

Appendix: AAC's ICAPs metric

About ICAPs

ICAPs are a simplified metric that doesn't fully account for indirect effects, uncertainties, and other complexities. However, its interpretation is fairly intuitive: one ICAP represents the impact of AAC in bringing a top candidate from seemingly nowhere to secure an average role in a high-impact animal advocacy nonprofit

We view AAC's primary impact as bringing skilled individuals into the animal advocacy movement, particularly for hard-to-fill roles that benefit the movement. In 2021, we updated our measurement and evaluation approach from simply tracking career changes to using a metric called ICAPs, which, while not perfect, aims to capture this impact better by adjusting career changes to the counterfactual value they add to the movement. We have found this particularly helpful to cross-compare programmes.

ICAPs is our attempt to measure our impact by assessing three factors: 1) the number of people who change careers after engaging with our services, 2) the likelihood that those individuals would have entered the movement without AAC's support, and 3) the value they contribute to the animal advocacy sector. We then compare this figure to the cost of running AAC financially and in terms of full-time staff which gives us ICAPs per FTE.

We found that using ICAPs to compare programs was an effective way to understand which initiatives were helping us fill the hardest-to-hire roles—such as executive directors, heads of operations, and directors of development—versus those programmes that were engaging with larger groups of junior program associates, volunteers, and program officers who were already thinking about changing their careers to help animals

How are they calculated?

Calculating the “base” number of placements

A “base” placement or career change is a placement prior to adjustment for importance and counterfactuals.

To qualify as a base placement, an individual must secure a paid position either within a farmed animal advocacy organisation or in an adjacent sector focused on creating positive change for animals

Exactly what counts as a base placement involves several subjective judgement calls. We err on the side of inclusion for the base placements, but borderline inclusions will usually count for noticeably less than a full ICAP after adjustment for importance and counterfactuals. For example:

- We include roles at organisations (for-profit or nonprofit) that do relatively low priority work that affects farmed animals or otherwise do not seem very focused on maximising impact, but adjust these downwards for importance.
- We include policy roles related to farmed animals, e.g. roles in relevant sections of the UK’s Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs or the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In future we intend to include all policy roles not just those that are related to animals.
- We include reported placements even if it is unclear that we played any role in securing the placement, but we adjust downwards for counterfactuals.
- We include part-time work but adjust our scoring for this downwards.

However, we have to draw the line at some point and make some somewhat arbitrary exclusions:

- We do not count internships or low-volume, paid work (e.g. if we know it to be fewer than ~10 hours per month).
- We focus solely on roles that likely have an impact for *animals*; we believe that many other causes are worth investing altruistic resources into, but these are not our main focus.

The services will differ slightly in how the base number of placements is calculated:

- For the job board, it is the number of candidates who cite our job board as how they heard about a role they have secured. We attribute the placement to the year the hiring round was concluded and the offer accepted.
- For one-to-one advising calls, it is the number of people who we advised and subsequently started a new role. We attribute the placement to the year we had the advising call with the individual and count the first role they secured since then as the base placement.

- For the online course, it is the number of participants who subsequently start a new role. We attribute the placement to the year the online course concluded and counted the first role they secured since then as the base placement.
- For the work placement service, it is the number of participants who subsequently start a new role. We attribute the placement to the year the work placement round began; this differs from the attribution style of the other services but seems necessary, given that some work placements may stretch on for a long time. Since then, we count the first role they secured as the base placement.

Although we usually count the first role that they secured since AAC's service as the base placement, we also hope to track subsequent roles that these individuals secure and to revisit later whether the ICAPs metric might be substantially undercounting our impact, e.g. if individuals later take on critical roles that might have been caused in part by AAC.

Reports of securing a role could come to us through any method, e.g. self-report by the candidate in an email or a survey, a report to us by the hiring organisation, or us noticing a placement via a check of their LinkedIn. We intend to contact as many participants in our services as possible to collect this information, such as via a survey sent to our entire mailing list.

To count, a placement must occur within five years of the year of attribution. For example, if their online course ends in 2022, their placement must occur by the end of 2027. This means that we won't know the full and complete number of ICAPs for a given year until five years subsequently, but we expect that a significant proportion of ICAPs will nevertheless have occurred by the end of the year. For example, within one year of the end of the course, we identified 11 participants in our online course cohorts that concluded in 2021 who had secured new positions. Hence, we should still be able to use the metric to compare between services.

Importance adjustment

To adjust each base placement for importance, we estimate a multiplier for the importance of the role relative to the average *nonprofit* employee.

Our view of the average nonprofit employee includes all paid roles, from entry-level to senior leadership. Although the precise boundaries and definitions of what counts as a nonprofit could be debated endlessly, when we think of the average nonprofit employee, we are thinking roughly of the average employee across the list of organisations that we regularly monitor for inclusion in our job board.

For example, a multiplier of 1 = average importance, 0.5 = half as important as average, 2 = twice as important as average.

This importance multiplier might reflect our views about the importance of the work of the specific organisation. For example, this might reflect our opinions about the promisingness of the interventions they work on, which types of animals their work affects, and other organisational factors that affect the impact potential of the role.¹

We don't tend to have strong views about the overall importance of most role types compared to others (e.g. fundraising vs. operations vs. campaigns).² However, the importance adjustment tends to increase the ICAP value of leadership roles and decrease the ICAP value of entry-level roles.

If a role has positive effects not solely for animals but also other beneficiaries we might be interested in (e.g. the people living in extreme poverty, future generations), we would evaluate the importance of that role solely in terms of its impact on animals.

Counterfactuals adjustment

To adjust each base placement for counterfactuals, we estimate a multiplier for the probability that the candidate would otherwise *not* have secured a placement within 5 years.

For example, a multiplier of 1 = the individual definitely would not have secured a placement within 5 years, 0.5 = 50% chance they would have done, 0 = they definitely would have done.

Regarding what evidence we base the adjustment multiplier itself upon:

¹ In an attempt to improve subjectivity in 2023 we sent out a random sample to experts in the field to get their rough ranking and used this to benchmark our own subjective assessments, there were minimal notable differences except for a notable underestimation from us on the value of a founder or co-founder vs. the hardest to hire for role. We have since adjusted our importance upwards.

² Much of our [research](#) focuses on identifying which roles are most difficult to hire for. A role being especially difficult to hire for might lower the barriers to entry for promising candidates, thereby making it easier for AAC to track base placements in those role types. It might also mean that each placed candidate adds more value above and beyond the next best candidate. This latter implication wouldn't be reflected in the ICAPs metric, however, and the difficulty in hiring doesn't directly affect either the importance or counterfactuals adjustments. These must be borne in mind as important limitations of the ICAPs metric. We will account for these particular limitations in retrospective Guesstimate models of the impact of each service.

- For our initial calculations for the online course and one-to-one advising calls in 2020-2021, we used the difference between the intervention and control groups in the LinkedIn analysis from our [studies](#) of these services, modified slightly to reflect (our guess of) a five-year timeline rather than a one-year timeline.
- In most cases, we hope to interview the individual in order to inform our estimates of the counterfactuals. We have tried this already with placements via our job board.
- For people who don't reply to our request to interview them, we will have to rely on a less well-informed guess of the counterfactuals based on whatever else we know about them and their situation. We will treat their refusal to participate in an interview as evidence that they either did not make the change that we identified, or that our role in causing that change was relatively small; such people are unlikely to contribute a very large ICAP score.

The counterfactuals adjustments are also highly subjective, so we plan to provide relevant evidence to key stakeholders and survey them for additional opinions about what these adjustments should be.

Multiplying to create the ICAPs

Each base placement counts as 1. We then have a multiplier (above or below 1) for the importance adjustment and a multiplier (always lower than 1) for the counterfactuals adjustment. So, to calculate the ICAPs, all we need to do is multiply the importance adjustment by the counterfactuals adjustment (and then multiply this by 1).

E.g. if someone lands a critical leadership role at a fairly impactful organisation, we might give them an importance adjustment multiplier of 5. If we only played a very small role in encouraging them to apply, we might give them a counterfactual adjustment multiplier of 0.1. Multiplying $1 \times 5 \times 0.1 = 0.5$ ICAPs from this placement.

We can then sum together the total number of ICAPs for a particular service, or for AAC as a whole within a given year.

Calculating ICAPs per full-time equivalent year of AAC work

At AAC, we don't have a formal time-tracking policy that all team members use. However, between partial time tracking and rough estimates of how long other team members spent on each type of task, we can estimate an approximate number of weeks of full-time equivalent (FTE) work (40 hours) spent on each service. This can be converted into a number of FTE years of work by dividing that by 50.

Once we have calculated the number of ICAPs for a particular service (or AAC as a whole) and the number of FTE years of AAC work spent on that service (or AAC as a whole), we can divide the former by the latter to calculate the number of ICAPs per FTE year of work.

Using ICAPs to estimate a dollar value to the movement added by AAC

To estimate the value added to the movement by any given ICAP in dollar terms, we need to take some additional steps:

1. We should only account for how much better each candidate will perform their role than the next best candidate who might have otherwise landed the role. We estimate that on average, they will achieve about 10% more than the next best candidate, so we multiply the ICAP value by 0.1.
 - a. Some hiring rounds might be a very close call, but it is worth noting that the best candidates [might be](#) substantially more productive than the next-best candidates.
 - b. We are very uncertain about what the best multiplier to use here is.
 - c. This therefore represents the expected value in terms of “full-time equivalent years of work by an average staff member in an average effective animal advocacy organisation” that would be added in any given year (assuming the person works in the role for a full year) by each candidate for whom we have estimated an ICAP figure.
2. To convert the figure into an estimate of the number of quality-adjusted years that they add, we need to account for the number of years that placed individuals will remain in the targeted role type in effective animal advocacy organisations. So we multiply the figure from the previous step by 7.5.
 - a. We don’t think this figure needs to be solely about the organisation that they first work in; the placement still adds value if the individual goes onto work in another, similarly effective organisation.
 - b. Again, we are very uncertain about what the best multiplier to use here is.
 - c. This represents the expected value in terms of “full-time equivalent years of work by an average staff member in an average effective animal advocacy organisation” that would be added by each candidate for who we had estimated an ICAP figure and the previous additional step.
3. Given that the figure from the previous step is interpretable in terms of FTE years of work, the final step is simply to assign a dollar value to each FTE year of work. So we multiply the figure from the previous step by 50,000.

- a. Our [survey](#) research and [job board data analysis](#) both suggest average salaries for animal nonprofit jobs in the Global North of around \$50,000 per year, which is roughly in line with the [average](#) for full-time work in the United States.
- b. We have much better data for this step than the previous steps, so we can be more confident and satisfied with this step. Nevertheless, this figure of \$50,000 does not account for the fact that many staff are vastly underpaid relative to their actual value to the movement, given funding constraints and other factors dragging salaries down.

As a result, we estimate that each ICAP is worth about \$37,500 to the movement.

Animal Advocacy Careers' "Importance- and Counterfactuals-Adjusted Placements" (ICAPs) metric was first referred to in our "[2022 Plans and 2021 Review](#)" post.

Relevant context from the post:

[We] set goals for our work in 2022 based on a metric we have created called "Importance- and Counterfactuals-Adjusted Placements" (ICAPs). Or, more specifically, ICAPs per full-time equivalent (FTE) years of work by AAC staff...

ICAPs are a simplified metric that does not fully account for all indirect effects, uncertainties, and so on. However, its interpretation seems fairly intuitive: one ICAP roughly equals the impact of AAC, causing a top candidate to materialise out of nowhere and secure an average role in an impactful animal advocacy nonprofit. We therefore expect them to help enable a ballpark comparison of the effectiveness of our different services via this particular path to impact. ICAPs will not be taken at face value, in isolation; we will use them in conjunction with qualitative discussions that enable us to consider the pros and cons of each service that are not well-represented by the ICAPs metric.