BeVolunteer Annual Report 2019-2020

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

1.1 BeWelcome website

● New website has been released during the last BoD term, in April 2019 (see previous Annual report for details). In addition to Community News (April 2019), this has been announced in the first Newsletter following the release (January 2020), hopefully attracting some dormant members to use the website more.

● External to BW, but with strong influence on BW activity were two events: (i) a paywall introduced by another hospitality network, resulting in an influx of new members and an overall **increase** in (website) activity starting around May 2020 and still active now; (ii) a global pandemic closing the borders and hindering travel for health reasons, resulting in an overall **decrease** in travel-related (website) activities (March/April 2020, still active in November 2020)

● *Implementing the website-related GA 2019 decisions*:

(a) A major change in the personal profiles regarding the hospitality exchange aspect of BeWelcome is the **replacement of the YES/MAYBE/NO hosting status with a YES/NO status**, where YES (visible on the member profile) is linked to a **Hosting Interest** (not visible on the member's profile but influencing the position in the search results on hosting). The Hosting Interest is set by the member on a ten-point scale from "very low" to "can't wait"

(b) **Temporary modification** of the hosting interest and display of **reply rate** on profiles have been discussed, but are not implemented at this point.

(c) Currently **Matomo is installed on our servers**, gathering information on visitors to the (public, i.e., available without logging in) places of the website.

(d) **Member search** has been improved in several ways: The default member search by location has been simplified with an improved sorting algorithm, and additional search options have been added. Search now works very well also for entire regions or countries. Profiles can now also be found by the username or parts of it.

(e) New **BV documents** (Terms of Use, Privacy Policy, GPDR compliance) have been implemented and communicated to users. It is now possible for any user to **download all personal data** stored about that user (i.e., themselves) on the website. (Linked to GDPR compliance).

(f) website domains were prolonged

● **Activities** tool received extra attention: activities can now be online only, and a dedicated team for moderating activities (including drafting guidelines/rules for activities and removing those not complying with the guidelines) is being formed. **Trips** feature has been ranked as the highest priority and more intense discussion and work are underway in November 2020. Re-organization of **Groups display** has been discussed and is on the tentative agenda of the GA 2020. **Wiki** software is also being updated (November 2020), much improving its usability.

● The sysadmin team had a change of membership, with one volunteer stepping down, two previously active sysadmins becoming active again, and 2 new sysadmins joining.

● A **PWA (Progressive Web Application)** has been released (October 2020) as early access in Google Play Store, and has thus far been very positively received by the users. Native web apps for Android and Apple are being discussed. We are still facing a shortage of developers active on the website code itself, but we are hopeful this might change with further development of the simplified workspace setup, being developed by one of the new volunteers.

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1.2 BeWelcome members and activity

Membership is compared roughly on basis of the Annual Report period, which ends in October or November of the year that the Annual Report is compiled. As of middle of November 2020, BeWelcome had roughly 140,000 members. This is a net increase of 17,000 members compared to last year.

Activity of the members (compiled on 20th Nov 2020 for the GA 2020, using BW statistics (https://www.bewelcome.org/stats)

- During the last 4 weeks only 2,5% of members did log in (~3,460 members). 79% of members did NOT log in during the last 12 months. That is a small improvement compared to last year. Probably this increase in activity is mainly to the paywall introduced by Couchsurfing in May 2020.

- Same statistics for the last years - (https://web.archive.org/web/20181114150652/http://www.bewelcome.org/stats)
  - Nov 19: **2,2%** log in during last 4 weeks, **86%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 18: **4%** log in during last 4 weeks, **85%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 17: **6%** log in during last 4 weeks, **76%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 16: **7%** log in during last 4 weeks, **70%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 15: **9%** log in during last 4 weeks, **63%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 14: **9%** log in during last 4 weeks, **63%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 13: **13%** log in during last 4 weeks, **38%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 12: **9%** log in during last 4 weeks, **69%** did not log in during last 12 months
  - Nov 11: **11%** log in during last 4 weeks, **67%** did not log in during last 12 months

- Preliminary results of the hosting requests functionality indicates that between 73-75% of the requests do not get a reply, and roughly 10% of all sent requests get (tentatively) accepted - this makes roughly 1/3 of those requests that get a reply. A very small proportion of the requests get canceled by guests. These stats will be interesting to follow as we get more data. Also it would be good to know the acceptance rates by gender of the requester, and number of accepted requests vs. hosting comments.
- This year Matomo got installed, so we are going to have more statistics. But we are still looking for a volunteer ready to interpret the data delivered by Matomo.

1.3 BeVolunteer organization

Changes in the organization:

- Policy documents for BeWelcome (ratified by GA 2019) were updated on the website: Terms of Use (ToU), and Privacy policy (PP), including GDPR compliance. The new ToU came into effect on the 1st of July, and a notification was sent to all users.

1.3.1 Board of Directors
- The new Board of Directors (BoD) had a good start, ending with a bumpy ride. The roles and tasks were divided amongst the five new board members: executive, treasurer, secretary,

volunteer-coordinator, BV strategy lead. In September 2020 one board member resigned from the board and from BeVolunteer.

- Meetings: The BoD organized 12 meetings with at least 3 BoD members present.

- The BoD started a new donation campaign in December 2019, to which donations made between September and December were added. See 2.1 Financial report for more detailed information.

- The BoD tried to include more BeVolunteer members by actively searching for new members. There are 2 new members since last GA.

- **ACTIVITES OF THE 2019--2020 BoD**
  - Main hope of the 2019-2020 board was to increase activity on BW, following the agreement on BV Strategy (GA 2018) and efforts of the previous board. This has been achieved with mixed success.

  - Much of the term was dedicated to implementing the GA 2019 decisions about the Hosting Interest, web analytics (Matomo), member search, volunteer organization, increasing BW [hosting] activity (BV Strategy; this includes the modification of member search, but also prioritizing the Trips feature), and GDPR compliance. More bureaucratic tasks included publishing and communicating the new BV documents (ToU, PP, GDPR document) approved by the GA 2019, informing the French authorities of the new BoD, updating the list of BW members that have access to various parts of the website, updating the BV member list etc. Other tasks included day-to-day volunteer coordination, decisions about for example limit of messages and requests.

  - *Day-to-day volunteer coordination:* A prioritization of some volunteering tasks (dev team, communication team) has been made and communicated to the appropriate teams. The board identified specific board members to be a link for a specific team. So each team had a contact person within the BoD and these tasks were shared amongst the BoD members. This principle should be continued by next BoD.

  - *Volunteer resources:* Major challenge in the term was lack of active sysadmins and developers. Sysadmin team has been refreshed by some BW members taking that role again, and some new BW members stepping up to the challenge. By the end of the BoD term, the sysadmin team was a well-functioning team with good communication with the board (via the contact person). Developer resources are still scarce, with one volunteer doing most of the work on the website, and occasional spurs of activity of other BW members (volunteers), for example for developing a Progressive Web App. Our hope of attracting new members in gatherings such as FOSDEM did not come to life, as our application for a lightning talk has been short-listed but was not viable to act on a possible call on short notice, and other than that there were no good "live" places for recruiting. The main recruitment process is still via the BW website, with the main developer being the sole point of contact. A new BW group was setup in hopes of stream-lining the work (development-design-testing) of major projects, however this group also achieved limited success. An outside-of-BW website platform was briefly used for technical chat, but that also died off. There seems to be a lack of consensus on the best way to "manage" developer volunteers: while some prefer a managed approach with clear deadlines and progress reports, others prefer a more loose structure. A development priorities list has been agreed on by the board, and communicated to the main developer and others interested. We think this is a good start and advise the next board to continue with a priority list of tasks, as a way to organize and follow the main tasks.

  - The GA 2020 is being organized completely online due to the global corona SARS CoV (COVID-19) pandemic, as proposed by the board and voted for by BV members in the BV

group. It will take place by the last weekend of November, and the board prepared the necessary documentation (Annual Report, Financial Report, Budget proposal).

1.3.2 BeVolunteer members

BeVolunteer currently has 40 members, 24 of which are eligible to vote.

During the year, only 2 new members have joined, and 1 BV member resigned. The membership of 9 members was cancelled this year by the BoD, according to the Statutes (automatic suspension 2 years in a row), which brings the total number of BV members to 40 – the lowest number since the association was founded. Out of these, 11 members are honorary members, and the BoD decided that additional 4 BW members qualify according to the Statutes for the honorary membership, 1 of which accepted the offer by the time this report is made. The honorary membership is "a class of membership that is non-voting, confers no rights or privileges […]", so the overall activity in the BV group seems rather small despite activities and progress made in BeWelcome. Out of members eligible to vote only 13 took part in the online pre-discussion of GA 2020 topics. The relatively low activity of BV members (in the pre-discussions) is joined by the fact that so far there are no candidates for the Board of Directors – something which will hopefully change by the end of the GA 2020.

Statistics on General Assemblies and members eligible to vote

Year	BV members	Members eligible to vote	BoD candidates
GA2020	40	24	0
GA 2019	48	23	5
GA 2018	47	20	7
eGA 2017	48	36	--
GA 2017	48	37	3
GA 2016	66	47	5
GA 2015	63	23	6
GA 2014	60	22	6
eGA 2014	60	34	3
GA 2013	50	23	7
GA 2012	45	16	4
GA 2011	43	21	5

2. Finances

2.1. Financial Report

The financial year of BeVolunteer was from October 1st, 2019 until September 30th, 2020.
The full financial report with incomes and expenses can be found in a separate document.

The donation campaign officially started on 05 December 2019. The donation goal of € 2,000 was reached on 22/5/2020 and we received and at the closing of the financial year (30/09/2019) we had received 3238,43 euro

The donation bar was then removed, but we still allowed donations.

Reason for reaching our goal so quickly was mainly due to a FaceBook campaign organized by some members who were dissatisfied by changes on another hospex platform.

We received in total 135 donations, averaging around 25€ per donation.
The largest donation was € 300, and several members donated € 100.
Most donations came from Germany, followed by the USA, New Zealand and France.

At the end of the term, we had a net gain of 1281,24 euro. This was mainly due to the fact that there were no legal expenses, no local event needed sponsoring, no promotional material was ordered and the increased donations.

2.2. Budget 2019-2020

Specifications of the budget are in a separate document.
We have currently almost 10,500 euro on our bank account, of which more than 8,000 euro is readily available.

3. Team Status Reports

3.1. Frontend/ Design Team

The state of the frontend developing in BeWelcome right now is kind of messy due to several volunteers coming and going throughout the last years. The coordination of the design team changed from amnesiac84 to Jesus82.

Right now the main problems are:

- The CSS doesn't follow any methodology and is scattered around many CSS files. This makes the code hard to read and also non efficient. Also it lacks scalability as it is difficult to modify existing code without being 100% sure that there will not be undesirable side-effects).

- Lack of consistency in design. Up to now there has not been dedicated designers with a clear view of what to accomplish with the website. There is not an established workflow in relation to design and coding.
- We're now trying to assemble a team of Frontend and Design. So far there were many volunteers interested, but the Redesign process has not already taken off due to the lack of availability of the designers interested.

- On the frontend side, Jesus82 is starting to implement a methodology (BEMIT), a 8px grid, and working with the designers in order to have a color palette, and start working towards a component based design.

<u>Guidance by GA or BoD:</u>

The design team would ask the Assembly or the Board to tell what is the policy the design team should follow.

- Gives us discretionality about design issues
- Clearly define what can be and what cannot be redesigned (for example, we opened this thread with not really much feedback https://www.bewelcome.org/group/56/forum/s21801-Re_design_of_the_logo)
- Set a contact person who could directly determine what can be redesigned (if this is the option, just make sure the process is dynamic, we cannot wait 3 months for a committee in order to know if we can redesign this thing or not. This causes demotivation and volunteers leave)

3.2. Sysadmin Team

3.2.1 Structure of the team

leoalone, our main sysadmin stepped back in December 2019. In the meanwhile milesagainst and jeanyves took over the task, but for certain reasons they also could not carry on.

The BoD asked tobixen and hkroger (2 former sysadmins of BW) if they could help out for a while. Since then a new sysadmin team was formed step by step. With tobixen, hkroger, freemind and alek it is very active right now.

Main communication channel for sysadmins is a Telegram group.

The sysadmin team now gets advertised in the volunteering area as well, https://www.bewelcome.org/volunteer.

3.2.2. Bug fixing

We acted upon reports on "slow site" and did some research on that. The issue was pinpointed to be some non-optimal SQL, taking around 3s to run, and being run for every page load. The problem was then taken care of by the dev team.

3.2.3. New achievments of the team

- Matomo got installed

- The broken Etherpad was repaired and can now be accessed under https://pad.bewelcome.org/, most of the old Etherpads are lost though.

- The broken Owncloud was removed and replaced by Nextcloud, what is working fine. All the data from Owncloud was secured and transferred to Nextcloud. wind is admin of Nextcloud and can give access to others if needed.

3.2.4. Lilu attack 2019

In September 2019 there was a Lilu attack to the servers, due to missing security updates on the exim mail server. We're doing patching more frequently now, and we will also replace exim with postfix when we migrate to a new server. Our mail setup is now located on a different server than the web site.

3.2.5. Planned actions

- Acquiring new production server to replace current 9y old one
- Migration production and services to new server
- Frequently upgrade of the currently used apps and services, test of unattended upgrades
- Migrate to posfix as main email server

3.3. Development Team

No report provided by development team.

3.3.1 Testing Team

No report provided by testing team.

3.4. Communication Team

As of November 2020, the team officially has 19 members, a decrease from 26 from Nov, 2019. While the group gained new members between May and August due to CS pushing away members, few of the new members sought to become active in suggested tasks. During September 2020, the team drew up, with the aid of the BoD, a list of high, medium and low priority Comms tasks. Those who didn't want to sign up to a task or couldn't contribute at this time, were removed from the group and asked to re-join once they have the time and motivation to contribute. All current members in the group have tasks assigned to them.

Since last year, we have sought to have at least two members involed in each task, rather than each member acting as lone operators. However, the workload system remains poor and relies on a person coming up with an idea, promoting it and gaining support. There the current work flow/project management system can be viewed at https://cryptpad.fr/sheet/#/2/sheet/edit/JVUFS9pTAG890LGsBbYSRQsv/p/

- Some tasks don't gain much love: updating the FAQ and newsletters.

- A specific "task board" on the volunteer page or specific job descriptions would be welcome, as we seek people with existing knowledge and skills (e.g copyrighters, designers, digital marketing skills). We don't have the ability to train or teach volunteers communications skills.

3.4.1 Internal Communications

Most communication remains internal with the aim of motivating existing members to use the site for hospitality related activities. While it is a necessary and important task, there is little external communications or a budget to do so. The primary means of internal communication is through the newsletter and community news.

Newsletters sent: 2019-2020 - 1; 2018-2019 - 0; 2017-2018 - 1; 2016-2017 - 1

This is compared to four in 2013. There is a lack of news/ original content (stories, pictures, advice) to engage readers. This is especially true during COVID-19.

The next newsletter will focus volunteer recruitment.

airb

Community News

The BoD gave more responsibility to take care of the front-page 'community news' which is only seen if members log in to the site.

2019-2020 - 11 stories; 2018 - 2019 - 8 stories; 2017 - 2018 - 24 stories; 2016 - 2017 - 22 stories; 2015- 2016 - 8 stories

We are seeking to create at least two stories with pictures per month, that have emotional appeal, rather than technical updates.

Example: https://www.bewelcome.org/communitynews/190

3.4.2 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 Likes

2013 GA - 1,777; 2014 GA - 2,600; 2015 GA - 3,576; 2016 GA - 4,225; 2017 GA - 4,751; 2018 GA - 6,050; 2019 GA - 6,171; 2020 GA - 9,700
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.
There was a large increase in members in 2019-2020. This was partially out of CS actions, but also better Facebook content. Once gained, we lose very few followers on Facebook.
There is a public BeWelcome group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/BeWelcome/), where members can post, and seek to connect.
- 2,000 members in 2015; 1,937 members in 2018; 1,931 members in 2019; 2,900 members in 2020.
It is linked to the official the BW page. Many organizations do this to encourage discussion around their brands.

Twitter

The @BeWelcome account had:
450 in 2013; 535 in 2014; 727 in 2015; 805 in 2016; 836 in 2017; 850 in 2018; 925 in 2019; 1026 in 2020.
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.

3.4.3 Spreadshirt

The BeWelcome shop at Spreadshirt primarily serves the European market. It had two sales in 2019-2020. It would be good to have more designs - so far no designer stepped forward and it is a task to organize this. There is 4.15 Euro credit, from the store at https://shop.spreadshirt.de/bewelcome/.
The American store at https://shop.spreadshirt.com/bewelcome/ which has no sales, has been

discontinued due to tax reasons.

3.4.4 Conferences/Talks/Events

BeWelcome has not been asked to take part in conferences during this year. Media requests, interviews and requests for information were handled by member duesseldorf who is also member of the Communications Team. The Communication Team as such does not receive or manage media requests.

3.4.5 The BeWelcome Video Channel

Located at https://vimeo.com/bewelcomevideo in 2019, it was relocated back to https://vimeo.com/bewelcome in September 2020. The number of videos has increased from 4 videos to 8. Thanks to member peterburk for producing a great video (https://vimeo.com/455434902). We also produced "10 Reasons why you should become a member of BeWelcome.org" - https://vimeo.com/453969540

As the move is recent, and the link unknown, we do not have many visitors/ followers. It is recognised how important the visual is to young people today.

- Suggestion: Add icons for the BeWelcome twitter, Facebook, and other social media outlets to the footer of BeWelcome.org.

3.4.6 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. After the 2016 General Assembly BeWelcome joined the Google for non-profits program. This program gives the ability for non-profits to advertise on the Google Search network up to an equivalent of 10.000 $ in ad costs.

In 2019-2020, we have sought to maximise the spend, but are limited in the keywords we use, as we serve a particular niche. We created keywords in languages such as Korean, Russian and Arabic. We also created a worldwide campaign, which has been very successful. We also added keywords such as "couchsurfing alternative" etc.

While searches based on derivates of couchsurfing still get most traction ("couchsurfers, couchsurfing app etc), there has been an increase in those specifically searching for BeWelcome. However, as the keyword couchsurfing itself declines (less people are searching that keyword during COVID-19), less people may find BeWelcome via Google Adwords.

3.4.7 Analytics

We only have access to analytics since October 2020, via server logs imported into Matomo. This is very welcome. However, one downside is that it doesn't tell us how many of those who find us via google ads, actually signs up.

3.4.8 CANVA and designs

Using CANVA, the team has produced a number of infographics to communicate the platforms value points. For example, reasons to join BeWelcome - (https://www.reddit.com/r/bewelcome/comments/hypqdp/why_bewelcomeorg_is_different/) but has been translated into Korean, Spanish, Portuguese and Traditional Chinese. These have been posted onto various groups and discussion boards online. We have also produced infographics related to finances and donations: https://www.reddit.com/r/bewelcome/comments/gyc9iz/bewelcome_finances/

3.4.9 Press Releases

We developed and posted one press release in 2018-2019, but none in 2019-2020. These are important, as they are official markers, and can be used by journalists, and in Wikipedia updates. https://www.pr.com/press-release/783855

We have opened a forum thread in the group looking for next press release suggestions.

Other: We have sought to promote BeWelcome via discussions on Reddit and Quora. We also released a story on Medium: https://medium.com/@bewelcome/bewelcome-a-permanently-non-profit-hospitality-exchange-7e22fd079f3f Promotion of the PWA app will be a element of the group in 2019-2020.

3.5. Translation Team

3.5.1 The Team

 Currently, **53** (compared to 245 in 2019) members have been assigned with translation rights, of those, **all 53** are still have an active status on 2020-11-09, **most** of them logged in in the last 3 months (since 2020-08-01) although quite a few did not conducted any translation after being approved to the team. There are also some cases of members with translation rights for convenience or administrative purposes but don't actually do translation.

 corazondeviaje has been assigned as an additional team coordinator, and volunteer offers for translation got quicker response since then. A cleanup of the translation rights and Translations group members have been conducted late May/ early June 2020, as well as some members in Translation Group but with no translation rights have been finally sorted out. The group has become much neater since then, and better team spirit has been formed.

6 languages (Portuguese, Dutch, French, Italian, German and Greek) have been fully translated, a lot more compared to last year, we've got a few very active translators who proceeded very quickly (e.g. Greek) or some returning. There is also an active French translators' group. More translations were done compared to previous years and the overall activity of the team has been higher (possibly also related to the influx of the new members, after CS pay wall). On the other hand, there's hardly any real teamwork as each member is working alone on their own language, and translators of the same language are working alone on different codes. It's difficult to know who are active and who are working in the team.

Some languages seem to have risen a lot the percentage, even though there is no active translator of that language (e.g. Catalan, or Polish which was noticed to have changed from 10% in 2019 to about 50% in May 2020 with no noticeable translators doing intensive work) – this might be related to the site migration.

3.5.2 Languages

BW has been (partly) translated into 40 languages:

Language	Percentage	Language	Percentage
English	100		
Portuguese	107,63	Simplified Chinese	40,4
Dutch	105,29	Swedish	39,45
French	104,49	Traditional Chinese	36,02
Italian	104,36	Basque	33,49
Greek	102,74	Slovak	33,39
German	99,95	Persian	31,74
Russian	83,2	Latvian	29,43
Serbian	80,36	Indonesian	28,26
Spanish	79,19	Romanian	27,03
Polish	73,42	Japanese	26,79
Czech	71,03	Bulgarian	24,72

Hungarian	59,81	Armenian	19,83
Croatian	54,97	Kurdish	15,9
Catalan	53,75	Hindi	15,79
Turkish	47,87	Swahili	15,05
Esperanto	46,54	Breton	12,68
Lithuanian	46,31	Norwegian	12,04
Finnish	45,8	Malay	6,51
Portuguese (br)	43,67	Danish	6,2
Arabic	41,84	Thai	0,45

** It seems we still have the bug and percentage of translation is not very reliable, as the languages which have completed the translation show more than 100% now.

3.5.2 Wish list

- Get back the statistics section, so we can know how many languages have started translation, and admins won't need to count the languages manually. It would be interesting for everybody to see the % of each language done.

- There is no tool for coordinators to see how the activity is spread, i.e. how much each member with translation rights has translated and over what time period. (Listed in "Difficulties" since 3 years.)

- When multiple translators of the same language translate texts, it's difficult to find out how certain returning words are translated exactly. (Listed in "Difficulties" since 3 years.)

- Working from the volunteer pages, when translating, more context is required. A link to the page(s) where the code can be found 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. (Listed in "Difficulties" since 3 years.)

- 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.

Suggestions by translators:

- Keep a log of the evolution of the translations to access which ones are still actively translated and which ones have reached a standstill.

- Automatic notification about new translations being added (limited to once per day). This might help bring back some inactive translators.

- Add priorities and have them moved to the github issue tracker (so that it would help to get more attention to developers and pick them up).

- The issue with big texts we could solve by splitting in smaller ones and add a development hint to use small text translation IDs.

- Some badges for active translators (shown on profile, for example a small box in the profile which can be edited by coordinator to mark e.g. "This member is an active Translator (or any other volunteering work) for BeWelcome"

- Have some translator session or activity, to get the fun of translate together.

3.6. Spam Checkers and Safety Team

The Spam Checkers consist of 9 volunteers, who check the daily signups, the forum and activities for spammers. Currently 3 spam checkers take on the largest part of the work. We welcomed one new spam checker this year. Although we have no statistics on the number of banned spammers, we can safely say that spamming activity has been greatly reduced compared to last year.

The Safety Team consists of 5 volunteers. This term we had only one serious incident to deal with when a known thief on another network joined BW. Other few actions we had to take revolved around cultural misunderstandings, creation of dating profiles and misuse of the messaging system.

3.7. Support Team

Current number of active Support Team Volunteers: 3

5 new volunteers were introduced in OTRS, of which only 1 continued working on the team.

Problems:

- Introducing OTRS to new volunteers takes a lot of time and energy. This task is too big for the current coordinator, so possible new volunteers have been let down.
- There's no team vibe: everyone works for themselves on tickets that they like to solve most.
- There's no real plan on how to deal with the tickets. Most of them are dealt with by members who have been doing it since years.
- At least over a certain longer period not all mails sent through the contact form reached OTRS, so not all incoming mails have been dealt with.
- There can be a long period of time between someone sending a mail and receiving a reply.
- Some mails remain unanswered.

What goes well:

- There are less incoming mails for problems with the password or signing up. Most problems are people who have forgotten their login name or e-mail address.
- The few volunteers who do answer tickets do it continuously.
- We do get some 'thanks' in return after helping people.

3.8. New Member BeWelcome Team

Currently, we do not manage to welcome most new members. The Team is not very active, but we hope that the new volunteers will make a difference. This year we have had 3 new members.

We realize that there is a discussion about abandoning personal welcoming messages and replacing it with an automated message. We feel a personal welcome has its advantages, and hope we can manage to greet more members in the future.

3.9. Status Report Ombudsman

The Ombudsperson is currently Pietshah.
During this term he did not receive any requests for mediation.
He would wish, that somebody more active would take over this position. But he has agreed to continue for another year, in case we do not find anybody else. That means at least in 2021 we should start looking for a new ombudsperson.