columbia Humanist Association and other free speech activists successfully pushed for the country to repeal "blasphemous libel". At the end of the years similar legislation was pending in New Zealand, where in August 2018 our members Humanist NZ had organized a parliamentary event highlighting the international concerns around the country's "blasphemy" law.

Humanists International has worked via the End Blasphemy Laws campaign to support all the organizations campaigning for repeal, and since 2015 there have been "blasphemy" laws abolished in Malta, Norway, Alsace-Lorraine in France, and Iceland.

Celebrating a decade of Humanism in Denmark

In October Humanists International President, Andrew Copson, was a special guest a celebration dinner organized to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Danish Humanist Association.

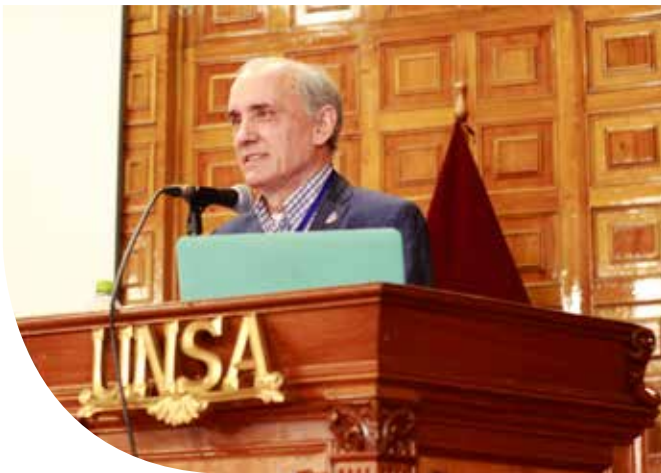
Since its founding in 2008, the Danish Humanist Association has made significant achievements. From establishing an increasingly popular programme of humanist ceremonies, to becoming a serious voice within Danish politics and society.

One of the organizations major international achievements was its successful campaign to repeal its blasphemy law in 2017. This was supported by the Humanists International.

First Latin American Freethinkers Meeting

The conference took place from 24-26 May. Three days of presentations and workshops, with 5 main panels on Secularism, Critical Thinking, Pseudosciences, Gender Equality, and other humanist themes: the whole meeting was live-streamed on the Facebook page of the Encuentro, thanks to the funding of a Humanist Regional Hub grant from Humanists International.

The presentation of the Growth & Development Officer of Humanists International was entitled “¡Viva el Humanismo! Humanists International y el crecimiento del movimiento humanista global” (“Long life to Humanism! Humanists International and the growth of the global humanist movement”). The Growth & Development Officer spoke about what is humanism, Humanists International's work to grow the humanist movement around the world, and the different challenges faces from our Member Organizations in different parts of the world.



Asian Humanist conference

Humanists from across Asia came together in Kaohsiung, Taiwan for the 2018 Asian Humanism Conference (29 - 30 December, 2018) under the auspices of our youth section, now known as Young Humanists International.

Representatives from India, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, as well as Taiwan, participated in a series of lectures and workshops designed to help the various local groups shape their strategic goals and collaborate on regional efforts “to combat dogmatism and willful ignorance in an era of identity politics and fake news”.

hmnts.in/asia-2018

Humanists International General Assembly

Members of the humanist and rationalist community in New Zealand and delegates from humanist organizations around the world met together in Auckland, New Zealand in August, attending our annual General Assembly and a conference organized by Humanist NZ, and the Rationalist and Humanist Association. The programme of events included a meeting in the parliament in Wellington where participants urged the government to scrap New Zealand's "blasphemy" law; a long-awaited bill has since come before representatives and been passed, finally repealing "blasphemy" for the first time in the country's modern history.

At the public conference in Auckland on Saturday, we heard from speakers including Te Henare on how "there's no Māori word for 'atheist'", Gulalai Ismal spoke on "How Humanism can help us counter violent extremism", Andrew Copson spoke on the non-religious arguments against secularism and how they can be answered, Jackie Clark on her organization The Aunties working with vulnerable women in New Zealand, and Max Wallace and Kim Stainton on religion and secularization in the Pacific islands.

As ever, the coming-together of humanists from around the world for our General Assembly meant an influx of new faces and ideas for the local humanist scene, an opportunity which was seized upon with great enthusiasm by our Kiwi colleagues, who hosted a professional and varied conference, who coped with the usual – and not so usual – challenges of international relations with great resourcefulness and alacrity, and who organized a tremendous cultural tour for those able to participate.



For a full report on these events see: hmnts.in/ga-2018

Our people

Our Board



President:
Andrew Copson
United Kingdom



Vice-president:
Anne-France Ketelaer
Belgium



Treasurer:
Boris van der Ham
Netherlands
From 5 August 2018



Treasurer:
Roar Johnsen
Norway
Until 5 August 2018



Becky Hale
United States of America



Gulalai Ismail
Pakistan



Kristin Mile
Norway
From 5 August 2018



Kato Mukasa
Uganda



Uttam Niraula
Nepal



David Pineda
Guatemala



Rein Zunderdorp
Netherlands
Until 5 August 2018

Our Staff Team



Chief Executive:
Gary McLelland



**Director of
Communications
& Campaigns:**
Bob Churchill



**Director of
Advocacy:**
Elizabeth O'Casey



**Growth &
Development
Officer:**
Giovanni Gaetani

Volunteers



UN, Geneva:
Kacem El
Ghazzali



UN, New York:
John Wagner



UN, New York:
Margaretha
Jones



Council of Europe:
Renate Bauer



Research:
Elisa Conti



Advocacy:
Tars van
Litsenborgh



Advocacy:
Alexandra
Militz



Advocacy:
Eline Labey

Key figures in 2018

20



20 European Union Foreign
Office staff trained on Freedom
of Religion or Belief by
Humanists International

23



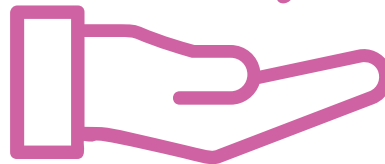
We delivered 23 statements
at the United Nations

£20,000

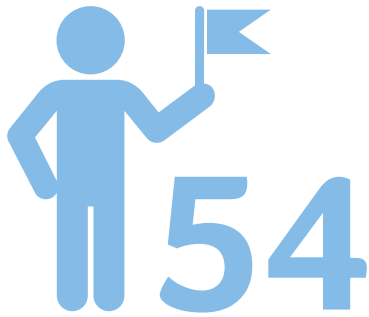


Raised over £20,000 GBP to
support our work protecting
humanists at risk

£13,400



£13,400 GBP given out in grants to
help support individual humanists
and organizations

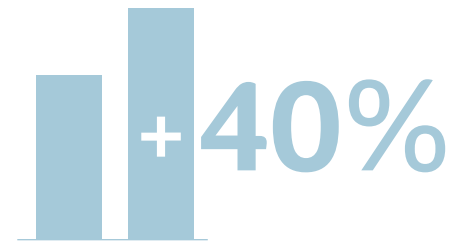


54 delegates at our General Assembly in New Zealand

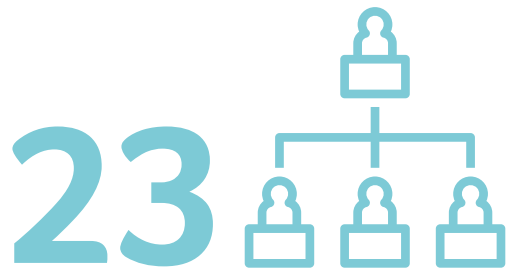
60



Advised or directly supported 60 individuals who were in serious risk of persecution

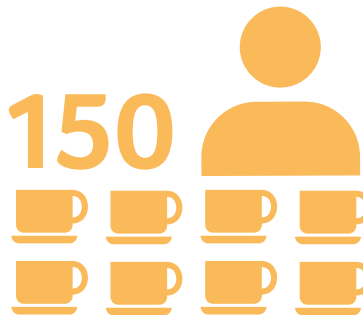


Gained over 40% on our Facebook followers (rising from 22.8K to 32.1K by the end of the year)



23 new Member Organizations

150



Over 150 people took part in the 8 Café Humaniste events funded by Humanists International

Highlights

Rebranding

In February 2019 we launched the new name for our organization: "Humanists International", complete with a new brand and a new website. Messages received from members, supporters, and the general public via social channels and email, were almost universally positive. We hope this demonstrates the importance of the active consultations with all members and stakeholders that had taken place since the 2016 General Assembly in Malta and the years in between. In 2018 we completed consultation on our positioning and approach to the rebrand and began working with a graphic designer to develop our new logo and the wider brand. We then worked with a web design company to translate the content from the old website into a form which would highlight the new brand and provide new functionality.

A special announcement video with the tagline "We're evolving" was prepared in-house and was seen by 158,000 people on Facebook alone. All traffic to iheu.org is transferring through to our new domain at humanists.international, and the new website announces the change of name to first-time visitors. Based on enquiries into the office, members and supporters were well-prepared: there has been very little confusion about the name-change, so we think this was time well-spent and well-planned.

African Commission

2018 saw a return to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for Humanists International. We last had representation there, by Leo Igwe, over ten years ago. This year, the Director of Advocacy travelled to Nouakchott in Mauritania for the spring session of the Commission. Whilst there she was able to deliver a statement to the conference, meet with the lawyers of Mohamed Mkhaitir, the anti-slavery writer imprisoned in Mauritania, and raise awareness of the ongoing slavery in the country. In 2019, we plan to return and continue highlighting humanist concerns on the continent.



Ahmad Al Shamri case

Another case we have sought to highlight is that of Ahmad Al Shamri, whose death sentence reportedly for "atheism" was upheld by the highest court in Saudi Arabia in 2018. In September 2018 we issued a "call to action" (hmnts.in/ahmad) to all members and supporters on the case, providing pro forma text for national organizations to approach their Saudi embassies.

We raised the case multiple times at the Human Rights Council in Geneva and with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK



Challenging hatred and division

In 2018 we worked with members and a drafting committee to produce The Auckland Declaration Against the Politics of Division. It discusses the threat from rising populism, nationalism, and the demonization of minorities, across all regions of the world. Members approved the resolution at the General Assembly in 2018. Inadvertently, the resolution spoke to many of the issues discussed in the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque massacres in March 2019, and we believe it is important that we carry the mandate of The Auckland Declaration through to our work in 2019:

to increase our focus on the kind of incitement to hatred, white nationalism and anti-immigrant rhetoric that divides communities and in extremes leads to hate crimes and atrocities.

The Auckland Declaration against the Politics of Division:

The right of all people to participate in the government of their society has been a foundation of human freedom and happiness wherever it has existed. We are fortunate to live in a world in which, through the efforts of humanists as well as religious believers, democracy is widely recognised as being the most just, rational, and effective form of governance available to humanity. Today, more people than ever before have the ability to shape the political direction of the community in which they live.

However, wherever there is democracy, there is always the risk of its abuse by demagogues, who seek to exploit the genuine grievances of sections of the population by misdirecting blame onto unpopular minorities, which may include pre-existing and competing political groups who are maligned as “elites”. Demagogues frequently employ intolerant forms of nationalism as well as other forms of prejudice and hatred. Their rhetoric appeals to negative emotions rather than to empathy and reason.

This politics of division is resurgent in many parts of the world. It is exemplified in a new generation of so-called “strong men” politicians, who purport to stand up for popular interests, but who are eager to diminish human rights and disregard minorities in order to gain and retain power for their own ends. They are a present threat to human dignity, the rule of law, human rights, and freedom globally.

Against this tendency, we affirm:

The best ethical foundation from which to approach the problems of today’s world and the future of us all is to try to see humanity as one global community. The greatest

achievements of human progress and solidarity can be won by rejecting the politics of xenophobia and tribalism and instead working together for the common good.

Democracy is much more than a periodic opportunity to vote. For democracy to flourish it must be underpinned by the rule of law and the principle of equality under the law for all. Respect for human rights as defined in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, including the right to freedom of expression, should be a

minimum standard for all democracies. The human rights of minorities, not just majorities, must be upheld and protected. Freedom of expression must include the right to openly criticize political parties, leaders, and policies. As well as voting positively for representatives, democracy must respect the value of a free press and include systems of transparency, accountability, and the capacity for the people to criticise and peacefully replace failing and unpopular governments.

Democracies can thrive only in a culture of open debate. Debate and rational inquiry should seek to settle disagreements in a peaceful and tolerant manner.

Today’s problems are more complex than ever before. Any politician claiming to have easy answers to them must be subjected to great scrutiny.

Across the world the speed of human progress is accelerating but the fruits of human progress are not being evenly enjoyed. Infant mortality is declining, life expectancy and income are increasing but many are still in poverty in a world of plenty. Too often, human rights are violated, there is insecurity, and in many countries there are new threats to

economic stability, the environment, and social protection. These problems should be addressed by individuals, non-government organizations, governments, and international organizations.

We reject the politics of division and call on all politicians and citizens to reject the over-simplified policy-making and rhetoric which characterize it and to recognise the damage to humanity that divisive politics can cause.

We commit ourselves to addressing the social causes of the politics of division: social inequality, a lack of respect for human rights, popular misconceptions about the nature of democracy, and a lack of global solidarity; and we call upon our member organizations and all humanists to join us in this work.

We urge humanists internationally to uphold and advocate the values of democracy, rule of law, equality, and human rights, and to identify and resist the politics of division wherever they see it in their own nations and internationally.

General Assembly, Auckland, 2018

Successful and sustainable Member Organizations in every part of the world

State of membership

At the end of 2018, Humanists International's ratified membership was:

Full Member
Organizations: **34**

Specialist Member
Organizations: **9**

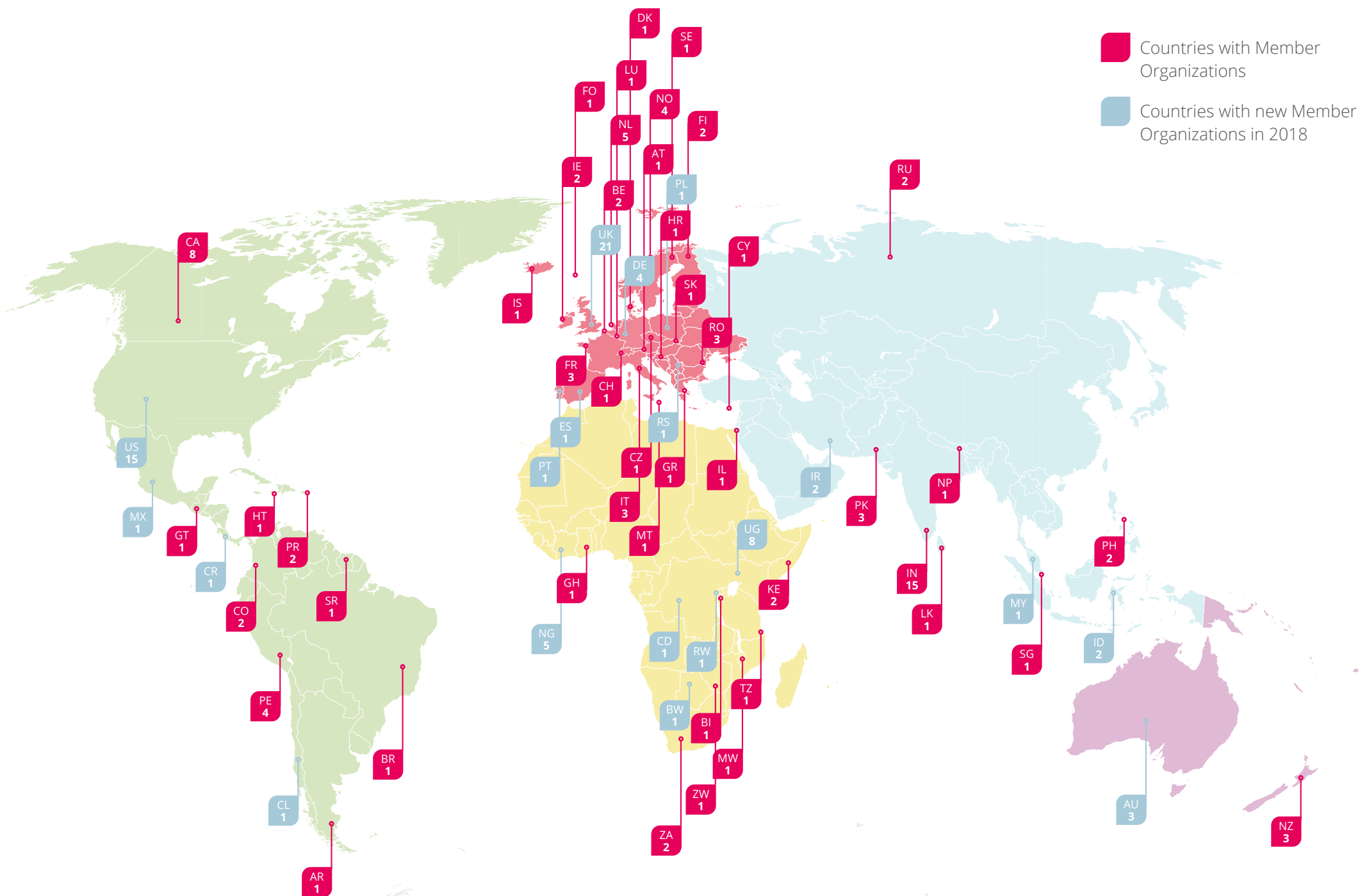
Associate Member
Organizations: **123**

Total: 166

New members in 2018:

1. Advocates Abroad (USA)
2. Alliance for Secular Nigeria (Nigeria)
3. Arab Humanists (UK/Egypt)
4. Association for Humanism (Spain)
5. Association for Republicanism and Secularism (Portugal)
6. Bavarian Humanist Association (Germany)
7. Botswana Humanist Society (Botswana)
8. East London Humanist (United Kingdom)
9. Freedom Centre Uganda (Uganda)
10. Freedom From Religion Foundation (United States)
11. House of Secularism of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo)
12. Iranian Humanistic and Ethical Committee (Iran)
13. Kasese Freethinkers Club (Uganda)
14. Kazimierz Lyszczyński Foundation (Poland)
15. Malaysian Atheists & Secular Humanists (Malaysia)
16. Malcolm Childrens' Foundation (Uganda)
17. Mexican Humanists (Mexico)
18. Rationalist Assn of New South Wales in Sydney (Australia)
19. Rwanda Humanist Association (Rwanda)
20. Sandya Institute (Indonesia)
21. Secular Action (Chile)
22. Secular Humanism in Costa Rica (Costa Rica)
23. Secular Humanist Association Humans (Serbia)

- Countries with Member Organizations
- Countries with new Member Organizations in 2018



“In 2018 Humanists International organized eight events in the Café Humaniste series...”



Growth and Development support

Café Humaniste

Café Humaniste is an event series conceived and organised by Humanists International, bringing people together to discuss questions of interest and concern to humanists, wherever they are from.

The events are organised by Humanists International in collaboration with local Member Organizations in countries all over the world. Humanists International provides financial and media support while the local organization manages the logistics for the event itself.

In 2018 Humanists International organized eight events in the Café Humaniste series, in collaboration with its national and local Member Organizations. The total budget for 2018 was £2400. Here is the list of events and the respective themes:



Suriname – 19 January

Human rights and transgender issues

Philippines – 10 March

Humanism and Science

Kenya – 17 March

Freedom of belief or religious freedom?

Philippines – 24 March

Humanism through Arts

Philippines – 7 April

Book launch: “From Superstition to Reason: A Journey Towards Humanism”

Uganda – 20 April

Secularism in Africa

Nigeria – 9 June

The humanist case for peace and tolerance

Nigeria – 7 July

Superstition in Nigeria

Regional Development Grants

In 2018 we awarded 5 grants for a total of £4,000

- **£1500 to Urban House Suriname** for a social media campaign to spread the meaning of humanism in Suriname. The campaign, called #Humancohesiesuriname, was successfully launched on 1 March 2019.
- **£800 awarded to HAPI** (the Humanist Alliance Philippines, International) to help members of HAPI to attend the General Assembly. The travel grants were successfully allocated to six individual members of HAPI.
- **£700 to the Freethinkers Association of Arequipa** for the professional recording and live streaming of the Latin American Freethinkers Meeting. All videos are available on the YouTube channel of the Meeting.
- **£500 to Malawi Association for Secular Humanism (ASH)** for the creation of a new website and the production of brochures and leaflets on Humanism in English and Chichewa.
- **£500 to the Humanist Association of Ghana** to run a multi-level Critical Thinking project in collaboration with its major partner Learning Support Solution.

Travel grants to the General Assembly

We awarded five travel grants for a total of £5,050 to help representatives of our Member Organizations to attend the General Assembly in Auckland, New Zealand, on 3-5 August 2018.

The representatives that attended the General Assembly with the help of our travel grants are the following:



Namyalo Viola –
HALEA Uganda
(Uganda)



Ramdeo Vishwabandhu
– Ambedkar Social
Institute (India)



Shymal Sagar Kumar – Pacific
Island Secular
Association (Fiji)



Alvin John C. Ballares HAPI
(Philippines)



Iaroslav Golovin -
Russian Humanist
Society (Russia)

“How to” guides

Having published “How to start a humanist organization” (hmnts.in/how-to-one) the previous year, in 2018 we published the second part of our guide for member organizations, this time on “How to run a humanist organization” (hmnts.in/how-to-two).

Both parts of the guide are designed to further the ongoing development of the global humanist movement. They are conceived both for newer humanist organizations, and also for larger or well-established humanist organizations that could take inspiration from the many practical examples included.



Welcoming new organizations

In 2018 we welcomed into the international movement 22 new Member Organizations

Nine of these are in countries with no existing members, namely:

- Chile
- Costa Rica
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Poland
- Portugal
- Rwanda
- Serbia

Amongst the largest organizations welcomed in 2018 was the Freedom From Religion Foundation, which has an astonishing record of legal victories in favour of the separation of state and church in the United States, with more than 85 First Amendment lawsuits since 1977.

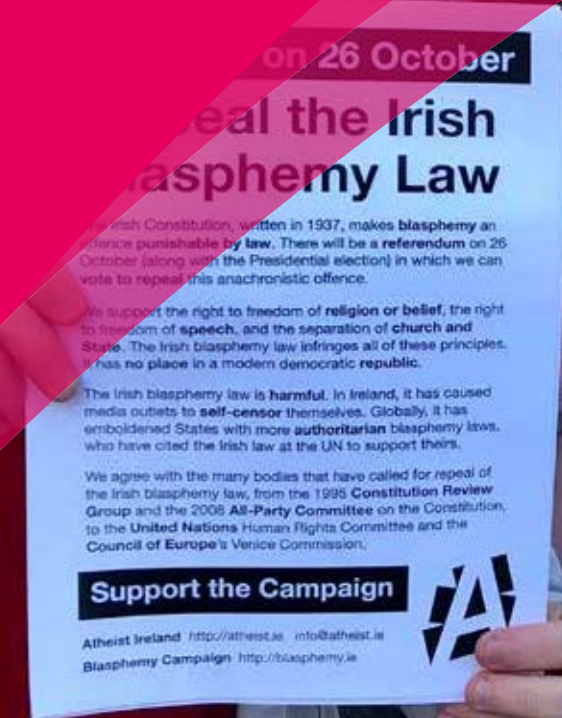
We welcomed the Bavarian Humanist Association, one of the largest humanist organizations in Germany with 2,100 individual supporters, operating various schools, kindergarten, student houses, and humanist counselling centers.

In Chile we welcomed our first humanist organization, Secular Action, a group of secularist activists campaigning mainly for the separation of State and Church and the promotion of a secular, neutral and non-confessional education in all public schools.

In Malaysia, where Humanists International had no previous Member Organizations, we welcomed the Malaysian Atheists & Secular Humanists, a new organization focused on advocacy for freedom of religion or belief, education and promotion of humanist values as well as educational, outreach and community activities for the betterment of society, guided by the principles of humanism.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo we welcomed the House of Secularism of Kinshasa, an organization working for the promotion of the secular worldview in the country. The group already has a deep relationship with our two Belgian Member Organizations, demens.nu and the Centre d'Action Laïque.

Member Organizations which are networked together as a coordinated global movement



Irish blasphemy campaign

In 2018 we supported the campaign to repeal a requirement in the Irish constitution that the country must criminalize “blasphemy”. We worked with Atheist Ireland to coordinate a letter from more than 20 people accused of “blasphemy” in various countries, which was then published as an open letter in the Sunday Times of Ireland, and our Chief Executive spoke at the humanist conference in Carlingford, Ireland, rallying activists to ensure that the referendum went the right way. Working with members in this way helps them to emphasize in their own campaign – for the public and for lawmakers – the “international” arguments in their favour: in particular, about the dangerous precedents for freedom of expression that such laws set on the world stage, and how embarrassing it should be for the country if the referendum was to fail.

The campaign was successful: hmnts.in/victory-ireland

To the good people of Ireland,

We are human rights activists, writers, and campaigners for equality, and committed to freedom and peace. We have all been threatened with fines, imprisonment, torture, or death for “blasphemy” in our countries. In some cases, our friends, family, and colleagues have been brutally murdered. We know that our plight may seem distant to your daily concerns but it is linked.

It makes all our work that bit more difficult when western democratic countries maintain laws that criminalize debate, satire and criticism concerning religious beliefs. The existence of blasphemy laws in European democracies like yours gives cover and support to the laws under which we are persecuted around the world. At the same time it lends false legitimacy to the extremists who claim that “blasphemy” is a sin which warrants intimidation and murder.

“Blasphemy” laws are not hate speech laws and can never work that way. That’s because “blasphemy” laws always potentially criminalize legitimate free expression about religious beliefs, practices, institutions or representatives; expression which is often morally necessary.

You have the opportunity to send a clear signal to the global family of nations that “blasphemy” laws contravene the human rights to freedom of thought and freedom of expression and should be repealed.

We appeal to you from our hearts to seize this opportunity, in solidarity with all those people from around the world – religious and non-religious alike – who are persecuted under “blasphemy” accusations.

Signatories:

Alexander Aan, Indonesia	Azam Khan, Bangladesh
Bonya Ahmed, Bangladesh (now United States)	Filippos Loizos, Greece
Choity Ahmed, Bangladesh (now Germany)	Asif Mohiuddin, Bangladesh (now Germany)
Rana Ahmed, Saudi Arabia (now Germany)	Taslina Nasrin, Bangladesh (now India)
Waleed Al-Housseini, Palestine (now France)	Alber Saber, Egypt (now abroad)
Mubarak Bala, Nigeria	Mohamed Salih, Sudan (now Uganda)
Ahmedur Rashid Chowdhury, Bangladesh (now Norway)	Prithu Sanyal, Bangladesh (now Germany)
Kacem El Ghazzali, Morocco (now Switzerland)	R A Sattar, Pakistan (now New Zealand)
Ensaf Haidar, Saudi Arabia (now Canada)	Amed Sherwan, Iraq (now Germany)
Fauzia Ilyas, Pakistan (now Netherlands)	Thessalonika Pride, organizing committee, Greece
Gulalai Ismail, Pakistan	Malaysian Atheists and Secular Humanists, Malaysia
Siti Kasim, Malaysia	

Strengthening ties with humanists in Latin America

Our Growth and Development Officer visited four Latin American countries from 18-30 May. He attended 5 conferences, including the First Latin American Freethinkers Meeting held in Arequipa (Peru) from 24-26 May. During the visit he met hundreds of secular activists in Guatemala, Colombia, Peru and Chile and he had the opportunity to meet almost all Humanists International Member Organizations in the region. He also took the opportunity to invite new groups to join our international family and to implement to the fullest Humanists International's mission: to promote humanism, to support and connect humanists, and to represent the humanist movement internationally.

His report on the visit is at: hmnts.in/latam-trip



Showcasing humanism in India and Nepal

Early in 2018, the Director of Advocacy and the Chief Executive made a trip to India at the invitation of the organizers of the World Atheist Conference. This was also a fantastic opportunity for us to renew and strengthen the relationships with our members all across India. Humanism has an ancient and fascinating history in the region. Over the course of their two week visit, they met with humanist and human rights campaigners all across India, as well as meeting with humanist colleagues in Nepal.

You can read more about their trip here: hmnts.in/india-nepal

Young Humanists International

Alongside the Humanists International General Assembly in Auckland, August 2019, our youth section met, representing the work and interests of the young humanist organizations around the world. Delegates at the youth GA — the last at which they would be known as the International Humanist and Ethical Youth Organization (IHEYO) — young delegates finalized procedures for the unification of IHEYO membership with the parent body. Elections were held for various posts, including the re-election of youth section president Marieke Prien. Elected officers discussed with the rest of the membership the goals and strategies of the youth section, as well considering the impact of re-naming and re-branding. A new grants programme facilitated by Humanists International to enable humanist work with young people was established. Delegates discussed the next Asian Humanist Conference which would take place in December 2019. And delegates decided to implement a new Instagram account for the youth section.



Consultation on the European Secularity Index

Based on his work with the Humanists International *Freedom of Thought Report*, our Director of Communications & Campaigns, Bob Churchill, was invited to participate in an advisory capacity in a committee session for the European Humanist Federation's upcoming *Secularity Index*, which will focus on state attitudes to religion or belief in Europe.

“A new grants programme facilitated by Humanists International to enable humanist work with young people was established.”

International and regional government policies are shaped by our policy agenda



UN Human Rights Council

In 2018, Humanists International was present at all sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council. We continued to lobby on relevant resolutions, meet with decision makers and other stakeholders and raise human rights cases of concern.

In total the team delivered 18 oral statements – some of them in Arabic – and five written statements. The subjects of statements included: freedom of thought and belief; freedom of expression and assembly; anti-apostasy and anti-blasphemy laws; LGBTI equality; sexual and reproductive and health and rights; harmful traditional practices; and “witchcraft” related abuse. Countries covered included Iran, Pakistan, Nepal, Guatemala, Russia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, India, Venezuela, Mauritania, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Botswana, Tanzania, Ireland, Paraguay, Ghana, and the Vatican.

For a number of these country statements, the advocacy team worked with Member Organizations to draft the statements and deliver them jointly: Atheist & Agnostic Alliance Pakistan, Ex-blogger from Bangladesh, Guatemalan Humanists, Humanist Association of Nigeria, Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations, Russian Humanist Society, Society for Humanism Nepal. Humanists International also made joint statements with other NGOs including, International Federation for Human Rights, Sexual Rights Initiative, and Center for Reproductive Rights, Freedom Now, and Pen International.

We also joined a coalition of NGOs calling on Member States of the United Nations not to grant membership of the Human Rights Council to states which are “unfit” due to their record on human rights and international cooperation: hmnts.in/un-unfit

The Director of Advocacy spoke on three panels in Geneva and organized a side event. In March she spoke on a panel at an event organized by the EU mission, which focussed on a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Religion or Belief; in June, she was a panellist at a side-event on the UN Faith for Rights Initiative. In September, the Director of Advocacy spoke on a panel as part of a two-day expert meeting on witchcraft-related abuse.

Whilst in Geneva for the June session, the Director of Advocacy also attended the UN Human Rights Committee examination of Norway and spoke at the pre-hearing briefing on behalf of the Norwegian Humanist Association. She was following up submissions the Norwegians had made to the committee concerning human rights issues around the constitutionally established religion in the Country.

US Withdrawal from the UN Human Rights Council

As many will be aware, 2018 saw the USA leave the UN Human Rights Council; Humanists International was embroiled in its exit when then-US-Ambassador, Nikki Haley blamed Humanists International and a number of other NGOs for their leaving. Humanists International was part of a group of NGOs, which included Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, who had lobbied against a US-led resolution to reduce the role for civil society organizations at the United Nations through a process of ‘efficiency savings.’ Following the US decision to withdraw from the Human Rights Council, we received a letter from Haley accusing Humanists International of trying to “undermine [the US] attempts to improve the Human Rights Council,” and being “on the side of Russia and China, and opposite the United States, on a key human rights issue.” As an organization, Humanists International has always supported multilateralism and the vision of the United Nations. This does not mean we are an uncritical friend. Indeed, there are legitimate criticisms of the UN Human Rights Council and other bodies, which we have voiced ourselves vociferously since its inception and have also shared some of the US concerns publicly. However, we believe it is vital that states continue to engage with the process and support what is currently the only international forum engaging states that exists to promote and protect human rights globally.

You can read more here: hmnts.in/us-withdraw

At the United Nations in New York

Humanists International has continued to monitor and engage with the United Nations in New York.

In October, the Director of Advocacy Elizabeth O'Casey and our volunteer representative, John Wagner, attended sessions of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly and side meetings. Those meetings included a meeting with Knox Thames, Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia at the U.S. Department of State, and meetings with UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues; and UN Special Rapporteur for freedom of religion or belief.

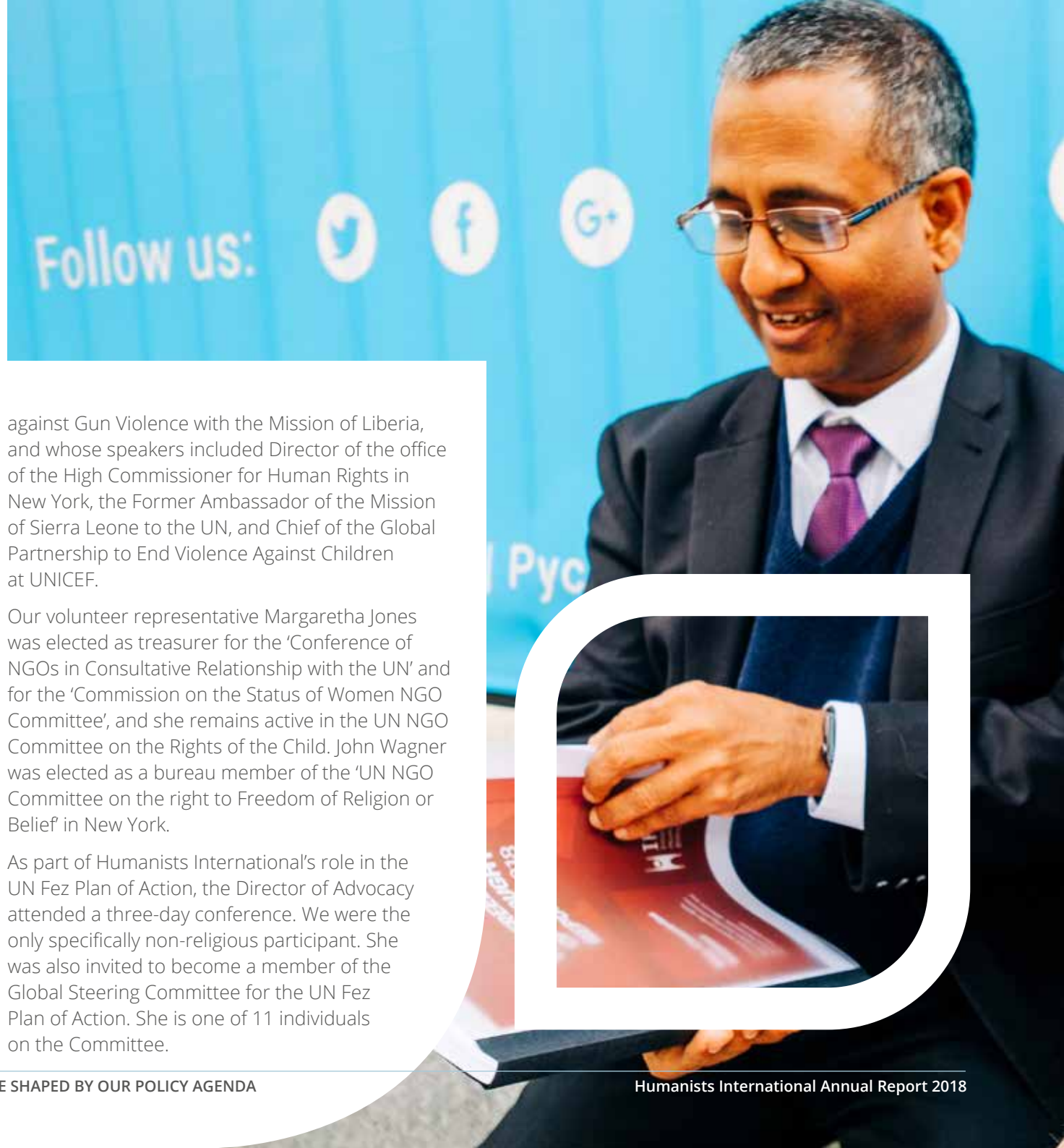
2018 also saw Humanists International continue its engagement with the UN mandate on Cultural Rights as well as aiming to ensure humanist organizations understand the importance of these rights for our community. Following an excellent report on the impact of fundamentalism and extremism on the cultural rights of women, this year the UN Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights, Dr Karima Bennouna, wrote a report on the need to defend our universal right to artistic, and cultural expression and scientific inquiry whilst ensuring culture is not misused to undermine other human rights. Humanists International helped organize a panel discussion that included the Dr Bennouna and Nobel prize laureate, Wole Soyinka.

Other events that Humanists International helped organize in New York this year included a concert celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and an event on Youth

against Gun Violence with the Mission of Liberia, and whose speakers included Director of the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York, the Former Ambassador of the Mission of Sierra Leone to the UN, and Chief of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children at UNICEF.

Our volunteer representative Margaretha Jones was elected as treasurer for the 'Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN' and for the 'Commission on the Status of Women NGO Committee', and she remains active in the UN NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child. John Wagner was elected as a bureau member of the 'UN NGO Committee on the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief' in New York.

As part of Humanists International's role in the UN Fez Plan of Action, the Director of Advocacy attended a three-day conference. We were the only specifically non-religious participant. She was also invited to become a member of the Global Steering Committee for the UN Fez Plan of Action. She is one of 11 individuals on the Committee.





At the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

2018 saw Humanists International re-establish its presence at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. hmnts.in/achpr

For its spring session, the Commission met in Nouakchott Mauritania, and Humanists International's Director of Advocacy attended. Whilst there, she made a statement reaffirming a core advocacy message of Humanists International: Tradition, Culture and Religion cannot be instrumentalized to undermine universal human rights. The statement partly provided an overview of concerns that Humanists International and its members have in the region in terms of human rights, and provided a specific response to a growing movement by states at the African Union to shrink the space of civil society observers at the Commission by using the notion of African traditions and cultures to reject the status of LGBTI NGOs and other groups.

The Director of Advocacy also took the opportunity of being in Mauritania to meet with the lawyers of Mohamed MKheitir (the anti-slavery writer in prison on apostasy charges on whose behalf we have advocated for many years). She liaised with the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights and provided her with information from the lawyers and concerned NGOs so that a group of UN Special Rapporteurs could make a public statement on the case. Whilst in Mauritania, the Director of Advocacy also met with a journalist and anti-slavery activist and attended a two-day NGO forum.

Humanists International was also part of a NGO network working on the case of Cheikh Ould Mohamed M'kheitir, held since 2014 on charges of blasphemy and apostasy for protesting the religious justification of slavery in Mauritania. Having highlighted the case in Geneva and in the Freedom of Thought Report since 2014, and having previously participated in diplomatic meetings about the case, in 2019 we also joined letter to Emmanuel Macron and to the African Commission calling for his release and a reversal of a recently introduced law making the death penalty compulsory for blasphemy crimes.



At the Organization for Security and Co-operation

Humanists International continued its presence at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe this year. Whilst in Warsaw for it, we delivered statements on blasphemy laws (with a specific call to Ireland), LGBTI Rights and the Holy See (Vatican), and freedom of the media.

At the Council of Europe

Alongside the Parliamentary Assembly meetings of the Council of Europe in January, Humanists International jointly organized a lunch briefing with International Planned Parenthood Federation, European Humanist Federation and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population & Development on the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Volunteer representative Renate Bauer participated in the meeting and also got a German Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Doris Barnet, to attend.

Work with the European Union

In cooperation with the European Humanist Federation we made a written submission on the implementation of the European Union Guidelines on promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief outside Europe. One of the recommendations included better linking the European Union country-based delegations with Humanists International Member Organizations.

Humanists International was part of a team which provided a two-day training course organized by the EU's External Action Service for representatives and staff working in the field on human rights cases and issues and desk officers in Brussels. The Director of Advocacy gave training specifically on the "belief"

element of Freedom of Religion or Belief, as well as on UN mechanisms and initiatives to help promote freedom of expression along with tackling intolerance and violations of the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Humanists International joined the European Artificial Intelligence Alliance, a private alliance which is aimed at a mobilisation of a diverse set of participants working on issues relating to Artificial Intelligence.



Freedom of Thought Report 2018



This year on 29 October 2018, we launched our seventh annual *Freedom of Thought Report*, with a presentation to coincide with the United Nations General Assembly in New York. At the event, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Ahmed Shaheed, said: “The *Freedom of Thought Report* has become an invaluable source of well-researched and important information for policymakers. The report highlights the range of discrimination that people can face around the world because of their non-religious beliefs, something that many would like to ignore.”

Read more here: fot.humanists.international

The Freedom of Thought Report examines every country on the rights, legal status, and discrimination against non-religious people.

For the first time, the 2018 edition contained a performance index, ranking countries according to how well they performed against the more than 60 boundary conditions assessed in the report. The report predominantly focuses on forms of legal discrimination across four areas: constitution and government, education and children’s rights, wider society, and values and freedoms.

Continued...

“The Freedom of Thought Report has become an invaluable source of well-researched and important information for policymakers.”

Dr Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

The focus on rankings opened up significant new media coverage, with news sources in several countries (including The Brussels Times, Malay Mail, TheJournal.ie, Asian Correspondent and others) focusing on how well their own nation performed in the ranking index.

We also used the launch of the 2018 edition to call for donations to our Humanists At Risk crowdfunding campaign.

A further European launch event was organized by the European Humanist Federation, held at the European Parliament in Brussels. Participants on the panel included the MEPs Sophie In't Veld and Virginie Rozière, both members of the European Parliament Platform for Secularism in Politics, as well as Dennis de Jong, chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The panel also featured two victims of anti-non-religious persecution: Karrar Hamza Al Asfoor, an Iraqi atheist activist who manages one of the largest atheist Facebook groups of his country, explained the social impact of renouncing religion later in life, and how even after having fled to Greece, he is still struggling against Islamist attempts to shut down his atheist Facebook groups. Nacer Amari, a Tunisian human rights activist and co-Founder of Prometheus Europe, told the event that despite its reputation as a secularized Muslim nation, Tunisia still faces numerous issues – as illustrated in the Freedom of Thought Report – including a blasphemy law, state religion, and religious restrictions on holding public office.

Read more here: hmnts.in/fot18-europe



Sufficient reputation, financial and human resources, and administrative effectiveness to achieve our goals



GDPR compliance

The Director of Communications & Campaigns worked to revise various internal and web systems to ensure compliance with the new General Data Protections Regulations which came into force across the European Union in May. We now have an updated Privacy policy, restructured online forms, a subscription management plugin linked to our CRM database, and an internal audit log for personal data.

Rebranding and website development

Throughout 2018 we worked with two external agencies first to develop our new logo and new brand as “Humanists International”, and then to build a website that would make best use of our new brand on a new domain at **humanists.international** ready to launch in early 2019.

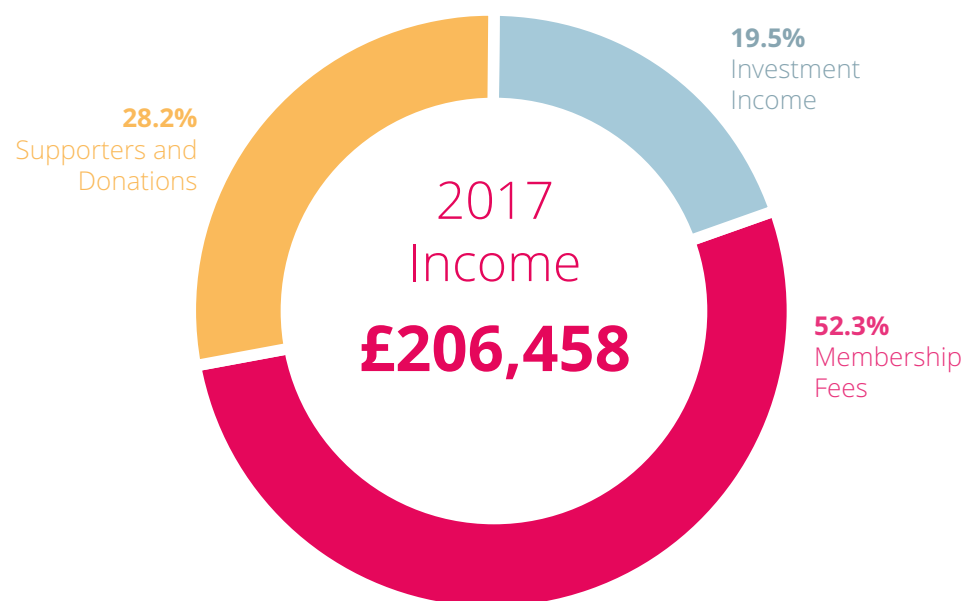
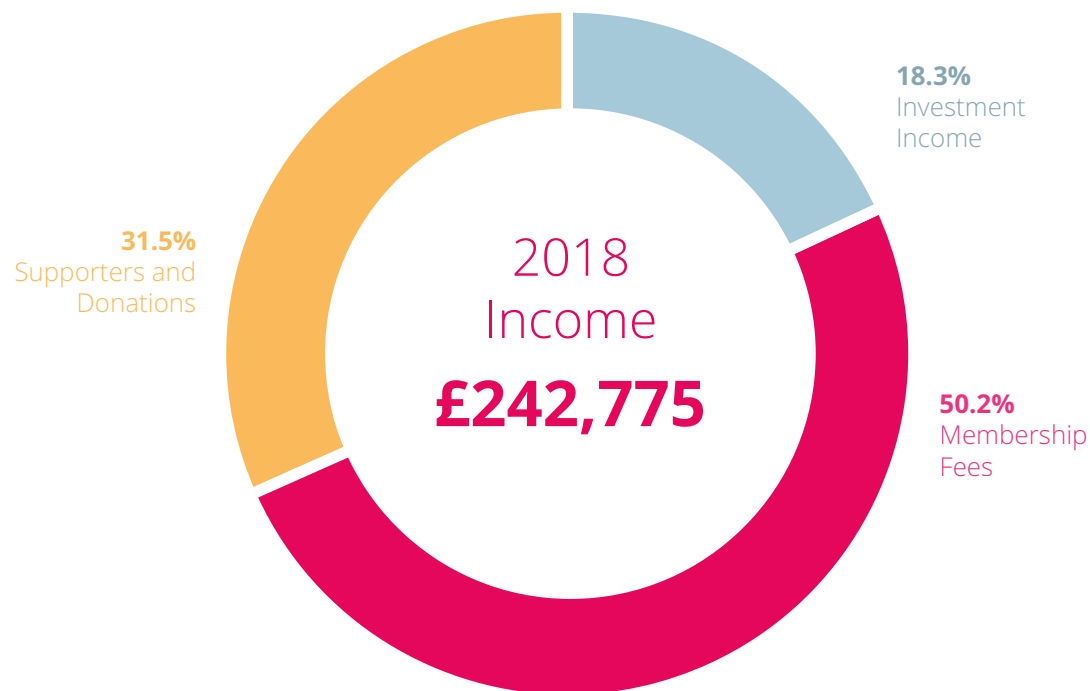
Much of the top-level page content is re-written or presented in a new way to best showcase our new brand and positioning. It was also important to us that there was continuity with our old website, so for example the new site contains thousands of news stories, documents and image files imported from the outgoing website. The new site also features dozens of new custom-built modules enabling us to present content in fresh and enticing ways.

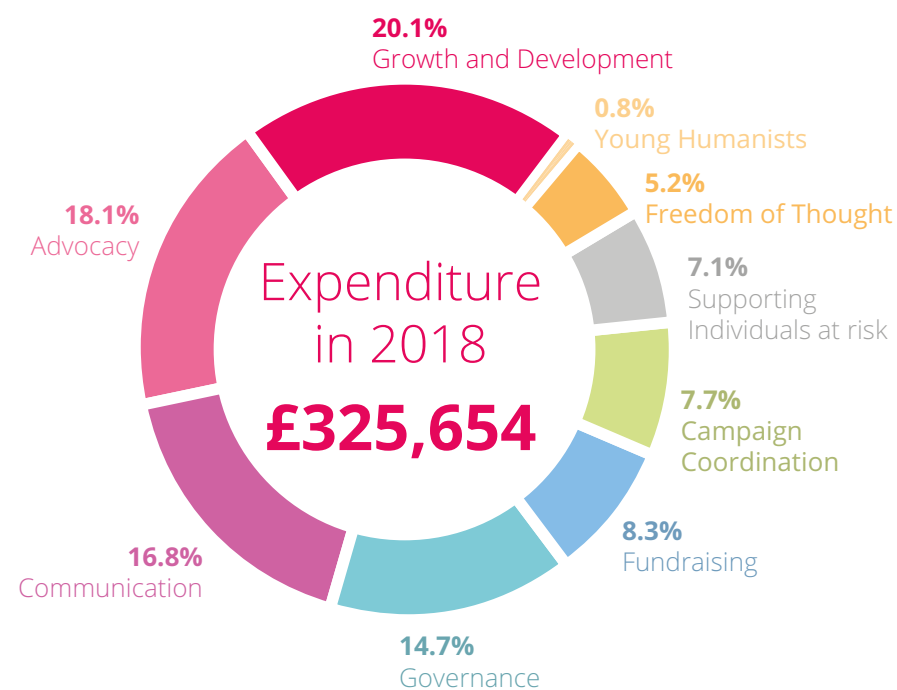
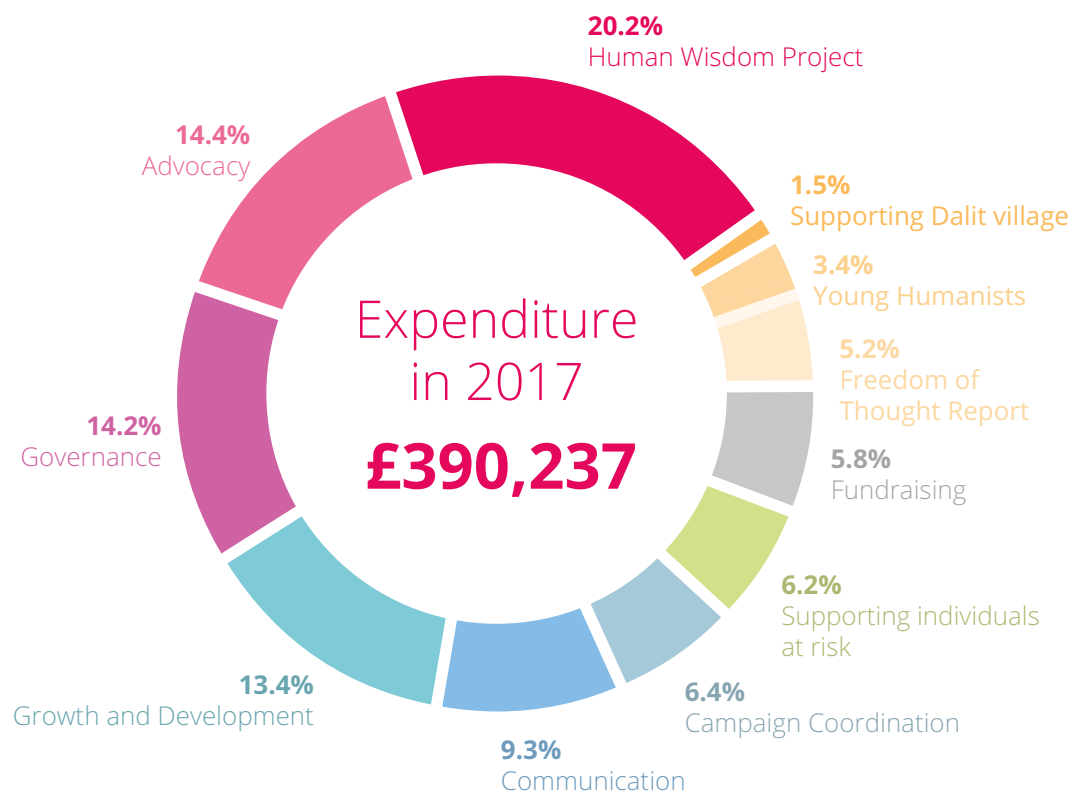
There is also brand new functionality, including a bespoke new “Policies Library” <[hmnts.in/policies](https://humanists.in/policies)> into which we have converted all the policy resolutions passed by General Assemblies and our governance committees over nearly **seven decades** of our existence as an organization!

Finances

2018 saw a strong financial performance, with an emphasis on fundraising and income diversification. This resulted in an over 17% increase in income, largely from individual donations to our Humanists at Risk campaign.

In 2018 we brought in greater financial control measures, which allows for greater scrutiny of how we allocate our resources. Plans are in place to increase this again in 2019 by recruiting a new Finance and Admin Officer.





A more detailed breakdown on how we use our resources:

			2018	2017
			£	£
Governance			47,849	55,440
Young Humanists International			2,633	13,390
Growth and Development			65,502	52,401
Communication			54,774	36,454
Freedom of Thought Report			20,877	20,235
Individuals at Risk			23,245	24,034
Campaign Coordination	2018	2017	24,948	24,833
UN Human Rights				
Council	24,971	23,711		
UN New York	12,187	11,794		
African Commission	7,470	7,180		
European Advocacy	14,312	13,675	58,940	56,360
Advocacy				
Human Wisdom			-	78,887
Dalit			-	5,764
Fundraising			26,886	22,439
			325,654	390,237

This financial summary has been extracted from the company's audited statutory accounts. Full details are available on our website.

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

Humanists International, 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel: +44 20 7490 8468 Email: office@humanists.international

Summary of 2018 accounts:

	Funds 2018			Funds 2017	
	£	£	£	£	£
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Total
Income					
Membership fees	121,881	-	-	121,881	108,078
Supporters and donations	76,301	259	-	76,560	58,130
Investment income	3,634	-	40,700	44,334	40,250
Total income	201,816	259	40,700	242,775	206,458
Expenditure					
Wages and social security	130,920	-	-	130,920	127,673
General assembly expenses	3,133	-	-	3,133	8,725
Travel aid board members	16,821	1,216	-	18,037	23,391
Office expenses	28,817	-	-	28,817	21,225
Young Humanists International	5,750	-	-	5,750	10,505
IT and website costs	22,727	-	-	22,727	77,933
Consultancy costs	26,958	-	-	26,958	33,227
Growth and development	-	12,411	-	12,411	3,414
Travel and representation	46,526	-	-	46,526	31,880
Other costs	24,058	257	6,070	30,385	52,264
Total expenditure	305,710	13,884	6,070	325,664	390,237
Net (deficit)/income before transfers, exchange and investment gains or losses	-103,894	-13,625	34,630	-82,889	-183,779
Exchange (losses)/gains	43,605	-	100,978	144,583	-241,176
Gains on investments	-	-	-184,052	-184,052	211,374
Transfers between funds	75,000		-75,000	-	-
Net Movement in Funds	14,711	-13,625	-123,444	-122,358	-213,581
Balance at 1 January 2018	229,633	323,957	2,111,824	2,665,414	2,878,995
Balance at 31 December 2018	244,344	310,332	1,988,380	2,543,056	2,665,414





Humanists

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