

1. Board of Directors report: Short overview of main activities and milestones

1.1. BeWelcome website & members

On the end of the 31st of October BeWelcome had 106491 members. Of which 91575 were also members a year ago.

1.2. BeVolunteer organization

Changes in the organization:

1. New Rules and Regulations
2. Taskforce working on clarifying certain parts of the statutes and presenting a proposal for new statutes.

1.2.1. Board of Directors

1.2.1.1 SUGGESTIONS FROM LAST YEARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BoD):

- The new Board of Directors (BoD) started with much enthusiasm. The roles and tasks were divided amongst the new directors.
- Volunteer coordination: The 2016-2017 BoD wanted to ensure the continuity to the role of Volunteer Coordinator according to the need to clarify the structure and ensure a good volunteer atmosphere.
- Meetings: The BoD organized 11 meeting with at least 3 members present.
- The BoD started a new donation campaign on 10.12.2016. See [1.3 Finances](#) for more detailed information.
- The BoD tried to include more BeVolunteer members by actively searching for new members. The Board took care of the inclusion of those members (there was 1 new member since last GA) in the association.

1.2.1.2 GOALS FOR BOD (from last General Assembly, November 2016)

- Change of Statutes - IN PROGRESS
- Call an eGA for changing the Statutes - DONE
- Prioritizing the suggestions: the previous BoD considered it a priority to implement the following suggestions:
 - 1) Rewrite Statutes and Rules & Regulations - DONE
 - 2) Have a specific button to send hospitality requests - IN PROGRESS
 - 3) Search surroundings (on map search) - IN PROGRESS
 - 4) Having a mobile (friendly) version - IN PROGRESS
 - 5) Improve "Trips" to make searching active members possible - IN PROGRESS
 - 6) Add a map on the "text" search and remove the separate "map" search - IN PROGRESS
 - 7) Reply to Personal Messages via Email - IN PROGRESS
 - 8) Add option to link small images from gallery (on profile) - IN PROGRESS
 - Make donations to BeVolunteer tax deductible in France - FAIL
 - Recruit 3 new tech-skilled volunteers - FAIL (during this year two new volunteers were recruited and one quit)
 - Announce meetings at least 1 week ahead in the community - DONE
 - 2 new BeVolunteer members from France - PARTLY DONE (1 new volunteer recruited)
 - Lead the Google for NonProfits campaign - FAIL
 - Have at least 5 BeWelcome members sign up for BeVolunteer - PARTLY DONE (so far 2)
 - Support/promote activities for at least 3 BW events in 2017 connected with BeWelcome Anniversary - DONE
 - Have at least 10 meetings with at least 3 members attending. - DONE
 - recruit at least 4 new volunteers - DONE (4)
 - find a new ombudsperson - DONE
 - prepare binding documents for the next General Assembly (GA) (financial statement, budget, annual report) - DONE

1.2.2. BeVolunteer members

Between November 2016 and October 2017, 1 new member joined BeVolunteer and one honorary member resigned.

1.2.3. Statistics on General Assemblies and members eligible to vote 1)

| Year | BV members | members eligible to vote | BoD candidates |
|----------|------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| GA 2011 | 43 | 21 | 5 |
| GA 2012 | 45 | 16 | 4 |
| GA 2013 | 50 | 22 | 7 |
| eGA 2014 | 60 | 34 | 3 |
| GA 2014 | 60 | 22 | 6 |
| GA 2015 | 64 | 23 | 6 |
| GA 2016 | 65 | 65/28 | 5 |
| GA 2017 | 48 | 48/36 | |

1.3. Finances

- The financial year of BeVolunteer was from October 1st 2016 until September 30th 2017.
- The donation campaign was officially initiated on 10.12.2016 and the donation goal (2.000 €) was reached on 28.02.2016, so the campaign took less than 3 months.
- The biggest single donation was € 200 (twice), last year the biggest donation was also € 200.
- When there is no donation campaign, there are practically no donations (only € 88 after the official closing date).
- Our bank account is with Crédit Coopératif in Rennes, besides that we have a PayPal account and a Bitpay account.
- Crédit Coopératif does not save the transactions for a long time, so it's necessary to make screenshots every 3 to 6 months.
- With Crédit Coopératif we have € 6430,50 in the bank, of which € 2.000 is considered an "emergency fund".
- We should keep some money on the PayPal account, in case we have problems with the bank account; on September 30th € 1654,88 were left on PayPal. After the GA we should transfer € 1.000 from PayPal to Crédit Coopératif.
- On Bitpay we received 2 donations (total of 0,025000 bitcoins), which were converted into € 35. We have currently no bitcoins in our possession.
- That means on September 30th we had assets of € 8085,52.
- The € 800 reserved for a lawyer were not used.

2. BeWelcome Volunteering

Without volunteers BeWelcome would not be possible. That's why we need to cherish every volunteer's input, big or small. It's not easy to find new volunteers. And it is hard to keep the motivation up, especially when the workload increases and at the same time the number of volunteers or their available time decreases.

A regular update of the ['Who Does What'-wiki](#) creates an overview of the current volunteering status. As of October 2017, at least 40 members can be called active volunteers for BeWelcome. [Note: there are many more people who volunteer without being members of BeVolunteer]

2.1. Software Development Team and Testing Team

2.1.2 Development Team

At the moment a complete redesign is being made. Symfony will be used as the new framework for the BeWelcome website (instead of Rox). The code is being reviewed and cleaned up to make it easier to read. The 'trips' feature is being coded from scratch. A new opening page has been designed and the unfinished version can be seen at alpha.bewelcome.org. All pages are currently being designed and rendered using the front-end framework Bootstrap.

Due to a lack of volunteers with experience in the used programming languages, the lack of time of the current volunteers and some unforeseen backlash, the new code and design was not ready as planned for the first half of the year. However, the re-coding and re-design are progressing. Between November 2016 and November 2017 three volunteers have committed code to BeWelcome.

Next steps:

- Remove trips and wiki
- Finish hosting requests so that they can be tested thoroughly
- Finish the search pages
- Start on the admin backend: Unfortunately the administration pages must be rewritten from scratch. This is the most time consuming task of the re-coding activities.

2.1.3 Testing Team

A group of approximately 10 members has been testing the new website as deployed on alpha, providing feedback to the development and redesign team. Five members have opened a so called 'Issue' on GitHub, officially stating a problem, bug or suggestion to enhance the code.

2.2. Sysadmin Team

The sysadmin team consists of 5 members. There is not one main system administrator who holds all keys to all servers. To share the control of tech “power” the Sysadmins have always formed an atypical team. Some members are dormant and do not take over day to day tasks. But if there are serious server issues they immediately step in. Those sysadmins have set up a backup in case they are not available immediately. Another sysadmin takes care of the everyday tasks like renewal of certificates or installation of new software asked for by the BoD or other volunteering teams. A new sysadmin has updated the documentation of our system structure as the documentation was outdated and thus not usable any longer.

2.3. (Re)Design Team

The new design has made progress. There are still some issues around usability, responsiveness on smaller screens and accessibility, but they should not be in the way of deployment of the new website. These issues can be fixed in a later stadium, providing temporarily inconvenience for some use cases.

The new design has been reviewed mostly by the members in the testing group, since it has surpassed the initial 'drawing table' status and now mainly focuses on user experience and interaction. Unfortunately the team of active designers/coders has not grown over the last year.

The new code and using bootstrap for the new website should make it easier for new volunteers to get involved in the website design in the future.

2.4. Forum Moderators Team

Forum moderation

Overview

Compared to some years, the period since the last GA has been relatively straightforward for the mod team, without any major disputes to adjudicate. This relative calm has been a gift, as the team continues to be under-strength. The present four mods all have other commitments both within and outside of BW, and there have been times when the team struggled to come up with a quick decision. This is a particular problem for the mod team as, unless issues are very routine, our decisions require input from several members of the team.

Forum Issues

The team dealt with many ‘commercial’ posts during the year. Most were part of the commercial spam problem being responded to by the safety and anti-spam teams.

In comparison to last year, there were fewer commercial posts by genuine BW users.

FYI: The Terms of Use ban commercial activity but there is a huge grey area around whether specific posts are commercial or not. The rule of thumb used by the mods is whether there is some financial benefit but, even with this, many posts are not straightforward, with differing opinions about things like flat share tenants, promoting commercial events without personal benefit to the poster, links to

websites, tourism promotions etc. To date, the team has generally managed to reach a consensus on action, but this is a difficult and slow process when the team is so depleted.

At the 2015-2016 GA, the forum moderators were also given the authority to intervene in the group structure. So far we have limited ourselves to removing spam groups and groups that once were created by members who are no longer on BW and therefore contain 0 members.

Over the year, the mod team have been involved with a number of posts made to inappropriate groups/threads, often to the general discussion forum (e.g. hosting requests in the main forum). The team usually moves these posts to a more appropriate place – generally with the agreement of the poster – but there have been enough of them for us to look at what might be done to prevent them in the first place. There seem to be a number of causes (a lot of which boil down to lack of information) but at least some of these posts result from the display on the landing page. The present list of ‘recent posts’ directs posters, without guidance, to a blank form which automatically posts in the general forum. The team hopes that this, along with some other landing page issues, will be addressed in the ongoing re-design.

No BW members were banned from the Forum (either temporarily or permanently) between 01/10/2016 and 30/09/2017.

2.5. New Member BeWelcome Team

As the former team coordinator currently is on “maternity leave” the team work got a bit stalled. Team members do their tasks individually and without much coordination. Currently there are 2 or 3 greeters who are very active. So far all new members have been greeted within the three months. If we could fine another 2 or 3 active greeters, that delay could greatly be reduced.

2.6. Support Team

2.6.1 Change of Coordinators

From March 2016 a Support Team member (amnesiac84) and a BoD member (girandoliere) temporarily took over the coordinators' task.

2.6.2 Statistics

Languages of tickets: most requests are in English but the Support Team regularly receives requests in French, Spanish, Italian and German. We also, from time to time, get requests in Dutch, Portuguese, Russian or other languages, e.g. Danish or Chinese.

Languages spoken by active team members: English (all), Dutch (2), German (2), French (2), Italian (2), Spanish (2). Tickets in other languages are usually machine translated and answered in English.

2.6.3 Types of questions

(period: 01-10-2016 until 30-09-2017)

Currently we use the following categories (number of questions per category for the previous year in brackets):

- Account: 490 (1513) Feedback at delete (268)
- Board of Directors: 238 (193)
- Forum moderators: 14 (29)
- French: 41 (49)
- General feedback: 93 (117)
- German: 7
- Junk: 740 (525)
- Media: 25 (22)
- Newsletter: 1157 (1832)
- Other: 34 (42)
- Safety and abuse: 364 (533)
- Software issues: 62 (57)
- Spanish: 23 (40)
- Suggestions: 29 (26)
- Survey: 38
- Terms of Use: 11 (962)
- Volunteer: 8 (13)

2.6.4 Volunteers

The support volunteers group has 13 members, all have access to the Support Team queues (excluding the confidential queues "Board of Directors", "Safety and abuse" and "Forum moderators").

This number includes some (formerly active) members that only help out in emergencies and on request, currently the team has 7 active volunteers. Also, the BoD members have access to the support queue.

Two new volunteers were successfully recruited and integrated in the team. Some others expressed interest in volunteering, but they have not managed to finish the training. This happened repeatedly and is unfortunate not only because of the lost hopes to distribute the tasks on more shoulders but also because there has been quite some training effort involved which adds workload to the “trainers”.

2.6.5 Problems

- Automatic password generation gives a lot of problems. The team recently changed the layout of the e-mail sent after this process to discover if it changes the amount of support mails for this problem.

- Another possible reason for the amount of problems could lie in the fact that people nowadays use their e-mail address more often to log in on websites. BeWelcome only allows to log in with a username.
- high number of spam/fake tickets.

2.6.6 Open tasks from previous year

- Recruit new active team members to increase quality of service and response times, especially for languages like Russian - (still open, even recruited two new volunteers)-
- Lack of volunteers who are able to solve the password issue
- Adjust the FAQ and include it on places members need it - PARTLY DONE
- Work on a more efficient first contact with potential new volunteers (templates, tutorials, step by step instructions for team coordinators) - PARTLY DONE - (experiments with Skype based training)
- Create a new how-to OTRS guide, which is more user friendly (a lot of volunteers step back because of it - FAIL
- Find a suitable job description for prospective supporters
- Update OTRS to a newer version (v4 or v5)
- Add a German-queue - DONE

2.7. Safety Team (01/11/2016-30/10/2017)

The team currently has 5 members. We consider our current team composition as adequate in view of the current workload.

2.7.1 Sub team

The sub team "spam checkers" has 9 members currently. The team members are actively looking for spammers and ways to decrease their activity. Adding extra volunteers to the Spam Checkers team, some in different time zones, has improved the response time.

2.7.2 Tickets handled

There have been 364 tickets – a significant dropdown from 533 in the previous year. The majority of tickets handled are reports by members about spammers. Thanks to technical approaches to disable fake profiles - many of them had links to commercial websites - fewer cases had to be handled manually by the spam checker subteam. So called "scamming spam messages" still appear regularly. There seems to be no technical way to detect them before they send the first messages - but only after those have been reported.

As the general activity of the Safety Team members has decreased a bit the team members tend to act more independently to handle the tickets.

We would like to ask to reconsider putting a "report this profile" button on profiles. Several members have asked this, since it is easier to flag a profile than to contact the Safety Team.

2.7.3 First crimes committed via BeWelcome

In May 2017 the Safety Team had to issue the first warning message ever about a travelling thief using BeWelcome to steal from his hosts.

The first theft was reported in Vienna/Austria. The thief Karolis Ivanauskas from Lithuania then travelled to Milano/Italy where he not only stole from his host but also beat him up so the host ended up in hospital. With several new profiles he tried to find hosts in Barcelona, Madrid, London and other places. Each time he proceeded in comparable ways. Whenever he posted last minute hosting requests in local groups the Safety Team was able to quickly post warnings in the groups and send private messages to all members he contacted with personal warnings. Because of our swift and very clear actions he was not able to cause more harm.

The Safety Team spent considerable time supporting the victims, tracking the thief, collecting detailed information about him for police and watching out for new profiles. One Safety Team member went to Vienna to join the member going to the Police Station. The Safety Team also tried to connect the Austrian and Italian Police investigations to enable them to issue an Interpol search warrant. The Safety Team has not been made aware of whether such a warrant has been issued nor when.

Only a few weeks later a second thief was reported in Cologne/Germany. The victim filed a police report but no further action was taken by the police.

The Safety Team issued several warnings to members who misunderstood the nature of BeWelcome by asking for visas, jobs or offering paid accommodation. Some of the latter changed their profile and made clear that for BW members their offer is free, others quit BW or were banned after they failed to comply with our request.

On several occasions the Safety Team was involved in disputes between members. Most of those cases were based on misunderstandings, miscommunication or cultural differences and the Safety Team was able to moderate between the members.

2.7.4 Contact with Safety Teams of other hospitality exchange networks

On the occasion of the traveling thief the Safety Team got in touch with the responsible people within several other hospitality exchange networks. Two of them reacted and now there is an established contact from BeWelcome to two other networks to prevent members from community hopping in case they have already created serious problems on that other platform.

2.7.5 Response time

Because of the varying nature of safety tickets requiring more or less consultation within the team a meaningful analysis of response times is not possible at the moment. Especially the urgent, safety related issues were dealt with swiftly.

One team member has had problems receiving OTRS ticket notifications despite changing the connected address repeatedly.

2.8. Communication Team

2.8.1 Members

In November 2015 the Communications Team did a huge clean-up and asked all of the formally 176 members to sign in again if they wanted to remain active. As of October 2017 the team has 22 members. After the clean-up, activity increased in the communication team, but decreased over time, as brainstorming didn't lead to action.

We still believe a volunteer management system or a project management system needs to be imposed upon volunteers and tasks. Without responsibility and accountability, there will probably never be any activity.

Each member is at the moment more or less a lone operator. This is because of the horizontal leadership style that all teams apply. While it ensures no one is a team leader, it does create a vacuum in direction. The workload system currently depends on a person coming up with an idea, promoting it and gaining support. Often ideas come and go without completion if there is a lack of motivation and action. There is no real team/project management system to initiate tasks and allocate tasks to members.

A few members (around 2-4 members) take the initiative of taking care of specific tasks which works quite well, albeit in a limited way. But there has been hardly any real teamwork and the communication team as such is pretty dormant and needs to be reactivated.

Suggestions

- The communication team is not working to any clear objectives, or isn't communicating any big image, vision or narrative. It is important that the BoD / BV create direction. After direction, the communication team can create objectives and the specific tasks to reach those objectives.
- Have a small, dedicated team that can function as a catalyst for the members of the communication team.
- Create a work flow/project management system, to show project ideas and enable people to join sub-teams within groups.
- * Develop one or several BW/BV Spokesperson(s) or face(s) for BW/BV.

2.8.2 Internal Communications

Most communication remains internal with the aim of motivating existing members to use the site for hospitality related activities and events as well as inform members of updates. While it is a necessary and important task, it is also born out of not having direction for external communications or a budget to carry out any such direction if given. The primary means of internal communication is through the newsletter. It would be nice to check whether newsletters are an effective means of communication - a technical analysis of click-through rates would be interesting.

Newsletters

Two newsletters have been sent out in 2016-2017, The first was in relation to Volunteering, the new BoD and the 10th Anniversary. The second wasn't a newsletter, but a promotion for BeWelcome's 10th Anniversary in Berlin. Therefore, only 1 newsletter in 2016-2017, compared to 2 in 2016 (spring and summer), two in 2015, one in 2014 and four in 2013. A post-GA newsletter will be prepared and is aimed to be sent out in December. The last newsletter was sent in 9 different languages. However, the role of the newsletter was discussed in the group, and while there are some ideas for new content, this takes time and effort. Other than the results of the member survey which have not yet been covered by a newsletter there is basically little news.

Suggestion

- Create a system in which the communication can work with other teams. For example, the design team could help with creating fresh sticker and poster templates for the communication team to publish or even print. A BeWelcome Open Data Team could indicate the effectiveness of newsletters and click through rates from the BW Facebook, Twitter pages and individual online news articles.
- * More connection between communication and design. For example, we need video content, GIFS and infographics to share with members and non-members.
- * Seek to reignite Newsletter through crowdsurfing content.

Community News

The BoD took care of the front-page 'community news' which is only seen if members log in to the site. This was resulting in 24 news messages (October 2015-October 2016), an average of 2 per month. In the year before there were 8 messages. There were approximately 22 messages between October 2016 and October 2017. Many of these news sites were not site "critical" news, such as events supported by BeActive.

Suggestion

- *Open up Community News content.

2.8.3 External Communications

The communication team works together to push consistent messages through internal tools such as the BW newsletter, and external tools such as Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook

There were 1,777 'likes' at the time of the 2013 GA. There were 2,600 likes before the 2014 GA. This has increased to 3,576 (October 2015) and 4,225 by October 2016. There are 4,751 people who like our page in October 2017, with 4,654 people following the page. This does reflect growing interest in BeWelcome, given the team doesn't use paid FB advertisements.

The team uses the page to motivate BW users in their everyday life to engage more with bewelcome.org (i.e. fundraising drives on the main site, building awareness of new site developments, calls to action). Due to a BoD strategic decision, Facebook posts do not contain 'general' information related to travel, tourism, hospitality. BW doesn't use Facebook in any commercial sense, since we are not driving users from BeWelcome to Facebook, but vice-versa. There is no host-guest interaction on the Facebook page. The communication team is constantly looking for more interesting input and it is a task for the team to encourage members to let the team know about their stories if they want them published.

Suggestion:

- * Run competitions on Facebook so as to engage them, and redirect them back to BeWelcome. However, this requires prizes.

- * There is a public BeWelcome group

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BeWelcome/>). It had more than 2,000 members in December 2015 but has seen little activity since. Some members left during the year. Should be created a BeWelcome group and link it to the BW page. Many organizations do this to encourage discussion around their brands.

- * We need more Facebook friendly/Social Media friendly content (video, pictures) to push through online platforms. aliflore made a great infographic - <https://www.bewelcome.org/gallery/thumbimg?id=55526&t=2> We need more of this. Even if we have to pay!

Twitter

The @BeWelcome account had 450 subscribers in 2013, 535 subscribers in 2014, 727 in 2015 (October), 805 in October 2016 and 836 in October 2017. 631 tweets have been sent. Like the Facebook account, 'tweets' reflect readers back to bewelcome.org. Followers and readers 'retweet' positive messages like hospitality experiences or stories related to BeWelcome. The communication team is constantly looking for more interesting input and it is a task for the team to encourage members to let the team know about their stories if they want them published.

Spreadshirt

The BeWelcome shop at Spreadshirt was reactivated about two years ago. Both the US and the European shop contain a few T-shirts. It would be good to have more designs - so far no designer stepped forward and it is a task for the coming year to organize this. The amount generated in sales was € 18.46 (paid out in 7.05.2016) and € 21.52 (paid out in 20.02.2017). These sales came from the European store at <https://shop.spreadshirt.de/bewelcome/>. No sales came from the American store at <https://shop.spreadshirt.com/bewelcome/> We also need to fill up the following form for US tax authorities - <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw8bene.pdf>

- * Close US store, and double down on European one.

Creating more designs.

2.8.4 Conferences/Talks/Events

BeWelcome has not been asked to take part in conferences during this year.

Google Plus: We have 170 members, but it is not an active channel.

<https://plus.google.com/+BeWelcomeHospitality>

Media requests

Interviews and requests for information were handled by a BoD member who is also member of the Communications Team. Apart from this the Communication Team does receive or manage media requests.

Suggestion

* We would like a list of "official" BW/BV spokespeople. Maybe from major language groups (one English speaker, French, Spanish) or different countries/regions.

* Create an annual spokesperson for BW, who will act as the brand face. It's a drawback that BW is seen as faceless. This could be someone on the BoD or outside.

BeWelcome Video Channel

A BeWelcome video channel was launched at <https://vimeo.com/bewelcomevideo> This was launched and promoted by duesseldorf <https://www.bewelcome.org/blog/duesseldorf/18296> It has 3 videos. There was a call for members to create their own, but no take up.

Google Ads

Google Ad Grants is a program that credits non-profits \$10,000 every month to advertise on Google.com. It is also open to French non-profits.

In November 2016 the General Assembly decided to join the Google for non-profits program. This program gives the ability for non-profits to advertise on the Google Search network without costs to the organization.

Since then BeVolunteer has experimented with certain keywords, not yet with differentiated advertisements, target groups or redirection URLs.

The budget used to test those keywords have been between \$10 and \$20 a day.

The advertisement of BeWelcome has been shown over 570.000 times between November 7th 2016 and October 29th 2017. There were 26.426. The clickthrough ratio is 4.61%.

The TOP-10 keywords in total clicks:

1. couchsurfing – 12.756
2. couch surfing – 3.186
3. guest – 2.735
4. couth surfing - 990

5. travel partner - 861
6. hospitality - 784
7. hospitality club - 496
8. home stay - 475
9. coachsurfing - 354
10. cauch surfing – 345

These were the TOP-10 countries people were clicking from (IP registered):

1. Ukraine – 1.383
2. Iran – 1.264
3. Turkey – 1.206*
4. Argentina – 1.181*
5. Morocco – 1.159
6. Colombia – 998
7. Brazil – 921*
8. India – 913*
9. Egypt – 853*
10. Peru – 587

* >50% above average clickthrough ratio

In Piwik it can be analysed how many people signed up after clicking on a Google advertisement. In the period between January 1st 2017 and October 29th 2017, 1452 profiles were created directly after clicking an advertisement. TOP-10 of countries those new made profiles were made from:

1. Iran - 193
2. Ukraine - 93
3. United States - 84*
4. Morocco - 71
5. Algeria - 66*
6. Colombia – 65
7. Turkey – 61
8. Argentina – 60

9. Brazil – 42

10. Russia – 42*

* not present in the TOP-10 of number of clicks

Whenever the new website is ready or whenever the BoD or GA decides, the daily budget will be increased.

Other

The team continues to support members and non-members who wish to communicate about BeWelcome through BW posters, flyers and badges, buttons, a Promotion Kit and press support. Over the previous twelve months there have been increased mentions of BeWelcome in the media and in blogs.

Examples:

India - March 18, 2017

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/trends/bling-it-on/are-you-ready-for-hospitality-exchange/377441.html>

Estonia - March 9

<http://reisijuht.delfi.ee/news/news/raha-vahe-aga-tahaks-reisida-siin-on-moned-voimalused-odavalt-voi-taitsa-tasuta-randamiseks?id=77487802>

2.8. 6 BeWelcome Outreach Team

The Outreach group created in 2014 was meant to be open to all BeWelcome volunteers who want to help spread the word about BeWelcome through outside communication. Nothing happened in this group - possibly because there is no clear strategy and nobody giving a useful hand to those who want to communicate about BeWelcome.

Other Ideas

- Filled out profiles: While the communication team can communicate via newsletters the importance of filling out a profile, a rule that a profile is only activated (and thus be enabled to send requests) after having a certain number of words in it may be a more efficient method.
- Responsive website: We support a redesign strategy that utilises those people using smartphones. We can then extend adwords to mobile searches.
- Code base camp: We are happy to support the call for more coding/redesign team help. However, we need the exact volunteer positions and volunteer description/specifications. What exact skills/knowledge should volunteers have?

- How to use BW?: We are happy to have a weekly column with just one tip at a time. This can be posted on social media and community news.
- New photos on landing page: Happy to use a competition for new photos on the landing page. Is there a place they can email/upload their photos? (something like dropbox but open source? Maybe with possibility to store the pictures on our own servers?).
- Outsourcing some tasks: We would support outsourcing minor tasks e.g. creating infographics, videos etc.
- Volunteer recruitment: We are happy to look for volunteers, beyond those who are already BW members. However, we need a volunteer page that has an OPEN POSITIONS tab/section, with detailed job specifications and the name and email address of a real team leader. This we hope can be linked to a volunteer/project management system.
- Non-western hosts: Happy to see more Non Western hosts. We can utilise AdWords for non-profits to this task. However, we also need design and other groups to design materials (posters) in non-western languages.

From the Member Survey:

- The main reasons for joining BeWelcome are the desire to be hosted by locals and to host travelers, meeting new people and learning about other cultures. Being non-profit is a strong motivation as is saving money. Which attributes should we focus on. Should we ignore the finding about "saving money"?
- Non-Use: The main reasons given for not logging in for a long time are not receiving requests and having forgotten about BeWelcome, but surprisingly also traveling oneself (and apparently not using BeWelcome during that time). This is interesting. The development of "push notifications" on desktop/phone might help? Newsletter may be of limited use?
- Ignoring messages: If members ignore hosting requests, should we add a reply rate? If people host, should we remind them to provide a reference?
- Not logging in: Male users and users who have not logged in for 6 months are somewhat less satisfied with BeWelcome. We largely just add links to our communication with members on FB, twitter, newsletter. Do we seek to add a SPLASH page, for returning members, to remind them of BW benefits. Its not great they keep returning to the same login page, 1 week, 5 months after a previous login. Whether its a new tip or hint, a quick video or some new content, how can we *use* splash pages to capture capture the returning members attention for a short time and can introduce changes or updates? Maybe a competition for a BW bicycle bag or a reminder to fill in their profile etc

- Removing the forum: We have had a previous GA decision to merge forum/Group Discussion. We can at least remove it from the frontpage. Instead maybe activities can be put on front page.
- AdWords: What they want most by far are more hosts and more guests. We can use adwords after the redesign to seek more hosts in new countries, using ads in different languages.

Key Suggestions

- We would like to have members create and spread more videos, posters, sticker templates, graphics, infographics, GIFS, videos about BeWelcome. However, given the lack of content, maybe we should pay an illustrator or designer. This can be quite economical via sites like <https://www.fiverr.com/>, designwork.com, upwork.com, designcrowd.com
- Find BV/BW spokesperson. This "face" of BW can be crowdsurfed by members. Make it a video competition. If not, find regional spokespeople (Africa, Europe, North America, South America, and Asia Pacific). Put a face and personality to BW/BV.
- At the moment, the communications team can't communicate anything that doesn't link directly back to the BeWelcome website. This limits the BeWelcome narrative.

For example we can't mention new travel books, support causes (climate change, low carbon lifestyles, green travel, petitions for good causes), because we may be accused by a member of being 'political.' We need BoD / BV approval to communicate on topic areas. Why not start by allowing the team to mention, for example, inspirational travel quotes' or pictures?

2.09 Ombudsperson

The ombudsperson luckily did not get involved in 2016/17. In the end of November 2016 the former ombudsperson stepped back, the BoD appointed a new ombudsperson.

2.10 Translation Team

So far, 246 members have given rights to translate the website. Of those, **151** still had an active status on Nov 17th 2017. Of those translators. Of those translators, 84 of them logged in in the last 3 months (since 2017-08-16). 96 were set inactive (1 in 2012, 11 in 2013, 11 in 2014). There are also many cases of members with translation rights for convenience or administrative purposes but that don't do any actual translations.

Languages

BW has been (partly) translated in 41 (or say 39, if Traditional Chinese / Simplified Chinese and Portuguese / Brazilian Portuguese are counted as one language each). No new language was introduced this year.

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| English 100% | Croatian 16.5% | Japanese 4.2% |
| Portuguese 99.6% | Swedish 13.4% | Kurdish 4% |
| Dutch 97.5% | Arabic 13.3% | Armenian 3.5% |
| German 94.6% | Esperanto 13% | Indonesian 2.5% |
| French 87.5% | Traditional Chinese 11.4% | Bulgarian 2.1% |
| Italian 79.6% | Turkish 11.1% | Latvian 2% |
| Spanish 79.3% | Polish 10.7% | Hindi 1.9% |
| Russian 72.4% | Basque 10% | Romanian 1.7% |
| Serbian 70% | Lithuanian 9.4% | Norwegian 1.4% |
| Portuguese (br) 67.9% | Hungarian 9.1% | Swahili 1.4% |
| Greek 58.2% | Finnish 7.9% | Breton 1% |
| Simplified Chinese 41.4% | Danish 6.3% | Malay 0.6% |
| Czech 30.5% | Slovak 5.5% | Thai 0.2% |
| Catalan 19.6% | Persian 5.2% | |

Difficulties

- It is not possible for the coordinators to see how the activity is spread, i.e. how much each member with translation rights has translated and over what time period.
- When multiple translators of the same language translate texts, it's difficult to find out how certain returning words are translated exactly.
- Working from the volunteer pages, when translating, more context is required. A link to the page(s) where the code can be found or would be of great help.
- Sometimes small changes are made to very big texts – when this happens it's not easy to pinpoint where the changes were made and the translators have to review the whole text again.
- Certain fragments of texts are repeated over and over again (for example, the newsletter signatures or mails sent regularly to members). It would be less frustrating if those texts could be translated only once and then reused on other strings.

- Many languages are abandoned before they reach even 10% (which should amount for a big percentage of the website being translated since newsletters and mails aren't as visible but do count a lot towards the final percentage). It is not easy to track if there is any recent progress in a certain language or not.
- BW Communications often only get translated to less than a dozen languages.

Suggestions

- Encourage translator volunteers to bring forward their difficulties and eventually suggestions on how to solve them to be later discussed with the Development team, if needed.
- Try to encourage a proactive approach from other teams to discuss their language related problems with the translation team. E.g.: Development team could use more variables for texts that occur frequently or the New Member Welcome or Support teams try to ask for translators help with an occasional issue with a less common language.
- Keep a log of the evolution of the translations to access which ones are still actively translated and which ones have reached a standstill. Promote a cleanup of languages that have been abandoned for a long time, removing them from the list of languages to choose until they're more translated.

2.11 Member Survey Task Force

In the past, BeWelcome had relied on spontaneous feedback in the discussion forum and groups, email submissions and more recently the Suggestion tool for development. The General Assembly of BeVolunteer in November 2016 decided that after ten years it was time to get a more comprehensive understanding of BeWelcome members.

The main objectives of the survey were to:

- Understand member activity online and offline
- Understand why members are not more active and identify ways to increase activity
- Obtain key data on website usage and satisfaction for improvement and assessment of progress (benchmarking)

The survey was carried out anonymously online from June 19th to July 9th using the sophisticated survey tool which LamaPoll let us use for free. Approx. 10.000 active members and 10.000 inactive members (not logged in for 12 to 24 months) were randomly selected among members fluent in English, German, French or Spanish (87% of membership). The sample received email invitations to participate in the survey in their main language, with a direct link to the corresponding questionnaire. The questionnaire had a total of 35 questions, but many conditional questions were only asked when relevant based on replies to previous questions.

It typically took respondents about 10 minutes to complete the survey.

For details, please refer to <http://www.bewelcome.org/groups/2351/wiki>

The detailed presentation is at

https://downloads.bewelcome.org/surveys/2017_BW_Member_Survey.pdf

Summary of main findings:

The main reasons for joining BeWelcome are the desire to be hosted by locals and to host travelers, meeting new people and learning about other cultures. Being non-profit is a strong motivation as is saving money.

The reasons for not uploading a profile photo, usually a requirement to host or be hosted, are varied, ranging from not having thought about it and not thinking it is necessary over preferring not to show oneself and not having had time. Not knowing how is rarely the reason.

The main reasons given for not logging in for a long time are not receiving requests and having forgotten about BeWelcome, but surprisingly also traveling oneself (and apparently not using BeWelcome during that time).

Most say they have met other members in person, and most have already received a hosting request. So BeWelcome is not just some website or a collection of profiles. However, 3 of 4 have not hosted anyone over the past 12 months. Most say they don't receive enough requests, almost nobody receives too many.

Almost all (87%!) have travelled and stayed overnight over the past 12 months, but only 15% of them with BeWelcome (vs. 38% with CS!). 3 of 4 are members of CS, and they keep using Couchsurfing to find hosts. Main reasons given for that are that they didn't find a BW host and that they didn't think about looking on BW. Overall they aren't significantly less satisfied with BW.

Most have tried to find a host on BeWelcome and most have found it difficult not only to find one, but even to obtain a reply. When asked, though, very few admit to having ignored a hosting request. But those who do say it was because they didn't have time, forgot, and only in third place that they didn't like the request.

The satisfaction with BeWelcome is the same as with the other hospitality websites respondents use.

Male users and users who have not logged in for 6 months are somewhat less satisfied with BeWelcome.

Forum and activities have not been important reasons for joining, have been used little and are not a focus for improvement requested by respondents.

What they want most by far are more hosts and more guests, easier member search and a mobile-friendlier website.

On a final note: While fewer members participated in the survey than we would have hoped, the comments by those who did were overwhelmingly positive and encouraging regarding the survey itself, the work which volunteers do to make BeWelcome happen in general, and the non-profit character in particular. This feedback alone, in addition to the useful guidance for future development and the ability to now track progress, has made the work put into this first survey worthwhile.

The results were posted to the website and announced in community news. They were also planned to be shared in the next newsletter, but no newsletter has been published since. Although some concrete

actions were suggested by the team, discussions haven't taken off neither in the BV group nor in the Forum. Hopefully discussions of the topic at the GA will result in concrete ways of putting the information to use.

The plan is to repeat this survey every year in order to track progress, ideally starting in early June. Only really relevant changes should be made in order to maintain comparability. Of course the questionnaire will have to be adapted once the new responsive website is launched in order to cover also key changes.

Although most of the work to set up the survey has now been done also for subsequent years, the team is looking for additional members to help with the adaptation and with analysis."

2.12 Statutes Review group

The GA 2016 in Venice gave the mandate to the Board of Directors to revise the statutes. The BoD formed a working group for that purpose, consisting of one BoD member and 3 other volunteers. The working group has been working intensely and discovering more and more issues as work progressed, but it will present a draft of new statutes several weeks before the extraordinary General Assembly in November 2017, especially convoked for the purpose of statutes change, which will take place together with the ordinary GA.

3. BeWelcome Meetings and Unconferences

No official volunteer meetings and unconferences took place during this year.

Instead local members were motivated to organize events for members celebrating the 10th anniversary of BeWelcome. Specially the French community picked this up and there have been several weekends, for example in Toulouse or Marseille.

In 2016 people from France had the idea to visit Berlin for the 10th anniversary of BeWelcome. So between 28th of April and 1st of May 2017 there was a nice and vibrant BeWelcome meeting in Berlin with around 25 participants from France and Germany. We had several events to explore the city like bicycle tour, alternative city tour and nightingale dark walk. But we also chilled and got to know each other while having picknick, playing Kubb in the park or while visiting breweries.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The new Board of Directors should and will take in account the suggestions made by the teams.

Footnote

1) After the report has been published we realized some mistakes in the table about General Assemblies and members eligible to vote (1.2.3). This is the correct version:

| Year | BV members | members eligible to vote | BoD candidates |
|----------|------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| GA 2011 | 43 | 21 | 5 |
| GA 2012 | 45 | 16 | 4 |
| GA 2013 | 50 | 23 | 7 |
| eGA 2014 | 60 | 34 | 3 |
| GA 2014 | 60 | 22 | 6 |
| GA 2015 | 63 | 23 | 6 |
| GA 2016 | 66 | 47 | 5 |
| GA 2017 | 48 | 37 | 3 |
| eGA 2017 | 48 | 36 | - |