

General Assembly of BeVolunteer 2020

28th and 29th of November 2020 online

moderation: thorgal67 (+wind)
minutes: wind + claudiaab (+everyone)

participants Saturday: 20 + 1 guest
sammiekong; thorgal67, leoalone, wind, polyglot, claudiaab, daydreamer69,
peterburk, corazondeviaje, subaculture, Chagai95, shevek, duesseldorf, amnesiac84,
frauenschuh, girandolere, crumbking, fhina, arved, jonny sagänger (president of servas),
lososs

participants Sunday:
thorgal67; sammiekong, polyglot, girandoliere (I will present early in the morning and
maybe during second afternoon), wind, claudiaab, duesseldorf (until approx. 12.00);
corazondeviaje, peterburk, Chagai95, leoalone, fhina, amnesiac84

====SATURDAY 28th November 2020====

Each discussion should already create a precise wording for the voting later on!

09:00 - 09:30 - Meeting of participants

09:30 - 9:50 - Welcome

9:50 - 10:15 - Financial Report + Budget

10:15 - 11:15 - Annual Report, https://www.bevolunteer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/201124-BV_Annual_Report_2019-2020.pdf

11:15 - 11:30 - Coffee (or tea) break (or buffer time in case of delays)

11:30 - 13:00 - Trips Feature, https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21860-GA2020_Topic_1_Trips_Feature

13:00 - 14:00 - Lunch break

14:00 - 15:00 - NMBWT, https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21858-GA2020_Topic_9_NMBWT

15:00 - 16:00 - BW members base
- https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21857-GA2020_Topic_8_BW_Member_Base

16:00 - 16:30 - Coffee (or tea) break (or buffer time in case of delays)

16:30 - 17:15 - Categorization of groups - https://www.bewelcome.org/forums/s21901-GA_2020_pre_discussion_Adding_categories_to_groups
(topic discussion switched with Project manger)

17:15 - 18:15 - Who wants to be a candidate for BoD? Explain the BoD job more in detail. Maybe small discussion circles of 3 or 4 persons?

<https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21925- GA2020 BoD candidates>

====SUNDAY 29th November 2020====

Each discussion should already create a precise wording for the votings later on!

09:30 - 11:00 - Strategy - <https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21856- GA2020 Topic 7 BV BW Strategy>

11:00 - 11:15 - Coffee (or tea) break (or buffer time in case of delays)

11:15 - 12:30 - Project manager - <https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21864- GA2020 Topic 5 project manager>

12:30 - 13:30 - Lunch break

13:30 - 14:50 - Proposals to be voted upon - wording, only for those topics that were not put to discussion (e. g. wiki software, social media preview, job board, joint IT team, organizational culture)

14:50 - 15:00 - Ombudsperson - <https://www.bewelcome.org/wiki/Ombudsperson>

15:00 - 16:00 - Introduction of & Questions to BoD candidates

16:00 - 17:30 - Buffer Time

09:50 - 10:30 - Financial Report + Budget

https://www.bevolunteer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BV_Financial_Statement-2019-2020.pdf

https://www.bevolunteer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BV_Budget_2020-2021-proposal.pdf

Donations mainly due to a campaign by former CS members started in May
Discussion about the donation campaign whether or not to put a donation goal in the budget

voting about 600,- as a realistic income through donations

How much money should we put in the budget in the line "donations"?

* 0 euro

* 600 euro: (9 votes)

* 900 euro (3 votes)

* 1920 euro

10:30 - 11:30 Annual Report

https://www.bevolunteer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/201124-BV_Annual_Report_2019-2020.pdf

- member numbers: the next BoD should try to get more detailed numbers about Statistics - e.g. newly joining members (after CS paywall), inactive members, resigning members (from shevek)
- Teams
 - Design Team: Discussion about how to proceed e.g., for redesign of logo; clear objectives need to be put and followed; communication between Design Team and Development Team and BoD/project manager needs to be improved
 - Development Team: problem: not enough testers;
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11:30 - 11:45 Break

11:45 - 13:00 - Trips Feature, https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21860-GA2020_Topic_1_Trips_Feature

- ideally tool should be beneficial for host that don't get lots of requests and for travellers that want to be contacted according to their route
- a lot of code already exists but development was abandoned due to the launch of the new website; some code needs to be re-written; a lot of the things suggested in the group are already there; (according to shevek)
- analogy to Open Couch Request on CS; 'meat market', because young attractive women get lots of offers, others less; at our current activity it would not hurt (polyglot); also, users can control whether or not they want to opt in and what kind of offers they accept; indecent offers can be reported;
- question about radius / location, dates (shevek pointed out the idea would be to show only requests for the next 3 months); (leoalone said that at least 2 years must be shown, since there are people that are doing long term plans, it would be useful an option to set, in user preference, the time in future for what to see activities and trips)
- hosts should be in control
- feature is linked to the location given in profile, since the website does not ask for location data (automatic) (see the topic 7bis to solve this problem)
-
- Other development projects:
 - rewrite forum
 - API
 - writing a native App -> peterburk could lead this
 - app would allow us to use push notifications, working more with geo location and??
 - all features from API (profiles, messages, forums)
 - cross-platform: you code once, and you have the app on iOS and android
 - web: old way, app: new; implications: touchscreens rather than clicking; current app looks different on different phones.
 - Matrix - chatroom (chagai95)
 - alternative to whatsapp
 - safety considerations;
 - technical maintenance would be external in the sense that updates are given;
 - integration in website should also be possible.
 - question about how heavy the load would be (if we need more servers)
 - proposal to just test it: (6 votes)
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13:00 - 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00 - 14:30 - NMBWT, https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21858-GA2020_Topic_9_NMBWT

- purpose of team: greeting all new members;
- nine members, 3 are active, 2 new members have joined;
- at the moment not all members are greeted
- proposal (polyglot):
 - change the automatic message for email confirmation to add a greeting and key information for completing the profile and becoming an active member. This way new members receive a first greeting and important information immediately, and only those new members would have to be greeted (if possible with a local, personalized message) who after a certain time still don't fill their profile.
 - (11 votes) (better let the NMBWT decide whether it makes more sense to greet the empty profile or "reassure" the ones with filled in profiles)
 - message needs to be right: not too long, informative enough etc..

14:30 - 15:00 - filler topics since we have time left:

- proposal to have more virtual meetings (BeWelcome Café) (by duesseldorf);
 - problem: visibility (on website); (we list virtual meetings on "Activities" on home page also - but maybe separately to "real life" activities) just put "banner" in the front-page to promote activities and web-café
 - monthly meeting with pop up a day before the meeting?; also newsletter
 - have hosts in different parts of the world, advertise also in local/regional groups
- What has the impact of CS pay wall been on BW?
 - some influx of new members
- solution for people with more residences (leoalone)
 - second account or
 - add one more category in the accommodation section of the profile
 - problem: the other residences ideally need to be linked to dates (not a problem: could be clearly written, also the host could also be willing to move to meet guest, and of course for online activity is not a problem)

15:00 - 15:35 - BW members base

- https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21857-GA2020_Topic_8_BW_Member_Base

- Jonny Sagänger - president of Servas is present.
- members with invalid email addresses, mostly with empty profiles; can some teams get rights to suspend those members; under what conditions
- proposal to actively search for those members
- at the moment: newsletters are sent, and we get lots of bounces; then profiles can be suspended; ideally more members should be suspended
- Volunteers of all teams who have the right to change a profile status (for example Support Team or Safety Team) may suspend profiles which: - have the status of 'Out of Remind' and - have very low or no exchange with other members and - have very little or no information without the e-mail address being invalid or inactive
- approx. 14 000 members were suspended this year?!
- clean up with script?
- bouncing mails give bad reputation to our mail server
- criteria:

- if you didn't react to x log in reminders your profile will be removed?
- ca. 30 000 members could be set 'suspended', because they have empty profiles;
- community news / newsletter should announce or report about this (big change in number of members)

15:35 - 16:00 - enabling members to get in touch with each other to replace the host - guest relation (so not big meetings) in times of Corona

- start a group for members interested in such interactions
- thorgal67 volunteers to create group and moderate
- advertise this in community news

16:30 - 17:15 - Categorization of groups - https://www.bewelcome.org/forums/s21901-GA_2020_pre_discussion_Adding_categories_to_groups

- tackling inactive and similar groups, improving activity and visibility (more than 1500 groups)
- suggestion to have a hierarchy a) geographical groups > continents > etc. b) lifestyle groups c) internal (for volunteer groups)
- debate about categories or tags, but in data base this is actually the same
- hierarchy should be flat

There is a consensus that the structure / ordering of groups should be improved; A quick exercise demonstrating what that would look like with our largest groups would be useful: <https://www.bewelcome.org/forums/s21901/#post111423>

17:15 - 18:15 - Who wants to be a candidate for BoD? Explain the BoD job more in detail. Maybe small discussion circles of 3 or 4 persons?

https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21925-GA2020_BoD_candidates

end:

SUNDAY

09:30 - 11:00 - Strategy - https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21856-GA2020_Topic_7_BV_BW_Strategy

I do not intend to create another strategy paper that nobody will read and that will not make any difference to our actions. Instead, I want to vote about certain strategic points. So we get some clear facts for the future and do not need to discuss those things again. The new BoD might put all these facts together in a new strategy paper, but that is optional.

So the strategy from 2018 is still valid. <https://www.bevolunteer.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A-STRATEGY-FOR-BV-BW.pdf>

But some points from this "new" strategy might overrule the old strategy.

As proposed by polyglot I would name these objectives:

- a large, active member base in as many places as possible
- Make it easier for members to find accommodation.

- easy-to-use, reliable website and apps
- active volunteers in the areas where they are needed

1. Proposed votes to get clearer about strategy to reach above mentioned objectives:

(We can vote on those parts on block where we all agree. The parts that are controversial I would vote separately.)

- 1.
1. The BoD should prioritise and monitor the work of all the volunteer teams to ensure that the focus on this critical issue for the future of BeWelcome is maintained. (no vote needed here!) (8 votes)
2. OR the BoD should only do the legal and administrative tasks (this might require changing the statutes) (1 vote)
- 2.
1. BW is a generalist and targets all types of people (we can still try to target certain groups and invite them more obvious, e.g. families) (11 votes)
2. BW will target specific interest groups, e. g. Families, cyclists, academic conference-goers, Erasmus students, computer programmers, ...
- 3.
1. The core purpose of BW is to promote and support hospitality exchange. Other activities and concerns (discussion groups, local activities, volunteer management etc.), however worthy, are peripheral to this.
2. The core purpose of BW is to promote and support hospitality exchange. Other activities (discussion groups, local activities, meetings of 2 persons) will be promoted and supported as well. But the focus should always be to increase activity on the website or hospitality exchange in real life.(promoting meeting between people- even from one local and one traveller-, t-shirts, web-café and others ideas IS promoting exchange hospitality) (10 votes)

4. BW Recruitment

1. It is not unreasonable to conclude that, unless something changes, the majority of BW members will never experience giving or receiving hospitality through BeWelcome! If this is true then BW is recruiting new members under false pretenses. (2-) So instead of constantly looking for new members, BW should focus on re-activate those members that turned inactive for above mentioned reasons. (2+) (by re-activating the existing member, we would have to get the reasons why they are inactive addressed, and only in this case, we can keep the members, otherwise even if we recruit a lot of new members they will get into inactive like the previous ones) but how can you know that a certain member turned inactive for THAT reason?
2. Most inactive members are inevitably lost and the reasons why they became inactive are very different (not only because hospitality exchange was not happening). So BW needs to recruit more members to increase the active member base. (2+)
3. this is not exclusive, both paths should be followed; (4+)

5. Google Adwords Campaign

1. Google Adwords campaign should aim for all regions in the world, especially because BW lacks active members everywhere, even in Germany and France. BW can only grow, if we get some active hot-spots, where the website is working and if activity can spread from these active hot-spots. (7+)
2. Google Adwords campaign will only focus on the remote regions (Africa, certain areas of Asia and South America). So in those areas where we do not have lots of members at all, neither active nor inactive ones.

3. While we were excluding the keyword "free", we lost unused grant funds. During that time it was ok not to focus on any specific region because we were not spending all funds anyway. Now that we have allowed "free", it makes sense to prioritize those regions where we need more host most. It is not about "remote regions", but about regions where we are underrepresented most.(2+)

6. Volunteer Communication

1. New volunteers need more support and communication by the BoD and by the team coordinators. We need to create a more welcoming atmosphere and we need to regularly get back to potential volunteers and ask them, if everything they got successfully integrated in a volunteer team. (5+) (suggestion to have a permanent volunteer chat/Jitsi room to experience a team spirit which gives motivation) (3+) (the Anja's idea to create a web-café might be useful for increase curiosity from bw members and from newbbie volunteers, but for be useful need to have a clear responsable at least for newbbie volunteers=> volunteer coordinator) (1+)
2. We do not need to improve our communication with new volunteers.
- 7.
2. The new Bod will work together with the development team on a strategy on how to better integrate new developers. First even with the new website the hurdles for getting involved into coding are still too high and scares away most people. Second development is one of our core volunteer activities (because we provide a website), so this volunteer team needs special attention. (8+)
3. We let things go and probably it's only a matter of time until we find qualified coders.

8.

1. Due to Covid19 we should especially focus on online opportunities, e. g. by quickly adding icons for members to show if they are interested in text, voice or video chat and make the setting searchable. A lot of people have more time on their hands (9) lealone/not just icons, but usable features, even if text only/,
2. the current means of the website totally serve the purpose of online encounters.

9. leadership

1. Do we need more leadership by the BoD and by team coordinators (many people are fine to work, but they need indication on what is needed to be done) (3+, 1-);
2. is the current volunteer structure working fine? (+1)
3. neither the current structure is working fine, nor we need more leadership by BoD and team coordinators. We need more communication between GA (BeVolunteer), BoD and team coordinators. The BoD is mainly there to facilitate that communication. GA 2020 for me is already a good step of BV working better (2+) (propose GA every 4 months with just the optional topics)

10.

1. Reduce the number of GA topics and try to prepare statements regarding each topic before the GA, so that there is something to work on and discussions get more focussed (1+, 1-), since statement must be prepared after discussion, otherwise is just take or leave, and people could leave just since do not agree on 1% of total, that could also be arranged differently.
2. keep the amount of GA topics and only prepare the statements. (2+)
11. Sorry, there is no number of topics to aim for; if something is important enough it should get time in the GA; (5+)
1. Each volunteer team needs a contact person within the BoD. The BoD should split these responsibilities amongst BoD members, so e.g. Executive being

contact person for sysadmins and developers and Secretary being contact for translators and mods (2+)

2. each BoD can decide individually how to handle communication with teams. (7+)
3. if the conditions (enough people) allow to create the role, still have the "volunteer coordinator" (2+)

11:00 - 11:15 - Coffee (or tea) break (or buffer time in case of delays)

11:15 - 12:30 - Project manager - https://www.bewelcome.org/group/94/forum/s21864-GA2020_Topic_5_project_manager

- 1 project manager for all BW (as part of BoD): if there would be a flow of communication from team coordinators, then maybe 1 person could do all the project management (1-) (in this case, we don't need the funny name of "project manager, it's the BoD)
- Alternative: 1 project coordinator for each BV project (such BW) delegated by the GA. if there ... [as other alternative] (1-) (BW is the only project of BV, there's not such thing as "each BV project" each one is valid even for one - but in case we start a new project would be another PM - the key difference is if appointed by BoD or by GA)
- We should name the position "Project Coordinator" as manager doesn't fit the community. And Project coordinator should take care of one individual project/task such as Survey or Matomo we had already (not to manage a team, and not to manage people).(1+)

13:30 - 14:50 - Proposals to be voted upon - wording, only for those topics that were not put to discussion (e. g. wiki software, social media preview, job board, joint IT team, organizational culture)

- Approval of Annual report - wording by thorgal67

[GA2020-01] Annual Report 2019-2020

Do you approve the BV Annual Report 2019-2020?
Please find the BV Annual Report 2019-2020 [HERE](#)

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 20 votes, NO – 0 votes, I ABSTAIN – 0 votes

- Approval of Financial Statement - wording by thorgal67

[GA2020-02] Financial Statement 2019-2020

Do you approve the BV Financial Statement 2019-2020?
Please find the BV Financial Statement 2019-2020 [HERE](#)

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 20 votes, NO – 0 votes, I ABSTAIN – 0 votes

- Approval of Budget - wording by thorgal67

[GA2020-03] Budget 2020-2021

Do you approve the BV Budget 2019-2020?
Please find the BV Budget 2019-2020 [HERE](#)

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 18 votes, NO – 1 vote, I ABSTAIN – 1 vote

- Approval of minutes from GA 2019 - skip it this year
- BW member base: we should vote here, do we have a text? amnesiac84?

- social media preview: do we want it? the question should be: allow people to publish a link, with limited time span validity, to show the personal part of their profile (excluding friends and comment sections)

- Votes on Strategy (see below)
- elections of ombudsperson (pietshah)

[GA2020-04] Do you elect pietshah as ombudsman?

Do you elect pietshah as ombudsman?

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 18 votes, NO – 1 vote, I ABSTAIN – 0 votes

- election of BoD

[GA2020-05] Do you elect wind to the BoD?

Do you elect wind to the BoD?

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 18 votes, NO – 2 votes, I ABSTAIN – 0 votes

[GA2020-06] Do you elect thorgal67 to the BoD?

Do you elect thorgal67 to the BoD?

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 18 votes, NO – 2 votes, I ABSTAIN – 0 votes

[GA2020-07] Do you elect corazondeviaje to the BoD?

Do you elect corazondeviaje to the BoD?

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 19 votes, NO – 0 votes, I ABSTAIN – 1 vote

[GA2020-08] Do you elect DayDreamer1969 to the BoD?

Do you elect DayDreamer1969 to the BoD?

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 19 votes, NO – 1 vote, I ABSTAIN – 0 votes

[GA2020-09] Do you elect Crumbking to the BoD?

Do you elect Crumbking to the BoD?

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 20 votes, NO – 0 votes, I ABSTAIN – 0 votes

[GA2020-10] Social Media Preview

Proposal: We want members to be able share their profiles and activities on social media (share that they joined BW, when looking for a host, when they create an event,...). Almost every website encourages visitors to share its pages on social media. A social media preview allows us to control the image/text of what is shown in that preview. Ideally this should be with a limited time span validity. After expiration the link would only lead to the start page of BW.

Should we make it possible for BW members to publish a link to a personal part of their profile (same structure for each member, but excluding anything related to other members)

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 18 votes, NO – 0 votes, I ABSTAIN – 2 votes

[GA2020-11] Do you approve the STRATEGY?

Answers: YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

These are the main objectives of BeVolunteer for the project BeWelcome:

- a large, active member base in as many places as possible
- make it easier for members to find accommodation

- easy-to-use, reliable website and apps
- active volunteers in the areas where they are needed

The strategy to reach above mentioned objectives can be found here:

- The BoD should prioritise and monitor the work of all the volunteer teams to ensure that the focus on this critical issue for the future of BeWelcome is maintained.
- BW is a generalist community and targets all types of people interested in hospitality exchange (we can still try to target certain groups and invite them, e.g. families)
- The core purpose of BW is to promote and support hospitality exchange. Other activities (discussion groups, local activities, real or virtual meetings, ...) will be promoted and supported as well. But the focus should always be to increase activity on the website or hospitality exchange in real life. (promoting meeting between people- even from one local and one traveller-, t-shirts, web-café and other ideas IS promoting hospitality exchange)
- The new BoD will work together with the development team on a strategy on how to better integrate new developers. Firstly, even with the new website the hurdles for getting involved into coding are still too high and scare away many people. Secondly, development is one of our core volunteer activities (because we provide a website), so this volunteer team needs special attention.
- Due to Covid-19 we should especially focus on online opportunities, e. g. by quickly adding icons and other useful features for members to show if they are interested in text, voice or video chat and make the settings searchable.
- New volunteers need more support and communication by the BoD and by the team coordinators. We need to create a more welcoming atmosphere and we need to regularly get back with potential volunteers and ask them, if they got successfully integrated in a volunteer team. Suggestion to have a permanent volunteer chat (for example Jitsi room) to experience a team spirit which gives motivation. The idea to create a web-café might be useful to increase curiosity from BW members and from new volunteers.

RESULT: YES – 17 votes, NO – 1 vote, I ABSTAIN – 2 votes

[GA2020-12] Re-activating inactive BW members

We have many inactive members. Some people feel that we should put our efforts into reactivating these inactive profiles. Others feel that we should concentrate more on recruiting new members to increase the member base. And finally, some feel that both strategies should be applied.

Polls #12 and #13 relate to this same issue. Please vote on them independently

Q: Should we try to re-activate inactive members? yes, no, abstain

RESULT: YES – 13 votes, NO – 3 votes, I ABSTAIN – 3 votes

[GA2020-13] Recruiting new BW members

We have many inactive members. Some people feel that we should put our efforts into reactivating these inactive profiles. Others feel that we should concentrate more on recruiting new members to increase the member base. And finally, some feel that both strategies should be applied.

Polls #13 and #14 relate to this same issue. Please vote on them independently

Q: Should we try to recruit new members? yes, no, abstain

RESULT: YES – 16 votes, NO – 1 vote, I ABSTAIN – 3 votes

[GA2020 - 14] Google Ads

Our Google Ads for Non-Profits grant lets us advertise BeWelcome on Google for the equivalent of \$10.000 per month. In the past we did not spend all of the grant money which as a result was lost. Recently, we allowed searches for the keyword "free" and may now spend the grant faster. If this is the case, should we:

1) continue to show ads in all regions in the world without a particular target because BW lacks active members everywhere, even in e.g. Germany and France

2) focus mainly on those regions where we are underrepresented and need more host most.

Which strategy should we pursue?

OPTION 1 : Continue to show ads in all regions

OPTION 2: Focus on underrepresented regions

OPTION 3: I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 10 votes, NO – 10 votes, I ABSTAIN – 1 vote

[GA2020 - 15] Suspending inactive members after 5 login reminders

After we send out newsletters and login reminders, the Support Team has a lot of work to deal with bouncing

e-mails. There are also many empty profiles that haven't logged in for over 5 years. We could do some active clean-up so that we don't have to wait until their e-mail addresses stop working. We don't lose any data and can return the profile if requested in the future, but it will just not show up and not be counted in the stats.

If members do not log in after 5 login reminders, they will be suspended

Do you agree?

YES, NO, I ABSTAIN

RESULT: YES – 17 votes, NO – 0 votes, I ABSTAIN – 2 votes, blank vote – 1

Controversial Strategy topics (can be skipped for now)

Leadership

1. Do we need more leadership by the BoD and by team coordinators (2+) (many people are fine to work, but they need indication on what is needed to be done) (1-);
2. is the current volunteer structure working fine?
3. neither the current structure is working fine, nor we need more leadership by BoD and team coordinators. We need more communication between GA (BeVolunteer), BoD and team coordinators. The BoD is mainly there to facilitate that communication. GA 2020 for me is already a good step of BV working better (2+) (propose GA every 4 months with just the optional topics)

GA organization

1. Reduce the number of GA topics and try to prepare statements regarding each topic before the GA, so that there is something to work on and discussions get more focussed (1+. 1-), since statement must be prepared after discussion, otherwise is just take or leave, and people could leave just since do not agree on 1% of total, that could also be arranged differently.
2. keep the amount of GA topics and only prepare the statements. (2+)
3. Sorry, there is no number of topics to aim for; if something is important enough it should get time in the GA; (4+)