

Summary of the Options Paper for the Global Movement Against Statelessness

The Options Paper consists of two parts reflecting on the Global Movement's development, transition from its current nascent Interim Core Group (ICG) set-up into a more sustainable global **structure** and the **modalities** of operation it adopts throughout the process. It draws on qualitative, descriptive, critical, and good-practice research and consultations within the field of statelessness (see the [Annex](#)). The research and consultations offer key considerations to weigh the Movement's position in and implications on the statelessness eco-system, the balance between the identity, objectives, values, and principles articulated in its [Manifesto](#), as well as questions of efficiency, effectiveness, governance, sustainability, and safety.

Part 1 of the paper focuses on the **statelessness eco-system** and its current asset and resource challenges, which calls for a global movement to offer people affected by statelessness more inclusive and supportive space(s) for expression and leadership towards change (see p. 7-17 of the Options Paper). It illustrates how the need for the Global Movement has been articulated throughout extensive studies and consultations (with)in the statelessness field (see the [Annex](#)). Essentially, the Movement is emerging into a vibrant eco-system of civil society actors including NGOs, grassroots groups, advocates, activists and academics (with and without lived experience of statelessness) currently working on issues of statelessness, nationality and citizenship rights. Inevitably, some gaps within the current ecosystem have been highlighted, with the Movement being seen as a vehicle through which efforts to address them can be consolidated. However, there is plenty within the current ecosystem that is working well, which has immense potential, that the Movement can build on, contribute to and also benefit from.

The insertion of a Global Movement into the current statelessness ecosystem will be disruptive. Some disruption is both necessary and representative of fundamental reasons for establishing the Movement if it results in more meaningful centring of stateless people and accountability to them; consistent efforts to build solidarity and trust within the field; identifying and countering extractive and exploitative practices that marginalise stateless people; openly addressing power imbalances and resourcing challenges that impact stateless groups; acknowledging and acting on the need to cede more space for stateless people to represent the field; and being more effective in jointly advocating on the issue at international and other forums. But there are also perceived risks that the Movement will detract resources from existing groups, duplicate rather than build on efforts, and cause conflict. To mitigate this, there must be clear communication, coordination and openness within our resource-strapped field, and collective efforts that the Movement can catalyse to develop resourcing for everyone, prioritising impacted-person led groups.

Considerations that determine the structure and modalities focus on the Movement's **identity** as a global community of people and organisations committed to addressing statelessness and discriminatory/exclusionary nationality laws, driven by values and principles of inclusiveness, diversity, solidarity, collectiveness and centring people with lived experience as leaders towards positive change. The Movement's identity is constituted by how it establishes, positions and presents itself. This is reflected through its name, choices of structure and modalities of operation, decision-making and performance which must be intrinsically connected and effectively consistent with the values, principles and objectives it articulates in its [Manifesto](#).

In order to determine the structure and modalities that best fit the Movement, it is crucial to reflect on our identity, values, principles and objectives. The structure and modalities that we choose must at a minimum not contravene them, and ideally should facilitate the right environment for them to thrive. For

example, if centring and being led by those impacted by statelessness is a main priority, the structure we choose should a) have built in leadership positions for those with lived experience, and b) support capacity development and leadership training, so people with lived experience can be supported and encouraged to thrive in leadership roles.

The Movement is a strictly civil society space for people with lived experience of statelessness and discriminatory nationality laws, as well as their allies. It includes academics, advocates, activists, artists and NGOs. By definition, government and UN actors cannot be part of the Movement. As a fundamental principle, the Movement centres those directly impacted by statelessness, while also valuing their collaboration, reciprocity and shared responsibility with advocates and allies without lived experiences.

The Movement’s identity is essentially connected to its objectives, which relate both to how the Movement can positively impact the statelessness ecosystem, and the real-world impact it aims to have on affected people. In this respect, the movement ultimately aims to be led by those with lived experience, recognising their expertise as vital to our mission and as the core of our identity.

A significant step forward has been naming the Movement. There were many discussions within the ICG about the Movement’s name. Considerations were driven by core values of inclusivity, clarity of purpose and a desire for the name to be representative of our shared values and identity. Over 80 names were discussed before narrowing down to three options that were shared with the wider movement, resulting in selection of the name ‘**Global Movement Against Statelessness**’.

Considerations of the Movement’s identity, values, principles and objectives should shape its structure and modalities choices, operations and decision-making processes. However, it is crucial to make a balance between the Movement’s objectives and practical capacities on the one hand and imperatives of efficiency and effectiveness brought about by funding and resource limitations.

Part 2 of the paper identifies structure and modalities options for the short-term and long-term, and as bridging measures between these two. These options are studied through questions prompting discussions within the Wider Movement (i.e., individuals, groups and institutions affected by and dedicated to ending the phenomenon of statelessness) to build a clearer picture of which options to consider. The discussions will inform the next steps the ICG undertakes to develop a more concrete proposal on the structure to be implemented after it concludes consultations with the Wider Movement.

The short-term (2024 – 2025) structure and modalities option are identified based on ICG’s development and progress with support from the ISI Secretariat since November 2020. The ICG had comprised 23 members, taking into consideration geographic and NGO representation, gender balance, type of work and lived experience of statelessness. In March 2023, the ICG was streamlined and restructured to comprise 14 members, 50% with lived statelessness experience of whom two are appointed as co-leads, as a first step in transferring the movement’s leadership to those affected by statelessness. An Advisory Committee (AC) of 12 people (half with lived experience) was also constituted. As of 31 August 2023, 193 members of the Wider Movement have joined the Movement’s mailing list, and 4 ICG working groups have been established: Solidarity and Action Working Group (SAWG), Structure and Modalities Working Group (SMWG), Fundraising Working Group (FWG) and the Public Relations Working Group (PRWG). The ICG has focused on six priority areas the progress in which is as follows:

Priority	Progress
Developing Manifesto	The Manifesto was developed through a consultative process.

Implementing inward facing activities	The ICG developed a strategy and started implementing inward facing activities, prioritising community building, trust-building, peer learning and capacity building sessions.
Developing structure and modalities	The ICG researched other movements, developed this Options Paper and consulted the Wider Movement. It is also developing various internal policies on safety and risk, a code of conduct, fundraising, etc.
Developing outward facing activities and objectives	The ICG began this process at the 2023 Nepal retreat and will take it forward in consultation with the Wider Movement.
Fundraising	While ISI took responsibility for fundraising for the Movement's first 2-3 years, the ICG has developed and is now implementing its fundraising strategy.
Thinking about longer-term strategies and priorities	The ICG has begun this process, which relates closely to the process of building consensus on the structure and modalities of the Movement.

Long-term (2026- onwards) structure and modalities options have been identified as follows:

	Centralised	De-centralised
Highly Structured	Strong governance and oversight measures with clear Membership criteria and Member-Secretariat interaction protocols. Pros: A strong global operational coordination and governance structure and a dedicated team to implement strategic plans and oversee/support member-based initiatives. Cons: It may not function in practice as a Movement, but more as a network with more ownership by the Secretariat. It requires considerable resources for both the Secretariat and Movement members.	Rather than one centralised Secretariat, would have a number of strong regional, country (or thematically organised) Secretariats that (may) have greater autonomy to establish rules of Membership etc. Pros: Allows for Members to align and connect on areas of interest and priority and is a more bottom-up approach. Cons: Risks of silos and a less coordinated global voice, as well as duplicating existing regional networks.
Loosely Structured	Fewer structured governance and oversight measures, with collective accountability and trust serving as a basis for oversight. Less structure in terms of organisation, representation and strategic direction, more based on common cause and trust. Pros: Allows for more collective action, organic and engaged Membership, and more ability for members to represent and act. Cons: Less coordinated and there is likely to be less capacity and a heavy reliance on volunteers and organisational member support.	With no regional/country/thematic Secretariats, with, at the very most, different organisations that are part of the Movement offering limited secretarial support. The Movement would coalesce around a common set of values and objectives. Pros: This would allow members to align and connect on areas of interest and priority. Cons: Very little coordination poses the risk of some regions being better organised than others.

Hybrid	<p>Governance structures and oversight measures in place would allow for coalescing around a set of values and objectives with Membership criteria and process. It would allow for different ways for members to interact with the Secretariat and present more scope for the structure to evolve and find its natural equilibrium. Pros: Benefits of a small Secretariat coordinating team with a focus on broader member engagement. More adaptive and flexible. Cons: Heavy reliance on volunteers and 'building' the Movement might take precedence over 'acting' as a Movement.</p>	<p>Regional/thematic/country Secretariats which may or may not be hosted by organisations who are members of the Movement and would give these Secretariats more scope to develop their own structure which suits their contexts. Pros: Allows for regional, thematic and country-level coordination and responsive action and also for members to align and connect on areas of interest and priority. Cons: Risk of siloing, less coordinated and visible global voice and structure and the duplication of existing regional networks.</p>
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As bridging measures between the short and long terms, the ICG will undertake the following specific measures while consultations and consensus building are in progress:

- Reviewing feedback received through the consultation process and developing a more concrete structure for consideration (this may require taking legal advice, etc.);
- Budgeting for the transition and facilitating a conversation on whether (and when) the transition can be made. If the option is infeasible e.g., due to budgetary reasons, best possible alternatives should then be considered;
- Fundraising to make the transition possible;
- Sharing information with the Wider Movement on the transition, consulting on key questions and also encouraging them to be actively engaged in the process. This would include specifically engaging with global and regional actors, to find the best ways of collaboration, that are mutually beneficial to the Movement and the engaged actors; and,
- Implementing the transition. This could include, depending on what is actually decided as the structure for the Movement, developing core documents setting out the structure and modalities of the Movement, facilitating the process of selection (or election) of leadership positions, negotiating with host organisations or registering the Movement, recruiting board and staff members, etc.

As this will happen in tandem with the ICG functioning as a Movement – setting its strategy, implementing activities etc., this process is likely to take time. This is something we should be realistic about when thinking about the measures that need to be implemented and related timeframes. The ICG will think through these bridging measures when developing the concrete option at the end of the consultation process. Finally, it is worth noting that the consensus of the Wider Movement may be to delay a decision on the structure, and to proceed in a more fluid way until (and unless) there is a need to look at structures in future. If this type of decision is taken, then the conversation around interim or bridging measures would entail a possibly longer period, than if there is a clear structure to be working towards.

Questions for Consideration

a. For the short-term options (2024-2025)

Bearing in mind projected expansion and intensification of work after the Movement is launched, a number of **structural questions** emerge in the short term:

1. Should the ICG's term be extended by a further 1-2 year period?

2. Should the ICG be restructured an/or expanded to enable it to meet the growing demands of an expanded role as set out above?
3. Should there be a new recruitment drive for the ICG, to bring in new members, and how should this be conducted?
4. Should ISI continue as the Secretariat for the ICG, and should there be any review of/changes to its role?
5. How can the ICG do better at engaging the wider movement and giving them a greater sense of ownership over the Movement, and involvement in decision making?
6. Are there any other structures that need to be set up in the short-term, e.g., an exclusive space for those with lived experience of statelessness, thematic steering committees or working groups?
7. How can this period be used to transition into the longer-term structure agreed by the Movement?

These are the first set of questions for further discussion with the Wider Movement during the consultation phase. Based on the outcomes of these discussions, it will be possible to develop a short-term plan for the 2024-2025 period.

b. For Long Term Options (2026-onwards)

Below, are the key questions for consideration, when thinking about the longer-term structure and modalities of the Movement. All members of the Wider Movement will be provided an opportunity to answer these questions. Based on answers received, the ICG will develop a more concrete plan for consultation and implementation. A realistic timeline for implementation would be after 2025, also factoring in challenges around funding, capacity and resources more generally, as well as the other short-term priorities of the Movement that must be taken forward.

1. Should we register the Movement as an NGO?

One of the key questions to consider, are the pros and cons of registering the Movement as an organisation. If we do register, the Movement will be an independent entity, not dependent on other organisations to 'host' it. However, the act of registration will immediately formalise the structure and bring it within a regulatory framework. There will be questions of where it is best to register the movement, with implications in terms of regulations, staffing and access to funding. If we follow the decentralised model, we can register in multiple countries. This will further complicate the structure, with added costs.

Equally, we should consider the alternatives to registration. What are the consequences of not registering? Will this result in the organisation(s) that host the Movement wielding too much power? Are there other risks related to staffing, etc.? It also may be an option to view the Movement as a 'collective' and utilise an online platform or space – such as Open Collective - to organise and convene the Movement. Finally, there is the question of whether registering the movement is a longer-term objective for us to consider at a later stage, while acknowledging that we are not quite at that place yet.

2. What governance structures should we have?

It may be premature to ask this question until we take other decisions (around registration, structure etc.). However, it is worth looking at whether there are any minimal 'good practice' governance structures and requirements that the Movement will want to have in place, regardless of the structure we end up with. For example, should there be a Board that provides oversight? What characteristics are

we looking for in Board members? Should there be an advisory function? What are the relationships and lines of reporting and accountability between Board, Movement leadership, Secretariat, wider membership etc.?

3. What leadership structures should we have? How should we select people into leadership positions? How do we move towards leadership by lived-experience, and what is the role of those without lived experience?

Simply put, where does the power sit within the Movement, and how is this shared among different stakeholders? There is a stated commitment to centring and being led by those with lived experience of statelessness, but what does this look like in practice? And what does this mean for the roles that can be played by those without lived experience? What is the relationship between those serving in the Secretariat and those occupying positions of leadership and responsibility? How does the Wider Movement meaningfully engage to help shape the strategy and priorities of the Movement? Importantly, how do we select people into leadership roles, and how do we support them to develop the skills and capacities to enable them to thrive in these roles?

4. What should the Secretariat function look like and what should its role be?

Depending on the structure we settle on, what type of role should the Secretariat(s) be playing? What does the Secretariat need to do its job properly, and how do we ensure mutual accountability between the Secretariat and those in leadership positions? What are the risks of the Secretariat overstepping its role, or taking greater ownership of the Movement? Similarly, what are the risks of the Movement being ineffective due to the Secretariat not driving it forward?

5. What kind of membership criteria/structure should be set?

What is the criteria for membership of the Movement? Does the current criteria (persons aligned to the manifesto of the Movement, who do not represent UN agencies or governments) suffice or do we need to flesh this out more? Should members be expected to make a particular commitment to contributing towards the Movement's activities, that they will be held accountable towards? Should we categorize individual and institutional memberships? Should we make a distinction between members with lived experience of statelessness and those without?

6. What structures should be in place to ensure wider movement ownership and engagement in the delivery of Movement objectives?

How can the wider movement be encouraged to actively participate in the Movement, and feel a sense of ownership in this regard? How can the Movement deliver for the wider membership, and how can the wider membership be brought in to support the Movement? What are the risks of alienation or conflict between those in positions of responsibility and the wider movement, and how can these be mitigated?

7. How is the Movement situated within the statelessness ecosystem and how centralised/decentralised should we be?

What place does the Movement occupy within the wider statelessness ecosystem? Does this warrant a more centralised approach through a global Secretariat? Is there a risk of duplication and/or competition with the regional networks if a decentralised approach is taken? Is there a role the regional networks can play to support this decentralised approach? What are the risks associated with that? How do we foster strong communication, transparency and collaboration between the Movement and key global and regional actors?

8. How do we ensure we embody our identity, values and principles as a Movement?

Do we need to have further conversations around identity, values and principles, in light of the discussion on structure? What are values and principles that may be vulnerable to erosion, as the Movement becomes more structured? How do we protect against that?

9. How do we achieve the right balance in terms of matters of efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, safety and risk management?

How do we ensure that the structure of the Movement ultimately enables us to achieve both our inward facing and outward facing objectives? Where there may be a tension between these, how do we prioritise and sequence action going forward?

10. Who speaks on behalf of the Movement?

Should the Movement have identified spokespersons, who are authorised (and trained and supported) to speak on its behalf and to represent it externally? Or should there be a more *ad hoc* approach to this? How do we protect against any member claiming to speak on behalf of the Movement and related risks of contradictory or mixed messaging, or even damaging messaging?

11. How do we take decisions? How do we set our priorities, strategies and objectives?

We speak about decision making by consensus, but what does this actually look like? Is it practical for all decisions to be made by consensus, and what is to be done when no consensus can be reached? Which decisions can be delegated to the Secretariat, to those in leadership positions or the Board? Which decisions should require input from the wider membership? Of particular importance, are decisions with regard to setting priorities, strategies and objectives.

12. Who holds the budget?

How do we set our annual budget, and who is responsible for this? How do we approach fundraising, and taking decisions on which expenditures to prioritise, in situations where we haven't raised our full budget?

13. What are the things we need to protect against/prioritise?

With regard to all of the above, and considering the discussion in Part 1, what are the main non-negotiables – in terms of core values and principles we will stick to, and which our structure and modalities must both comply with and also enable to thrive? What are the main concerns we have, and eventualities we should protect against? What are the main things we should prioritise?

Collective engagement with these questions can help us to better identify where we have common ground, what is really important to us, and where we may still have diverging opinions on the best way(s) forward. These conversations will be fundamental to thinking through the Movement's ultimate structure. Based on the outcomes of these discussions, it will be possible to develop more concrete option(s) for consideration and implementation.