



Not the sAIM?

Introduction

The board of trustees of CISV international approved a motion at the AIM in Thailand in 2005, asking for a study being conducted, on how to change the way AIM is conducted to be more efficient improving the working environment. The study was to be carried out by Nick Trautmann (Germany) in cooperation with IEC (liason: Cathy Knoop) and support from Chris Möhlen (Germany).

AIM is the result of a continuous process of adapting the only annual meeting of CISV international. In history, AIM has changed many times, most markedly a few years ago with the 8-day framework (presented at AIM 1998) – shortening the duration of AIM in order to save costs and easier to attend for people who have to take a job-leave.

Small changes have been made to the agenda by the IEC, almost every year, adapting to the needs of the participants such as introducing rotating committee reports or including an observers' agenda. These have not had any financial consequences, but sometimes changed the culture of AIM markedly. One of the main question that shall be adressed in this report is whether there exists an opportunity for a "grand reform" or "major overhaul" to change AIM for the better – and what consequences would that have?

Background

During the board discussion at AIM 2006 a few trustees expressed concern that before changing any AIM structure, it should be guaranteed that all voices have been heard, and that input on the process has been made from perspectives different in culture, gender and CISV role. Below you will find a list of documents and sources that were included in the study:

1. IEC motion AIM 2005

The original motion that lead to the conduction of this study: Original wording: *"The IEC moves that a Study is conducted to analyse the overall structure of AIM and Pre-AIM, with respect to increasing efficiency, and improving the working environment of the meetings."*

2. 8-day IBM framework IBM 1998

A presentation by COD (constitutional and organisational development committee) that lead to the new 8-day framework for AIM including background research

3. Wiki hosted at ijb.cisv.org

A wiki page that was made public in September 2005 by the IJRs and collected a number of good ideas from various contributing CISVers.

4. IEC survey (11/05)

A short survey among members of the IEC to get an idea of what the “bosses” of CISV were thinking.

5. Discussion session and informal exchange of thoughts at AIM 2005

A informal yet productive (unfortunately poorly attended) discussion session at AIM 2005.

6. Survey of past AIM participants

Everybody who signed up at friends.cisv.org for an AIM between 2000 and 2005 was invited to a survey, offering some of the most popular ideas for change. More than 80 people took part in the survey. All participating groups were represented and a broad range of different countries from all regions. It should be mentioned, that the survey probably has a “western bias” (more people from western cultures took part), a “native speaker bias” (more native speakers took part) and an “international executive bias” (more long-time AIMers took part). This is a kind of bias, that can be found almost in every area of CISV.

What are the objectives of AIM?

Before diving into the discussion, of how AIM should be organized, research was conducted for any official “terms of reference” for AIM. Unfortunately no such document was found (or exists). Obviously, it is difficult to develop “AIM objectives” because they are very different between the various participating groups. Some may even contradict objectives that others have. Below is a brainstormed list of AIM objectives that may be incomplete and has not weighted the individual objectives against each other.

Board members:

1. represent NA in decision making process
 - approval of motions
 - approval of committee plans and personnel
 - approval of budget
 - election of IEC
2. Face-to-face contact to IO, other NAs and committees
3. Exchange of best-practise and individual support

Committee members:

1. administrative work during preAIM
2. Co-operation with other committees = synergy effect (unofficially and officially [EEC])
3. Contact to NAs
4. Recruitment of new committee members
5. present achievements to and discuss plans with board of trustees

Observers:

1. Formal and informal training for current national or upcoming international position
2. (Some first time observers) Exploration for future involvement on the international level

Juniors:

1. Training for co-ordinating JB in home country
2. Election of IJRs
3. Creative development of new ideas
4. Exchange of best-practise and individual support on JB level

Everybody:

1. Meeting working partners face-to-face
2. Reward for year-long work
3. Motivation and inspiration for future CISV work

Obviously the present structure of AIM puts a focus on Board members objective 1. The agenda arranges other objectives below this one, but allows specific room such as the preAIM for Committee

members, objective 1. A new structure may review the balance of objectives and move in a new direction.

Here's the weighting that the people gave in the survey:

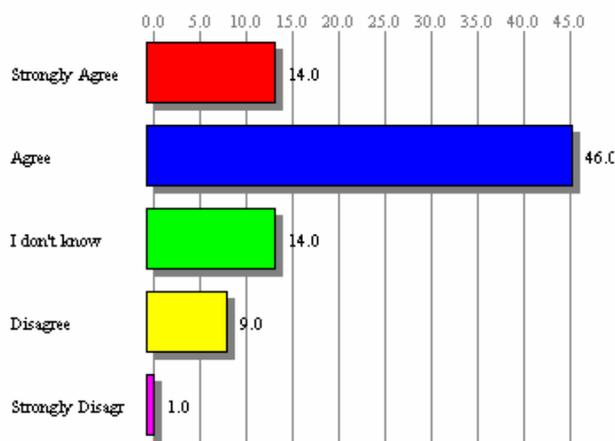
The main purposes of AIM should be...(please choose no more than three.)

- 81% Decision making process (board of trustees)
- 73% Committee work, such as planning, developing or evaluating.
- 63% Face-to-face contact between representatives from different countries.
- 30% Exchange of best practise and individual support.
- 24% Formal and informal training for individuals (observers, juniors, future executives)
- 2% reward for year-long volunteer commitment to CISV

Is there need for change?

The first main question that should be answered, is if there exists a need for a major change of the present structure at all, as the IEC and the board of trustees assumed. This is what the survey returned:

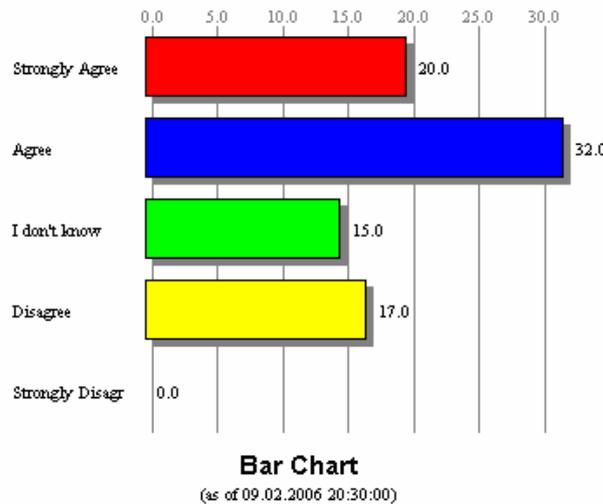
The present structure of AIM desperately needs a major update.



Bar Chart

(as of 09.02.2006 20:24:24)

AIM, as we are currently organizing it, is highly ineffective, if we look at the costs we have.



A majority of people in the survey see the need for a “major update” and think AIM is “highly ineffective” compared to the costs. However, comments to the first question stressed that there is a need for change, maybe not “desperately” and not necessarily “major”. The second question should be interpreted with care, because many people stressed the word “costs” in their comments: It was mentioned several times, that AIM is run quite ok, but just far too expensive. This small, but distinctive difference is, that people want to maintain the AIM standard for a cheaper price (as opposed to increasing the efficiency for the same cost).

So, the question stated above, whether there really exists a need for change can be answered with yes. However, the original notion behind this study was looking for “improvement in quality”, these results suggest, that most people would rather focus on “same or better quality for lower cost”.

3. What are the main problems of AIM today?

In the quest for a new AIM structure, we analyzed the biggest problems of AIM today. This may be a rather negative approach, however it is also the most specific.

The biggest problems of AIM these days are (please choose no more than 3)...

- 55% Lack of time for committees to work.
- 44% Loss of AIM-culture of being creative, generating ideas, exchanging thoughts.
- 34% Inefficiency due to a very large group.
- 70% Increasingly expensive to participate.
- 28% No role or official programme for observers.
- 6% Timing of the year (August).

In the comment section another main problem was mentioned several times: The increasing separation between CISV international (committees & trustees) and the local chapters: Trustees don't understand what the chapters need and international reasoning is not communicated well down to the chapters.

This question underlines the notion of the previous chapter, i.e. the main issue with AIM today is that it's too expensive. It was mentioned in other comments, that the problem is not only the cost for the

individual participant who pays from his own pocket, but also the funds that AIM requires from CISV international's and NAs' budget(s).

The lack of time for committee work seems to be the second most important issue to deal with, when developing a new structure. The third most important issue seems to be a the lack of creative AIM culture. This was also explicitly mentioned in the discussion during AIM 2005 in Thailand.

Any promising “single-issue” reforms?

Before CISV decided a major overhaul of our AIM structure, jeopardizing good work that has been done over the past years, it should be considered, if maybe triggering a few switches may do the same job. Are there any “single-issues” that could be changed for the better? Which are changes to the AIM structure that lay within our current framework of structure; that preserve the advantages of our current way of doing things, but result in a more effective and improved AIM?

A number of ideas that have been pushed forward in the past years. Below is a list of suggestion with a short description, and obvious (unsorted and unweighted) disadvantages. For some suggestion, specific questions were asked in the survey. Comments Approval rating should be read as the survey average between 1 = “Totally agree” down to 5 = “Totally disagree”.

AIM in January

Idea: August AIMS don't go very well with southern hemisphere agendas Furthermore they prevent committed CISVers to be both active in a programme AND take part in AIM as an active official in CISV international. Moreover some people may be more likely to get time off work outside the main holiday season. Also, booking an AIM site may be easier in January. It is undecided whether AIM in January would work out with our current annual CISV agenda.

Disadvantages: Most active NAs are in the northern hemisphere and wouldn't benefit.

Approval rating: 3,5 (Hosting AIM in January instead of August would have many advantages).

Exclusion of AIM tour

Idea: More time for meetings and work, when people can usually go on a trip before or after AIM.

Disadvantages: Lack of cultural visit to host country. Sleep-in and Paper-reading morning is needed anyway, so why cut out this social and motivational event?

Alternative: If excursions are not included in AIM fee (as approved in 2005) a tour can be offered WHILE other official meetings take place. For example the board can meet while observers go on a tour.

Approval rating: 2,2 (The AIM tour should be excluded from AIM. Valuable time is wasted, when people can tour the country before or/and after AIM takes place.)

IJBC during AIM

Idea: Shortens overall time of AIM. Saves a lot of money for NAs sending juniors (not: IJBC + AIM). More inclusion of JB ideas. Group building process of IJB not separated but integrated. Juniors can join preAIM (committees) and IJBC. Furthermore, if AIM remains around the same dates and most programmes take place in July, this may decrease the overlap of programmes and IJBC, thus making it possible for juniors to participate in programmes AND take part in IJBC.

Disadvantages: Disrupted IJBC; Double function (junior/trustee, junior/committee function) impossible/difficult. IJRs are board members and can't lead IJBC in present structure.

Fixed AIM location

Idea: AIM takes place at the same location every year. This place fulfils all requirements in size and technical equipment and is located in a convenient place, so that travel costs are minimized. An experienced (volunteer or paid) team takes care of administration.

Disadvantages: Once country is responsible for hosting (a ton of work!) which leaves practically only the chance to have a paid AIM co-ordinator. Positive effects of AIMs such as publicity, boost in volunteer motivation is lost.

Alternative: Bi-annual fixed location. One fixed location per region.

Cost sharing system for AIM

Idea: A cost sharing system reduces differences in costs between countries close and far away to the AIM host country.

Disadvantage: Bureaucratical burden, difficult to create a "fair" system and still motivate people to save money on trips.

EEC meets at MWM

Idea: Committee chairs meet in Newcastle in February with IEC. The EEC meeting at preAIM and postAIM is very short and an extra meeting can be very fruitful. Furthermore this guarantees better communication between chairs and IO may save time at AIM and creates better continuity by meeting on a 6 month basis.

Disadvantages: Higher costs. More commitment for a committee chair. IEC loses time of IEC-MWMeeting or would need to have a longer MWM than the EEC.

Approval rating: 2,9 (To reduce the workload at AIM, the EEC should meet during MWM. Even if this has a significant budget impact, this could improve the way CISV international works significantly.)

Committees meet elsewhere

Idea: Committees meet anytime during the year in a convenient location and complete committee work there. Without the fuzz and mess of AIMs committees can work very effective.

Disadvantages: Committees will have to organize the practicals of this meeting. Loss of the synergy effect during AIM. Increase of costs overall. Recruitment of new members becomes difficult / does not work.

Approval rating: 2,4 (Committees should meet outside AIM in a different (possibly cheaper) place, maybe even during a different time in the year.)

Electronic AIM

Idea: At one distinct time in the year a "virtual" AIM takes place. Motions can be submitted beforehand, "virtual AIM papers" are sent out and an electronic discussion and decision making process takes place. This could speed up the rate at which CISV speeds forward, e.g. a motion will not be tabled for a full year, but only 6 months.

Disadvantages: Nothing replaces face-to-face communication. Discussions may not reach high quality, if people are not in-to-it as much as they are during AIM. Time zones only allow a very small slot for i.e. a trustee chat meeting. Disadvantages for people with poor internet access. Danger of pure decision making without true discussion. Need for "electronic AIM culture" to develop.

Approval rating: 2,6 (Once a year, we should hold a "virtual AIM" on the internet, with the possibility of discussion and voting. Even if technically challenging, this would improve the speed at which CISV can move forward.)

Decisions taken during regional meetings

Idea: Once CISV / NAs accept(s) to define its/their regions and official structures are introduced, some decisions could be taken on regional level to save time and energy at AIM. Issue to be discussed what are the decisions taken by International and which ones by the regions = deviation of competences.

Disadvantages: The idea of CISV as one global organisation gets lost a bit. Much work needed to establish official regions. Existing structures are very individual and would need to be adapted towards each other, which again is a challenge in the light of very different geographic and developmental

circumstances. Furthermore, regionalization will make the already complicated structure of CISV international even more difficult to understand.

Approval rating: 2,6 (AIM could strongly benefit, if more decisions were taken on regional level, such as the decision on AIM location today.)

Alternate AIMS

Idea: There could be two different concepts for AIM that alternate over the years. This would allow us to reserve time for specific purposes. Possible would be an AIM as we know it in some years, in the others a meeting with only little administration and much room for training, development and mid-term planning.

Disadvantages: The board has to meet every year (at least) and training and development is much better and cheaper hosted on regional level.

Increase Length of AIM

Idea: Cost of travel is far higher than accommodation. So let's make most of it while everybody is there. One day added to AIM may already make quite a difference.

Disadvantages: For many AIM costs are at a limit already. Working people cannot take many days of and are therefore excluded from participation.

Approval rating:

3,2 (Travel costs are far higher than accommodation for most participants. Therefore, the duration of AIM should be extended, in order to make the meeting more effective.)

preAIM plus one day

Idea: Take one day away from AIM and add one to preAIM. This can improve the creative output of committees and almost no increase in costs.

Disadvantage: Even less time in board for non administrative issues.

Alternative: This extra preAIM day is a training workshop for new trustees. Or an excursion day for trustees and observers.

Approval rating: 2,3 (Simply adding one day to preAIM would strongly improve the work done by committees and EEC at AIM.)

Minor changes:

A number of minor changes have also been mentioned:

1. Remove or condense regional meeting in AIM agenda
2. Introduce IPAC session (International Programme and Activity Committee meeting) = miniEEC.
3. Offer translations to be more inclusive.
4. More organized social and introductory activities, to make it easier for newcomers.

Some of the ideas listed above don't seem feasible if we look at the biggest problem of aim – cost – unless expenses reduced on a different budget item. This again makes any expensive "single reform" only possible if combined with an effort to save money elsewhere.

Looking at the approval ratings, it is noteworthy that not a single idea managed to get an average approval rating of better than 2. The ideas that were most liked are:

- (1) Exclusion of AIM tour (2,2)
- (2) Add one day to preAIM (2,3)
- (3) Committees meet outside AIM (2,4)
- (4) More decisions on regional level (2,6)

(5) Virtual AIM (2,6)

Visions for a new AIM?

Before moving on, and combing some of the ideas listed above into a whole new AIM concept, let's take one step back. If there is a need for change, what is our vision? Let's forget the "how" and look at "where" we want AIM to be. From different sources of input, but mainly the IEC survey, we constructed 4 visions for a future AIM. (We decided to name these models after those people who inspired the idea - which doesn't mean that the final concept and suggestion all derive from that particular person.)

"Tweaked as usual" (Model á la Carla")

Idea: AIMS have evolved in a continuous process of improvements and refinements. The present AIM has a very strong tradition and NAs, volunteers and IO have adapted to it wisely. Continuous small change provides the best solution for adaption to changing circumstances and often small changes yield in big differences. A few strategic improvements to our usual AIM have the potential of huge leaps in efficiency.

"All-inclusive and á la carte" (á la Cathy)

Idea: AIM is the main and most important meeting of CISV during the year. Nowhere else expertise is concentrated at one place at one time. The various groups of participants (trustees, committee members, observers, etc) should take part in the individual agendas with individual objectives during the day to gather in the evenings for a great synergy effect. A longer and bigger AIM with parallel structures has a huge potential of improving the efficiency and speed of which CISV is moving forward.

"Administration first" (á la Elenita)

Idea: AIM is a cost-intensive meeting with a distinct legal purpose, such as decision making and elections. Limiting other purposes of AIM (training, exchange of ideas, best practise) can save costs and increase output of AIM itself. Funds that are spared at AIM could then be used for creating alternative structures for training, brainstorming and exchange of ideas such as Regional Workshops. By limiting costs of AIM we will also have more funds available for the programmes themselves.

"Big flow of thoughts" (á la Tomaso)

Idea: AIM is the only international face-to-face meeting of CISV international. Therefore the development of ideas, strategic planning, key issues and best practise should be the main focus of this meeting. Reducing the time spent on administrative issues and increasing creativity and human interaction would largely increase efficiency and output of AIM.

Here's the survey result:

	Carla	Cathy	Elenita	Tomaso
Favourite vision:	14%	21%	13%	42%
Second best:	19%	28%	16%	23%
Combined:	23%	35%	21%	53%

The results could be interpreted as such:

- Obviously creativity and human interaction is something most people miss with the current AIM environment (Tomaso)
- People voting against a vision á la Carla underlines the desire for change. (→ Need for change)
- People are unwilling to give up any aspect of AIM (Cathy vs. Elenita) and envision AIM as a meeting that offers opportunity for everybody (→ AIM objectives)

Anybody up for a big leap?

The single-issue reforms mentioned above are designed to work *within* our current system of CISV administration. However, there are also ideas for a new AIM that would work in company with a remodelling of CISV's structure as a whole. Obviously one needs a fair amount of courage to propose changing major aspects of CISV's administration. Moreover, it is questionable, whether CISV's structure should be modelled around AIM. In other words, shouldn't AIM reflect CISV's structure and not vice versa?

Below are a two AIM concepts that have been mentioned from various CISVers, that request changes to CISV structure:

Bi-Annual AIM

Idea: Modern communication make face-to-face meetings less necessary than they used to be. A possibly longer AIM every two years makes enormous sense from a budget perspective, reducing travel costs spent per meeting day. In turn, our elected executive body, the IEC, takes decisions during the time in between. Committees can meet individually in cheap locations between the AIM years to cover their work.

Necessary changes to CISV structure: Motions and committee plans between the two years must either be approved by IEC or e-mail ballot, if you want to avoid being limited to a meeting that only happens every two years. IEC-election period would have to be 4 years. Changes to IECs terms of reference would be necessary, Possibly an increase in number of IEC-members to cover the workload.

Disadvantages: It is already hard for people to work in teams that only meet once a year. Obvious slow down in speed at which CISV adapts to change.

Board of regional representatives

Idea: In order to reduce the size of the board and travel costs likewise, we give up the concept of one voting member per country for the concept of regional representation in the board, with i.e. three representatives per region. This could dramatically improve the efficiency at which the board of (regional) trustees is working. With such a small size board AIM could even take place twice a year. AIM concepts such as training and best-practise are moved onto the agendas of regional meetings such as ASPARC.

Necessary changes to CISV structure: Establishment of official, somewhat same-size regions, that can take the responsibility of certain issues, that CISV international is taking care off today. Terms of reference for a new "regional board" would be necessary. Establishment of regional meetings in all regions.

Disadvantages: We are far away from established regions within CISV. Furthermore a majority of CISVers rejects the idea of CISV as a regional organisation and appreciates the fact that CISV is taking a global approach in its structure.

Conclusions

This chapter is, more than any previous part of the report, subject to my personal interpretation of the situation. Anybody reading the previous chapters, may as well come to different conclusions, but I would like to present mine, together with a "road map" of, what I consider the most promising approach.

1. Any attempt to change the AIM structure can only take its origin in reducing costs. Reducing the expenses of AIM will be reflected in thre-fold: a) the budget item in CISV international's budget, b) costs NAs have sending their representatives to AIM and c) the participation cost for individuals participating on their own expenses. The opposite approach – investing in AIM financially – will not result in immediate increased income (economically speaking), and increasing participation fees is probably out of the question. If we like it or not, creating a cheaper AIM must be the starting point of all efforts.
2. Maintaining the same quality of AIM we are achieving today will already be a challenge for a new structure, but the efforts should be more ambitious: Most people ask for more human interaction and less administration. This is an area where, in fact, small tweaks can have an

enormous effect. As an example, I think the strategic planning sessions during preAIM in Israel 2004 created an enormous positive spirit among all participants: They were feeling that, hey, we are working on the core CISV development.

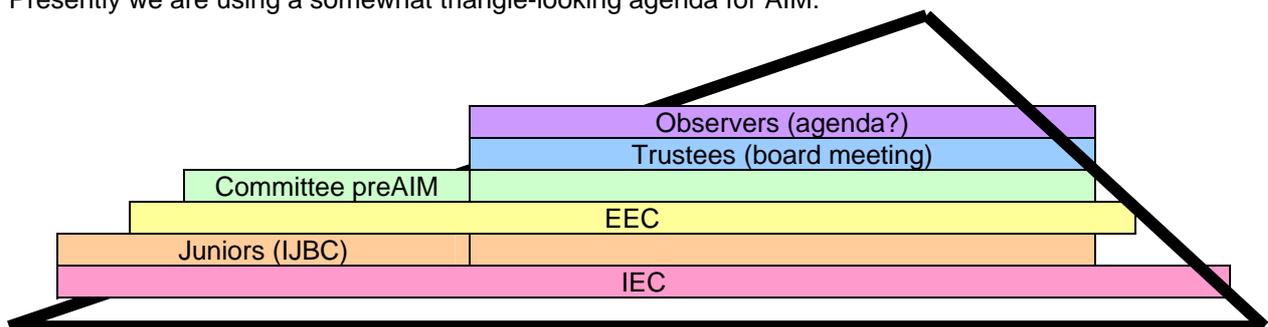
3. Big leaps, as suggested above is a dangerous business, I believe. Are we ready to give up something that is working fairly well and has been adapted over the years? Also, I don't agree that moulding CISVs structure around AIM is the right way to go. However, I think, if we walk the opposite direction, we have a good chance of improving the AIM working environment as a side-effect: With a vision of which structure CISV should have in 5 or 10 years, we could work towards that goal, and adapt AIM in a second step for the better – not the other way around. To make my point clear, some of the potential triggers lie not *within* the AIM structure but somewhere else: When ETG was created a few years ago, suddenly the board of trustees at AIM worked much more efficiently – less aggressive discussions, less pointless motions - probably because consensus on delicate issues was already achieved even before AIM started.

One Suggestion (not necessarily the best, but my favourite)

In the last part of this report, I would like to suggest one¹ possible “roadmap” towards a more efficient AIM. It is my personal integrated result of the survey, AIM discussions and IEC’s input. It may seem little ambitious at first, but you will see, the devil is in the details². I’m not sure this is the best approach, but for this moment in time, I consider it the most promising and integrating one:

Introducing the square AIM.

Presently we are using a somewhat triangle-looking agenda for AIM:



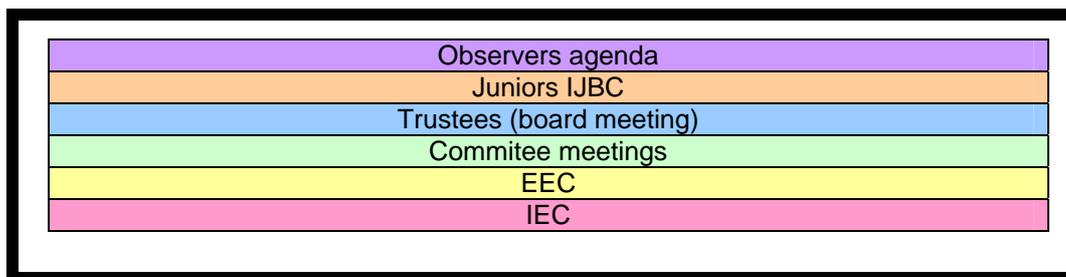
People are arriving at different times, before the real AIM begins, the trustees themselves only attend AIM for a mere 5 days, whereas IEC members have a total of 11 days.. Juniors attend IJBC before the real AIM begins, most of them stay on as trustees or observers. Similarly committees meet before AIM begins, and most committee members continue as trustees or observers. This works pretty well for various reasons:

- IJBC is an entity of its own, creating an open space uninterrupted by other meetings (except EEC)
- Committees have somewhat of a quiet time, before everybody else arrives
- Double-positions such as NJR/trustee or committee member/trustee work pretty well.

The alternative, I'd like to propose, is a “square” agenda with more days for trustees and observers, but less days for juniors, committee members, IEC and EEC. Basically everybody would come and leave at the same time, and stay for the whole AIM with a duration of 7-8 days:

¹ The motion requests three alternatives for a new AIM structure. Besides the two mentioned in the “big leaps” chapter, this is the only one I chose to elaborate.

² German idiom: The whole thing looks easy, but the details are difficult.



This would have some great advantages:

- Reduce costs for CISV international paying for EEC & IEC accomodation
- Reduced individual costs for juniors to participate
- Reduction of redundancy of presentations for EEC and board (example 2005: re-branding)
- The overall time that AIM takes place is decreased, thereby reducing organisational burden for the host NA.
- Simplifying the application process if everybody arrives and leaves on the same day.
- Easier to attend for people who have to take a work leave (trustees and observers, however would stay longer)
- Two more days for the trustees agenda: Not all sessions would have to be “board”-sessions, thereby leaving space for trustees to take part in any of the alternative agendas.

Some more opportunities

- IJBC & observers agenda could merge into a new “creativity and training agenda” during AIM, offering more chances for non-junior newcomers to be integrated.
- All AIM participants could have more input in committee work and recruiting new members may be easier (At present committee reports are almost submitted when trustees and observers arrive)
- While alternative agendas take place during the day, evening sessions could be planned as “plenary sessions” where everybody gathers for key issues or similar.
- The AIM trip could take place on the first or second day as a social event, while IEC and committees remain at the AIM site and begin their work.
- Potential of finding cheaper site that can be booked from Saturday to Saturday.
- A stronger feeling of “togetherness” among all participants.

Challenges:

- Creating the “alternative agendas” will be difficult.
- The character of IJBC will change dramatically. However, the new IJB structure does not require IJRs to run IJBC sessions all the time.
- Committee meetings will have to be fit into the agenda cleverly and may be more messy than at present. If done wisely, however, there could be even more time for committee work. Otherwise, committees will have to meet outside AIM to tackle bigger projects.
- Double roles such as NJR and trustee or committee member and trustee may not work as well anymore.

Saving even more costs

In order to reduce costs of AIM even more, some supportive measures should be considered:

- Revisit the AIM hosting system: Does AIM really have to rotate into every corner of the world, if some are cheaper than others? Maybe all NAs should compete for the cheapest AIM (accomodation-wise AND travel-wise), and be voted upon in the board, thereby dropping the regional system in favour for healthy competition.
- Hosting AIM even more often in Europe could serve that purpose, where discount airlines and short travel distances reduce travel costs dramatically. But then, financial support for non-European participants should be considered, such as a discount fee.
- Accept hosting bids for sites with <150 beds, if those are cheaper.
- Locate a central, cheap location, where AIM is hosted at least every second year.
- Analyze the effect of moving AIM back in the year into late August or early September. Maybe travel costs are cheaper if we move outside the main holyday season, or convention sites are

cheaper to book. As a positive side effect, CISVers would be able to attend both a CISV programme and AIM.

Changing the world around AIM

On a mid- to longterm scale CISV's administrative structure should change in a way, that supports a more efficient way of working. This should include removing administrative issues from AIM by strengthening alternative pillars of our international structure. None of the following proposals can be established from one year to another, but they have the potential of taking over some workload in the future:

- **Electronic AIM:** Most people in the survey were sceptical but ready to give it a shot. Let's determine one weekend in February or March every year, where people exchange thoughts, and discuss in online forums. At the same time e-mail ballots take place for specific issues, such as approval of minutes or the nominations of IJR/IEC candidates. The goal should be that, even if spread around the globe, everybody involved in CISV international synchronizes their work for one weekend. I imagine busy discussion boards on friends, buzzing IM-clients and ringing Skype-programmes. Once the culture of this virtual AIM is more established, maybe even voting on certain issues can take place during this particular weekend.
- **Establishing official regions:** Even if the regions are very different today, with a common vision it should be possible to create three strong, self-governing regions (Euro-med/Africa, Asiapacific and ARC) with a specific role within the organisational structure. A regional board could be responsible for organizing all regional seminar camp staff, summer camp and chapter development workshops. Regions could take even more responsibility in promoting CISV into new countries, thereby relieving the workload of CISV international. Again, this will be a process that takes years, but the result could be great.

Final Words

Something that started as a straight-forward project, has become increasingly complicated. At some point I felt smoke coming out of my ears, when I tried to understand and summarize all the consequences the changing of one switch in the complex clockwork of CISV would have. The report fails to reduce the number of options on what can be done to improve AIM. It seems as while writing, more and more possibilities appear between the lines.

I do hope, however, that I was able to sort the different ideas that have been up in the air, and create a solid background for a discussion that may just have started and will go on for a while. A discussion that goes beyond what AIM should be on to about how CISV as a whole should be navigated through the 21st century.

Nick Trautmann

Hamburg, February 2006