Workshop on Membership Management | OUTCOMES

15-17 May 2019 | Bonn, Germany

This workshop was organised with a **peer-to-peer approach**, 17 representatives of choral and cultural organisations gathered around the topic and shared their knowledge, experiences and issues moderated by a facilitator Anna Steinkamp.
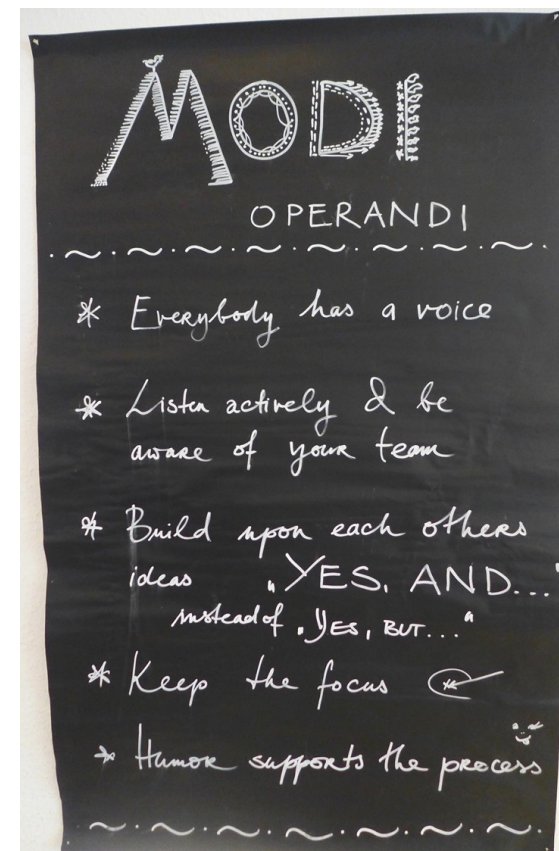Below a summary of the final outcomes.

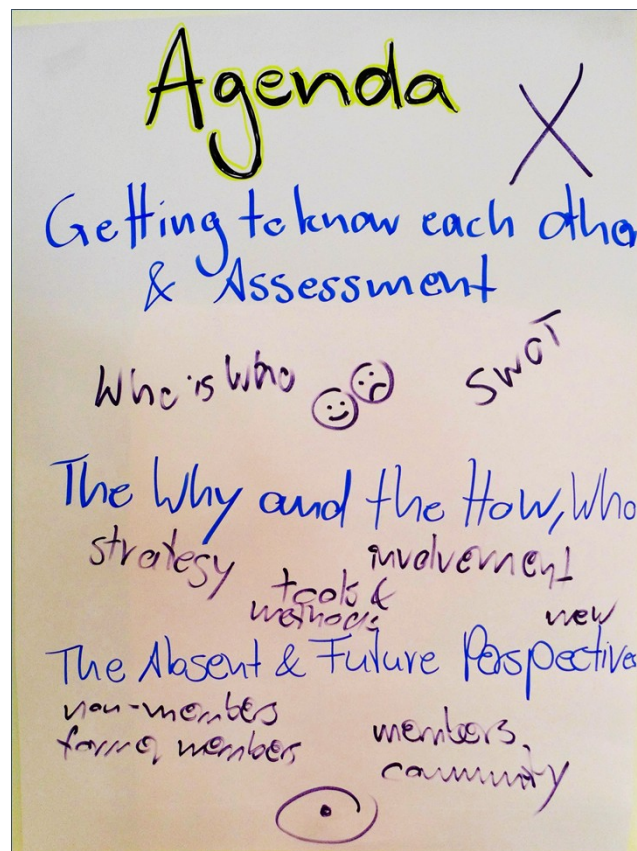Co-funded by the
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Agenda

◆ Getting to know each other and assessment

◆ The why, the how and the who

◆ The absent and future perspectives

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Getting to know each other and assessment

Map of terms: What are we talking about?

We tried to agree on common terminology.

Association	Structured group of people or organisations, gathering around a shared interest, in order to achieve a shared aim. Might be to encourage or facilitate interaction and collaboration, but it can also involve promoting and enhancing the purpose itself.
Organisation	Umbrella term
Networks	Can be informal and formal.
Members	Individuals or organisations officially gathered in an association. The members are the association (ie: an association without members is not an association).
Customers - clients	People buying a specific product or service (including "free" services).
Users	People actually using a product or service
Stakeholder [people/organisations]	Stakeholders that are considered as being potential customers or members > target for communication. There are in "human prospects"..
Relays/influencer	Stakeholders that are considered as being instrumental in convincing prospect to become customers or members.
To involve	It's more than participating. Get somebody to do something that serves, in one way or another, the community, association, group, etc...
Communication	Bi-directional exchange of ideas, projects and data. Common development of ideas.
Information > communications	Directional transmission of ideas, projects and data.
Governance	Decision-making and power delegation systems in an organisation
Vision > long term	A declaration of an organisation's objectives, intended to guide its internal decision-making. It's a road map, indicating what the

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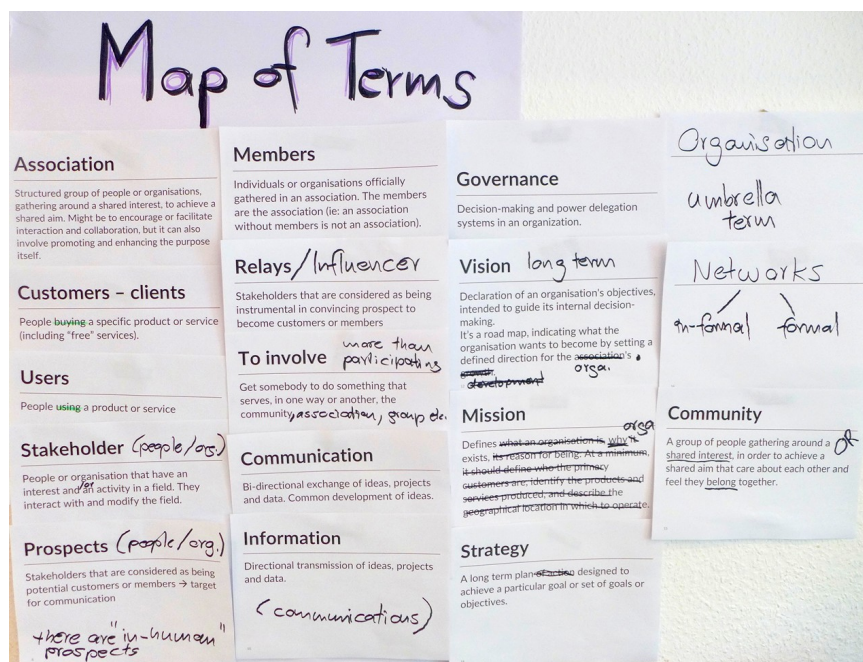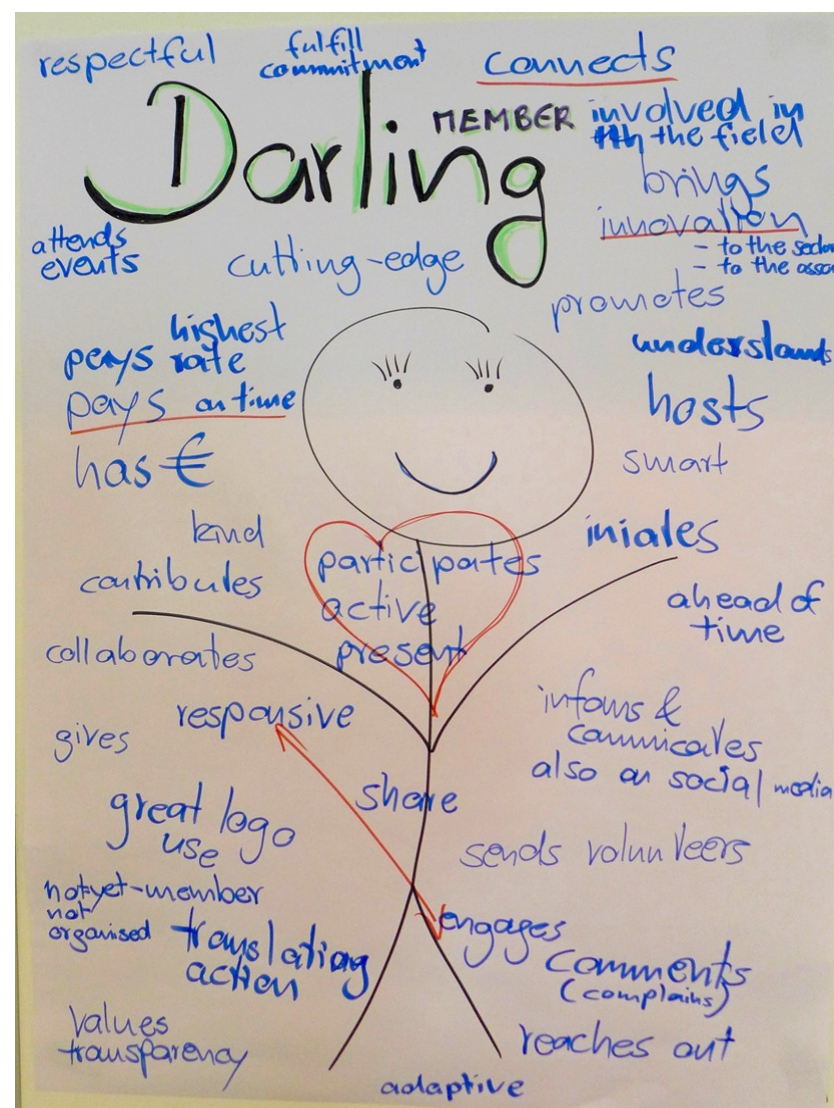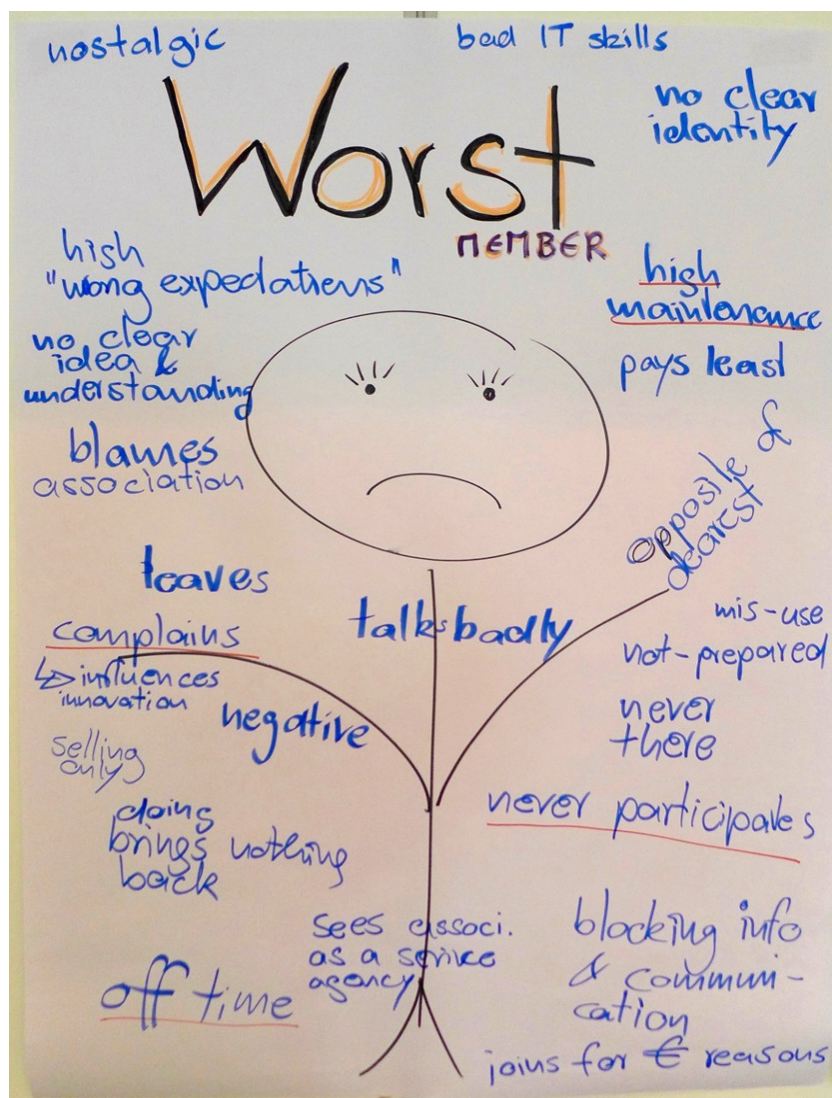|	
	organisation wants to become by setting a defined direction for the organisation.
Mission	Defines why the organisation exists.
Strategy	A long term plan designed to achieve a particular goal or set of goals or objectives.
Community	A group of people gathering around a shared interest, in order to achieve a shared aim that care about each other and feel they belong together.

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Presentation of participants worst and darling member

We asked the participants to describe their worst and best member.

	WORST	DARLING
Characteristics	No clear identity	Is not yet a member or not yet organised
	No clear understanding > High and wrong expectations	Cutting-edge
	High maintenance: demanding, a lot of time spend on answering/helping	
Network	Misuse the network > Trying to sell its activities/services	Brings innovation to the sector and to the association
	Takes only and does not give anything back	Gives inputs and support to the network
Participation	Not proactive	Proactive: propose initiatives, involved in the field, offers translating actions
	Not prepared when attending meetings, events, GAs	Attends events and comes prepared
	Never there: not coming at any event or activity	Hosts events, activities, meetings Sends volunteers
	Never give inputs	Engages Collaboratives Contributes Comments and constructive complains
Attitude	Nostalgic, negative, talks badly about the network, members, people, blames association, Off time, leaves	Understands, Respectful, Responsive, Fulfil commitment, Ahead of time, Adaptive, Value transparency, Kind, Smart
Communication	Blocking information and communication, not sharing them with its network	Connects, Promotes, Shares, Reaches out Informs and communicates also on social media
	Bad IT skills	Great use of logo
Money related	Pays late	Pays on time
	Joins only for money reasons: to get discounts/reduced fees	Has money	no big budget problems
	Sees the association as services provider	Pays highest rate

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Worst MEMBER

nostalgic

bad IT skills

no clear identity

high "wrong expectations"

high maintenance

no clear idea & understanding

pays least

blames association

opposite of dearest

leaves

complains
↳ influences innovation

talks badly

mis-use

not-prepared

selling only

negative

never there

doing brings nothing back

never participates

sees associ. as a service agency

blocking info & communi-cation

off time

joins for € reasons

Darling MEMBER

respectful

fulfill commitment

connects

involved in the field

attends events

cutting-edge

brings innovation
– to the sector
– to the assoc.

promotes

pays highest rate

pays on time

understands

has €

hosts

smart

kind

participates
active
present

iniates

contributes

ahead of time

collaborates

responsive

informs & communicates also on social media

gives

share

great logo use

sends volunteers

notyet-member
not organised

translating action

engages

comments (complains)

values transparency

reaches out

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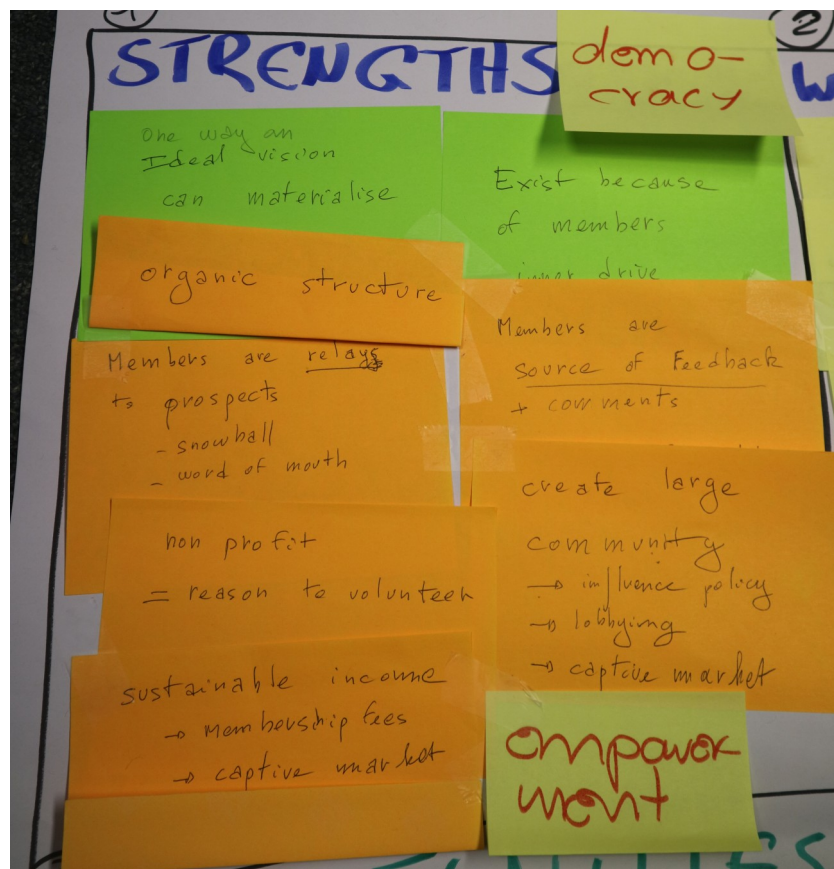
SWOT analysis: why do we work with members?

SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis) is a framework for identifying and analysing the internal and external factors that can have an impact on the viability of an organisation.

It is often used at the start of or as part of a strategic planning exercise. The framework is considered a powerful support for decision-making because it enables an entity to uncover opportunities for success that were previously unarticulated or to highlight threats before they become overly burdensome.

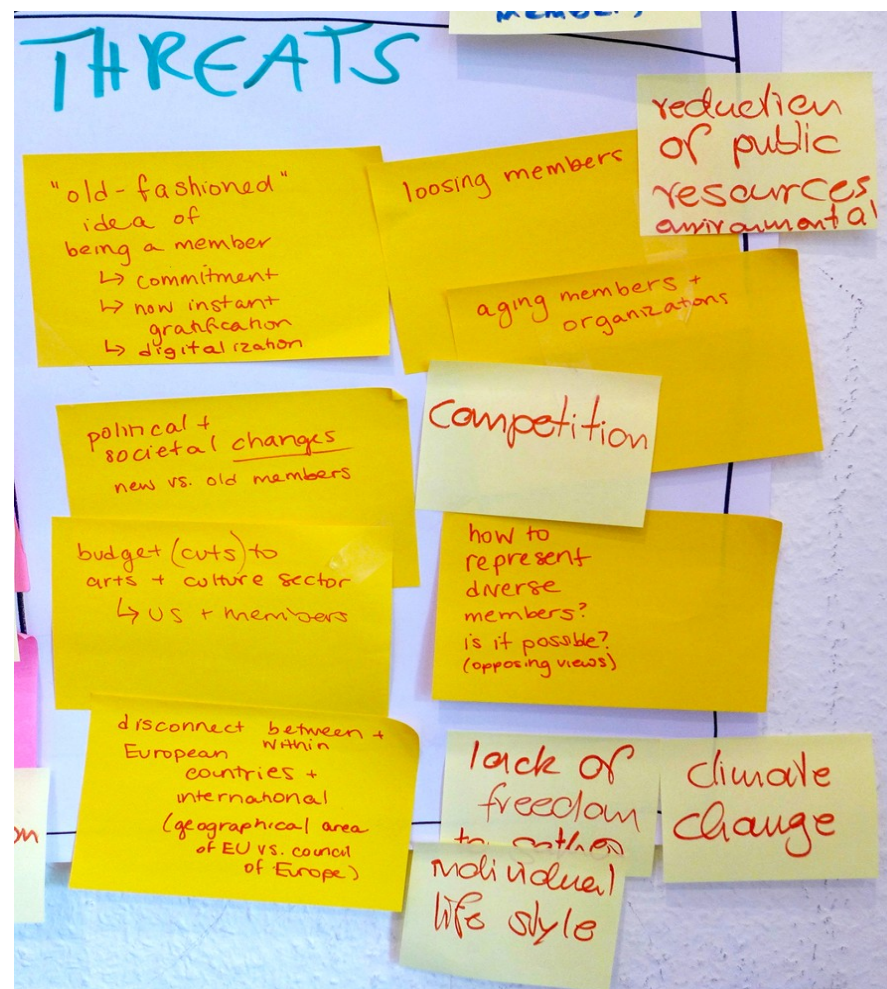| STRENGHTS	What your organisation does better than your competitor?
	Internal attributes and resources that support a successful outcome.
WEAKNESSES	What does your organisation need to improve upon?
	Internal attributes and resources that work against a successful outcome.
OPPORTUNITIES	Which external factors could lead to increase/develop your organisation?
	External factors that you can use to your advantage.
THREATS	What are the advantages competitors have over your organisation?
	External factors that could compromise the organisation's success.

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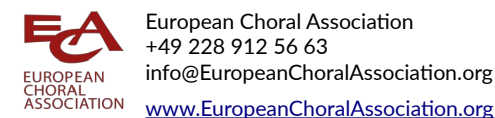
SWOT Analysis on having members

	STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
Structure		
	Democracy	Time consuming: keep updated database, demanding members
	Organic structure	
	Non-profit > reason to volunteer	
Members		
	Empowerment	Difficult to keep a relation: Lack of interaction, Geographical distance, Invisible
	Ideal vision can materialise	Slow processes
	Members inner drive	Not engaged, not active, not propositive
	Members are source of feedback and comments	
Reach out		
	Create large community: Influence policy, Lobbying, Captive market	They are not as we expect/want them to be: Aging members, too diverse/not diverse enough
	Members relays to prospects > snowball, word of mouth	Un-informed and static membership
Financial		
	Sustainable income	
	Membership fee, Captive market	

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STRENGTHS

demo-cracy

One way an Ideal vision can materialise

Exist because of members inner drive

organic structure

Members are relays to prospects
- snowball
- word of mouth

Members are source of Feedback + comments

non profit = reason to volunteer

create large community
→ influence policy
→ lobbying
→ captive market

sustainable income
→ membership fees
→ captive market

empowerment

WEAKNESSES

Time

lack of interaction

far removed

database

un-informed members

difficulty of diverse membership

invisible

static

demanding members

low diversity

ageing members

	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Diversity of membership	Access to statistics	Old fashion idea of being a member: commitment, non instant gratification
	Language skills [in the network is international]	Political and social changes [new vs. old members]
	Gather > Stronger voice	Lack of freedom for gathering in some countries
		How to represent different members? Is it possible? [opposing views]
		Individual lifestyle
	Spill-over-effect	Aging members and organisations
		Loosing members
Opportunities	Peer-to-peer learning	Competition
	More offers: activities, events, possibilities	Disconnection between/within European countries or on the International level [EU countries vs. Continental Europe]
	Cheaper than market	
Digitalisation	Connect members from remote > more accessible	No need for an organisation since information and networking online platforms exist
		Environmentally not friendly: people traveling to attend events
Economical		Reduction of public resources
		Budget cuts on cultural sector
	More free time	
	Universal language	

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Why, How and How to

Membership – an organisational/institutional and human-centred approach
Input by Albert [IETM]

IETM - International network for contemporary performing arts - is a network of over 450 performing arts organisations and individual members working in the contemporary performing arts worldwide: theatre, dance, circus, performance, interdisciplinary live art forms, new media.

It was created in 1981 around the **need of access to information and experiences globally** and had initially a **loose structure**.

<u>Mission</u> > be the place to exchange and collaborate for the ones who are working in the field.

<u>Vision</u> > Equality, diversity and inclusion

Today IETM is a **open** and **non-hierarchical organisation**, that **serves its members** and goes beyond feeding and teaching them, with a more **defined structure** (membership fees, General Assemblies, etc...). It's a **human-centered network** with rules, but based on **trust**.

<u>Members:</u>

IETM members include festivals, companies, producers, theatres, research and resource centers, universities and institutional bodies.

What members expect from IETM?	What IETM expects from members?
Implement mission	Active membership
Eco-friendly	Responsible
Political representation	Work for the network
Policy work	
Events and publications	

Interaction with members: informal and often initiated by Secretariat through forum, meetings, events and the website

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Use of **online platforms** for: information, communication, practical info, transparency (all open and public), dedicated members' section.

New members:

2 criteria: international and working in contemporary performing arts.

Fast process, membership officer decides on it, no need for the IETM Board to approve. Once they become member a skype call of 20-30 min is organised to describe the association, frame its work, clarify what's the role of members and give the opportunity to the new member to ask questions.
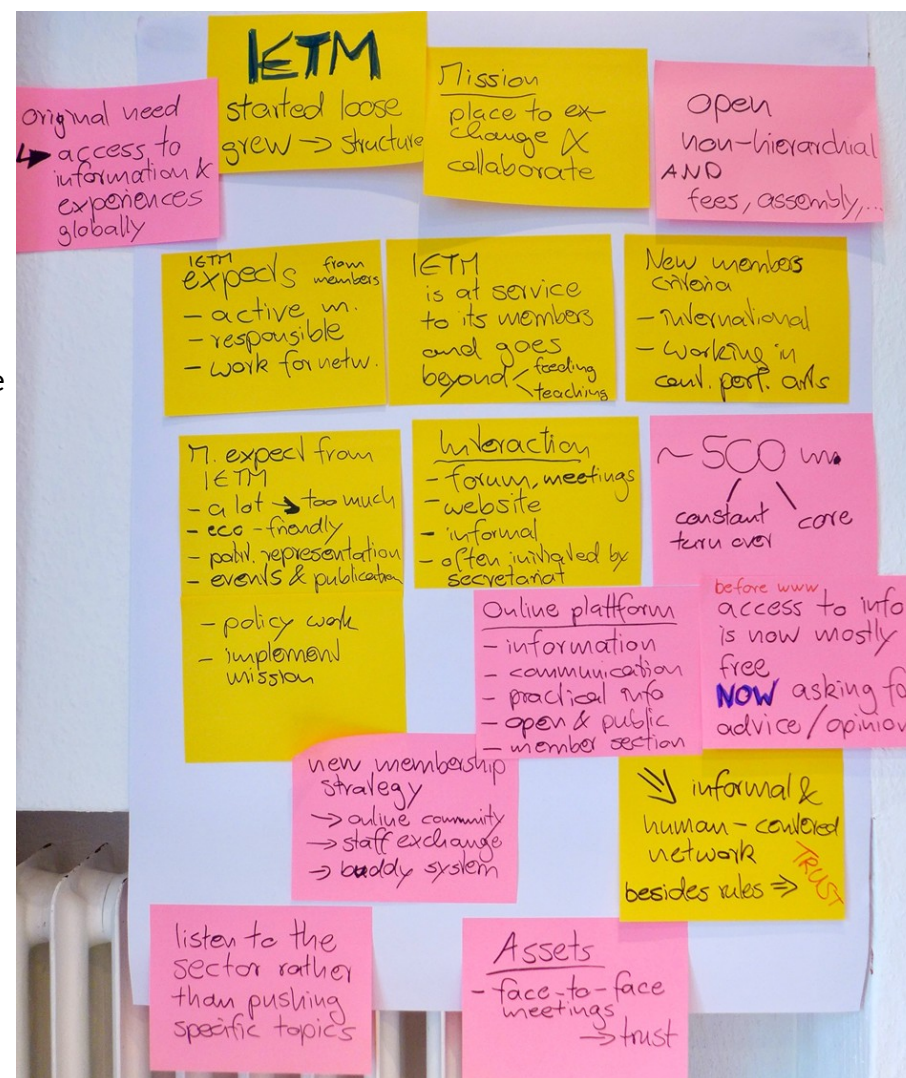
<u>**Membership strategy**</u>:

- Build an online community

- Set up a staff exchange

- Buddy system

Listen to the sector rather than pushing specific topics.

Assets > face-to-face meetings [trust]

Support documentation > www.thefutureofmembership.info/

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Changing perspectives:

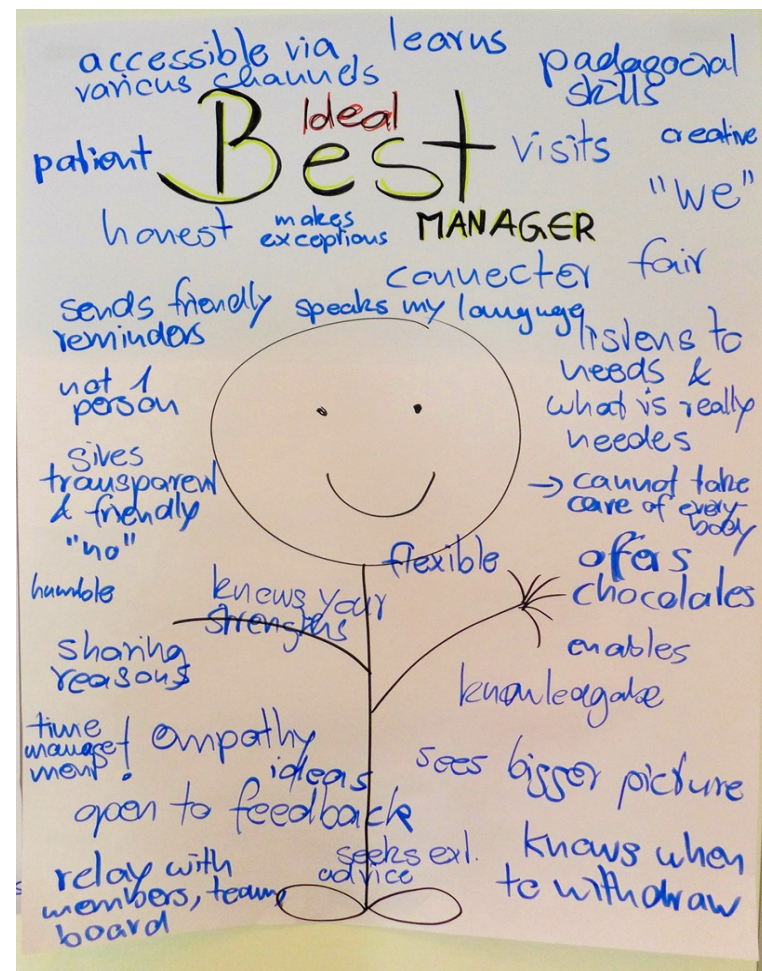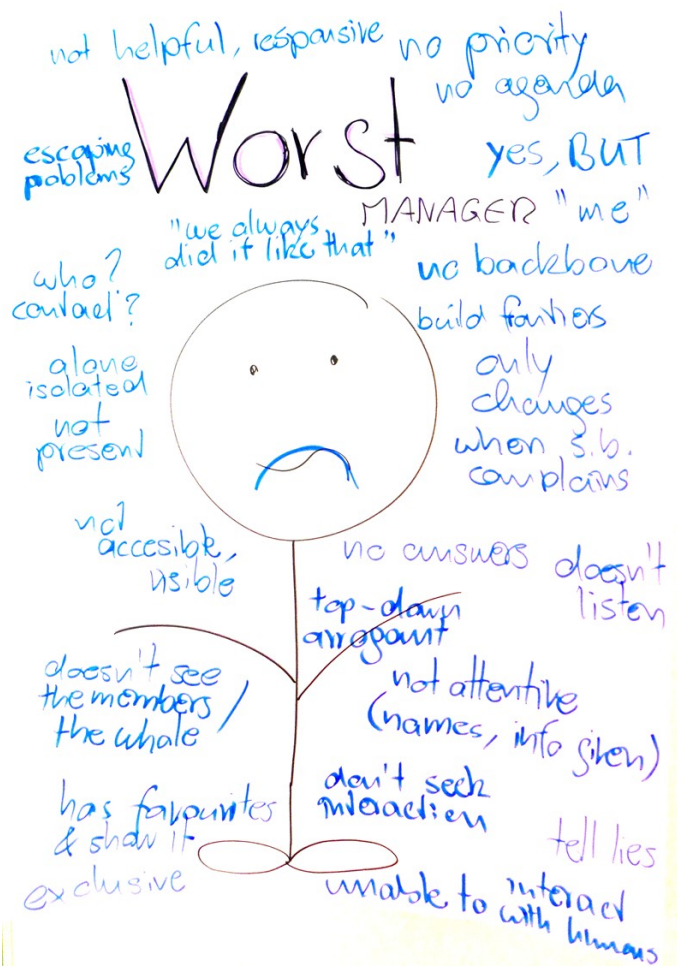## Do we understand the needs of our members?

We played a role game where we were members interacting with a membership manager.

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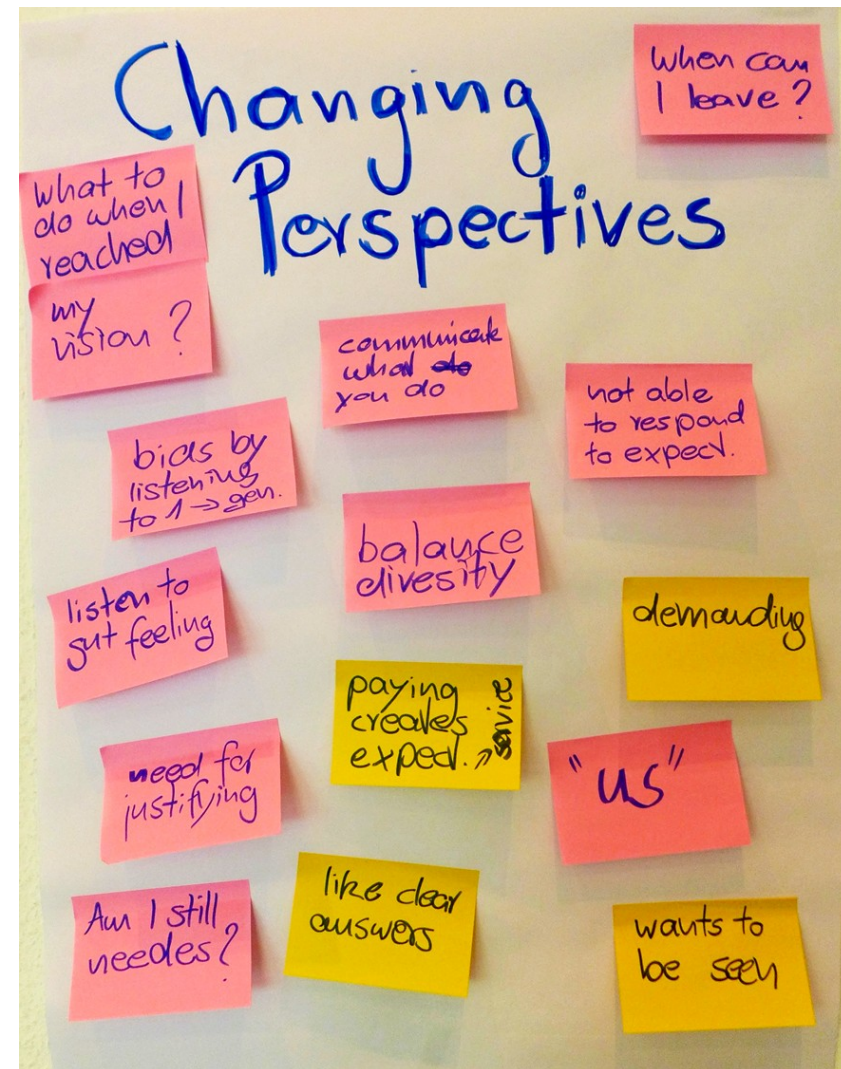
Ideal and worst membership manager

	WORST MANAGER	IDEAL /BEST MANAGER
Organisation	ME centred: focus on her/himself	Sees the big picture: has a clear idea of what a network is [WE]
	Preferences: has favourite members and shows it	Relay with members, team and Board
	Counterproductive: build frontiers	It's not only 1 person, membership management shares among the bodies of the organisation
		Knows the organisation and the members, their strengths and weaknesses
Prioritise	No agenda	Knows when to withdraw
	No backbone	Listens to need and selects what is really needed
	"Yes, but…"	Knows that cannot take care of everything
	Only changes when somebody complains	Gives transparent and friendly "no"
Attitude	Arrogant, top-down, Not helpful, Not responsive, Alone, isolated, Not present, Exclusive, Tell lies	Patient, Honest, Fair, Humble, Empathy, Flexible, Knowledgeable during events, On-going-learner
Communication	Not attentive: cannot remember names, info given	Connector, speaks my language
	Does not listen	Accessible via various channels
	Unable to interact with human beings	Send friendly reminders
	Does not seek interaction	Visits members when possible
	"We always did it like that!"	Open to feedback
	Not accessible, visible during events	Makes exceptions
Skills		Time management
		Pedagogical skills
		Creative
		Enable

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Strategy for membership management

To start a mechanism that will produce a change

1. Has to be aligned with the **organisation's strategic plan**, **vision** and **mission**

2. **Why?** Start from the end, identify goals and clear scope

3. **Who?** Identify your targets groups [main, secondary]

4. Recall **SWOT analysis**: challenges, effects, etc…

5. Define **strategy** and sub-strategies for membership management

    - Take in account context

    - Hierarchy of priorities

1. Define action **plans** accordingly to resources [budget]

    - Take in account the membership fee

    - Membership advantages

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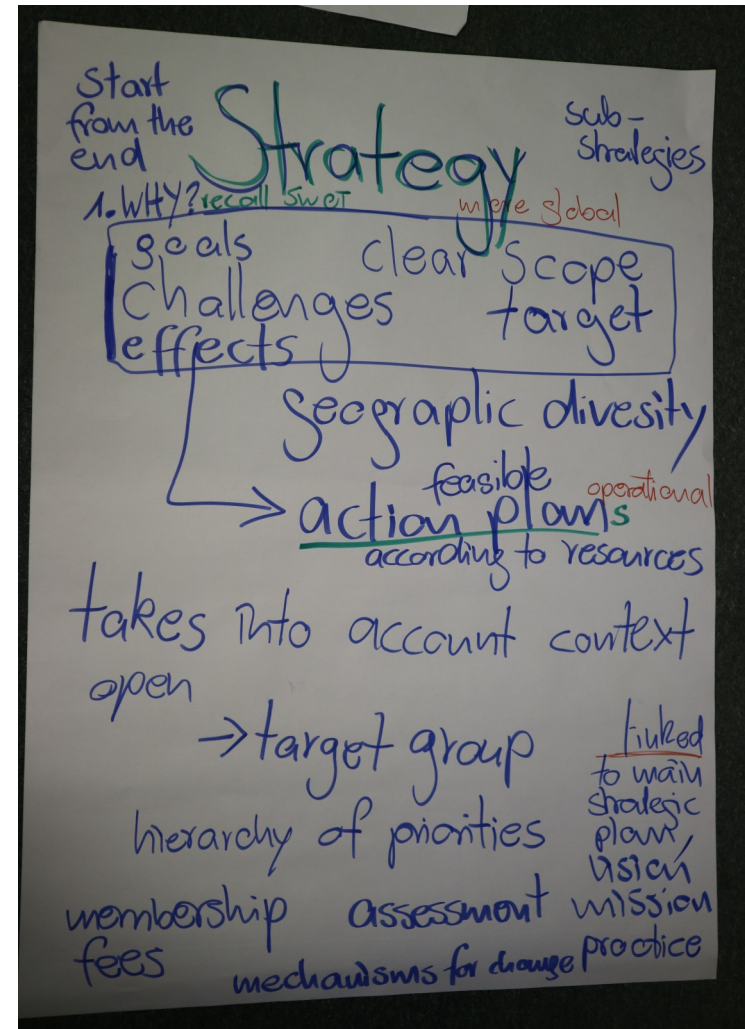
Involving existing members
COMMUNICATION: bi-directional

Understand who are your members and what they do through surveys, visiting them and what they like and dislike [DATA!]

When a member contacts you, try to be responsive and helpful

How? Target the communication to the audience [general/specific]. Consider	Channels/ Tools	
	Digital	**Traditional**
Tone	Interactive website	Meetings, live events
Language/vocabulary	Newsletter	Printed material
Timing/schedule	Social Media	Phone calls
Statistics/data	Database	Influent people
Adapt to the platform	Doodles	Merchandising
To the point	Management platforms	Word of mouth / ambassadors
Visual works better	Targeted emails	
	Messaging groups [Telegram, Signal, WhatsApp]	
	Skype, Zoom, …	

Keep track of the communication flow > LOG

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INFORMATION: uni-directional

Organisation should inform its members about:	Members should inform the association about:
Activities	Update contact details
Formal events	Changes in their organisation [President, Board, staff, etc...]
Main changes	Formal events [General Assembly]
Remind one a year advantages in being a member	Inform about their main projects > could be shared with the network [project of the month]

Tools:

- Website: Main content holder where to find all the information / Digital archive

    Registration area where members can log in and add info about their projects

- Newsletter

- Publication and printed material

Criteria: share only relevant information and adapt to the target

Schedule: How often do we send information? Find a balance and a routine

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ACTIVITIES

Occasions to:

- Get inputs from your members and from the field to then influence/direction changes.
- Co-organise, co and co-planning with your members
- Delegate members as representatives of your organisation

Types:	ONLY FOR MEMBERS	OPEN
General Assemblies: Democratic exercise, voting, validate governance Reduce GA time, add inspiring contents and networking time	x	
Membership Day	x	
Conferences	x	x
Festivals/concerts/performances		x
Receptions	x	x
Fairs		x
Prizes/Awards/Competitions	x	x
Staff exchanges	x	x
Webinars	x	x
Joint communications	x	
Collaborations/Partnerships	x	
External speaking events	x	x
Market places	x	x
Pecha Kucha		
News rounds	x	

Remember that meals&drinks during events can be inspiring moments to network and connect.

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Communications

bi-directional!

HOW: target the commu. to the audience — general / specific

- tone
- language / vocabulary
- to the point
- visual
- timing / schedule
- statistics / data
- adapt to the platform

COMMUNICATION (not information)

Availability
- When a member contacts us, be responsive, helpful
- Amateurs need possibility to contact us outside office hours

channels / TOOLS

DIGITAL
- DATABASE
- DOODLES
- MANAGMENT PLATFORMS
- EMAILS — TARGET
- NEWSLETTER
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- WEBSITE — INTERACTIVE
- WHATS APP GROUPS
- SKYPE — JITSY / ZOOM

- YOUTUBE
- FACEBOOK
- TWITTER
- INSTAGRAM
- SOUNDCLOUD
- LINKEDIN

TRADITIONAL
- INFLUENT PEOPLE
- MEETINGS
- PRINTED MATERIAL
- PHONE CALLS
- MERCHANDISING

Keep track of communication flow → LOG

Members connected context

- Understanding members activities
  - survey
  - visit them
  - to enter their "own space"
- clicks to see what members like
- GDPR

Information

registration area / log in on website to give information on main projects

informe our members about our activities / formal events (GM...)

members should informe us about / contact details / changes in the organisation

Concerned by how much information should we send!

Share only relevant information with people you share with

having data through newsletter (clicks...)

Adapt language — different languages / levels / content / Tone — formal / informal

Border btw Communication & information is blurring

Personalise

how often do we send information = find a balance

BI-LATERAL EXCHANGE   ONE-WAY INFORMATION

website: archive / content holder → more static

publications

newsletter → often same content? → develop a strategy
social media → facebook / youtube / instagram / linkedin / tiktok → COMMS

information from members → as project of the month

Content: not only information on association / members but also random

text / video / image / gif

Activities

Share activities organized by others

platforms / working groups

prizes / awards

competitions

REDUCE FORMAL
DELEGATE MEMBERS AS REPRESENTATIVES
GA 20 to 30 minutes + public discussion

formats
- GA
- conferences
- workshops
- webinars
- scholar exchanges
- research / projects / performances / concerts
- prize communication / celebrations / external speaking events
- (multi-) disciplinary
- partnerships
- marketplace / meeting day / social hubs / in person round

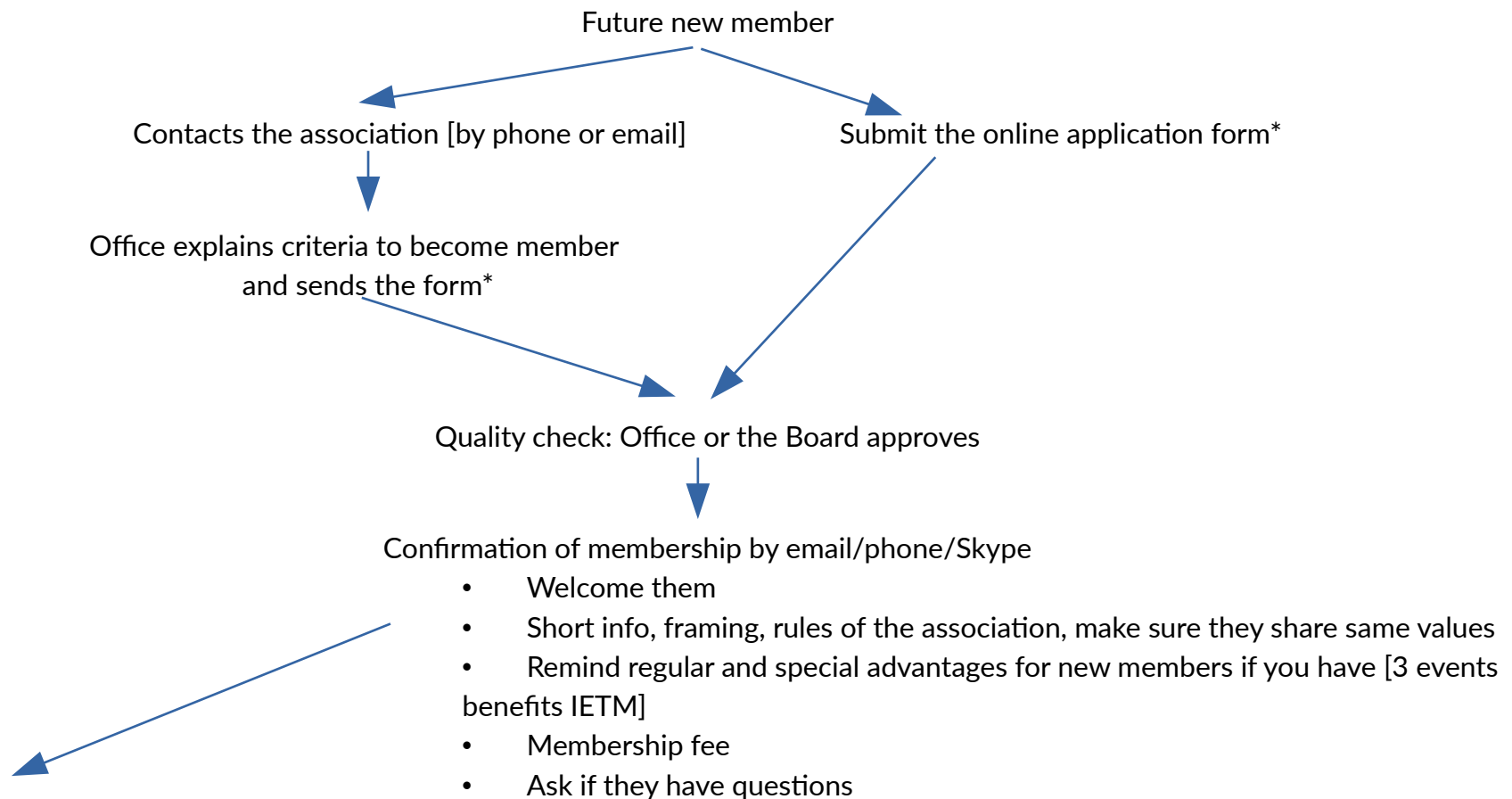increasing quality & diversity

Open space: Presentation of tools, formats, methods, practices of membership management

Open source	Civi-Database	Online voting	Membership works	Italiacori.it	Climate Change Choir Estafette
Kjetil Aaman [Norsk Sangerforum]	Albert Meijer [IETM]	Côme Ferrand Cooper [ECA-EC]	Natalie Giorgadze [Culture Action Europe]	Marco Fornasier [Feniarco]	Thomas Hessels [Koornetwerk]
Information available online for free for everybody	Open source CRM Database free to use.	Individual and choir members voted from remote for the election of the Board	Web-based app on membership management. Price depends on number of members	Database and websites for Italian choirs' members	Project idea to make choirs interact and combine singing with social topics
Issues:	Pros:	Important to:	Pros:	Pros:	Issues:
Not many use it [digital gap]	Talks to other programmes	Change the statutes of the organisation before doing it	from manually to automatic	One database with all the data that federations and choirs can update themselves	Jointly?
Members do not feel the need to stay since info are available for everybody	Many many options	Have a code to identify members but not see what they vote [anonymous]	Save a lot of time!	Each Regional federation can have its own website, can produce info or use the ones created by Feniarco and publish them	How to link climate change topic and choirs?
Should info be available only paying?	Searchable in many ways	Info:	Users friendly	Unified visual identity for members	
Exclusiveness vs. Inclusion		50-60% used it	Constant tutorials	Choirs can create a user profile, update their info, add concerts in the calendar	
Suggestions from the group:		In our system their vote is grouped per country		Shop for scores	
Accessibility to selected information				50.000€ + 8.000€/year	

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Future prospective, round up

New members

Future new member

Contacts the association [by phone or email]   Submit the online application form*

Office explains criteria to become member
and sends the form*

Quality check: Office or the Board approves

Confirmation of membership by email/phone/Skype
- Welcome them
- Short info, framing, rules of the association, make sure they share same values
- Remind regular and special advantages for new members if you have [3 events benefits IETM]
- Membership fee
- Ask if they have questions

Repeat and remind them → During your events: set up a space for new members and/or buddy welcoming system [peering older and new members]

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Integrate new members' data in your database and give them access to members' section if you have one.
* + letter of recommendation from existing members if the procedure

The participants explained how their organisations are calculating the
membership fee and it could be based on:

- Size of organisation applying
- Solidarity system [HDI]: countries sorted in groups according to their GDP, organisation based in a country pay a membership fee accordingly [organisations based in reached countries pay more and vice versa]
- "Eco power"
- Organisation's budget
- Turnover of organisations. Fixed for individuals
- Members' number

Regular raise of membership based on inflation
Local members might be members of a regional association, if they want to join the national they might have to pay a double fee if there are no agreements on regional and national [European/international] organisations > this might disincentive new potential members in applying.

Specific offers for new members:

- Grants for organisations wanting to assist in the General Assembly
- Discount for "friends": members bringing new members have a discount
- Non-members participating to an event get back the difference [price for non-members-membership fee] if they apply for becoming members 2 weeks after the event.

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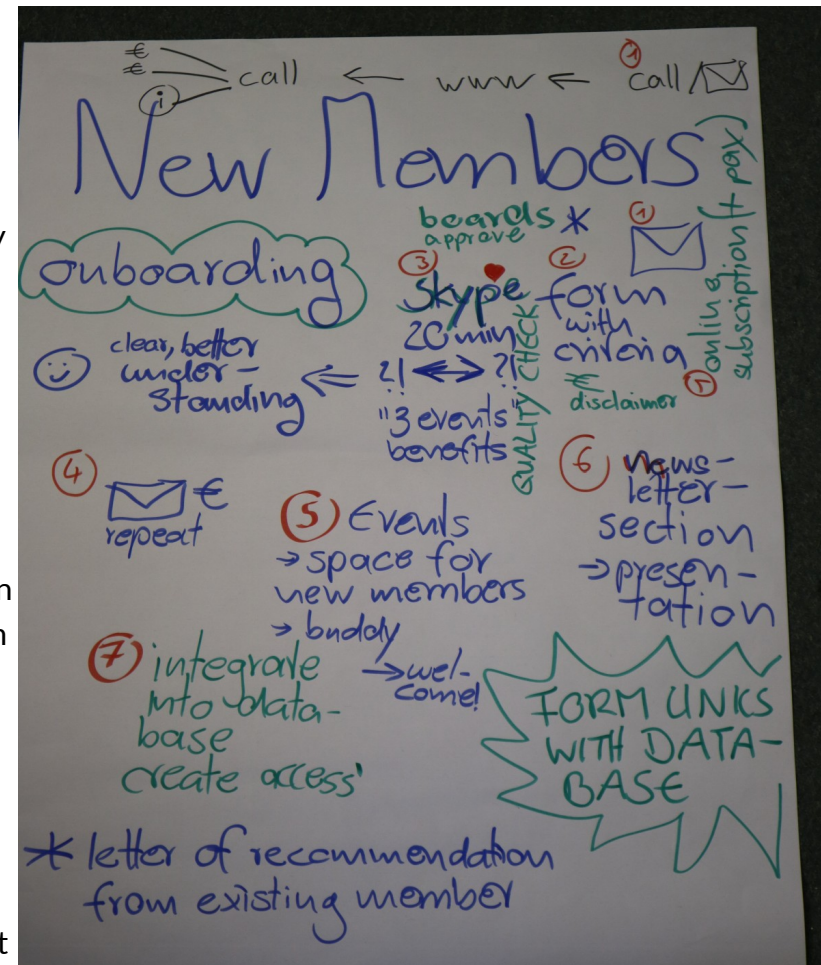
Potential new members

Joining an organisation:

PRO	CONTRA
Be part of a growing ecosystem	Too expensive/no money to pay the membership fee
Access to a range of interesting events	No local connection [for National/European/International organisations]
Body representing you, your interests and your category	Sector is fragmented
Make your life easier and cheaper if you participate and are really active in the sector	
Access/Open up to new dimensions that you know thanks to the organisation's network	
Face-to-face meetings and connections → visit potential members	

Have a specific approach to them:

1. Start from **data**:

- Know the **sector**, identify the potential members who fit your organisation and might be interested

- Know your **competitors**: see what they offer, compare your offer/prices with theirs

1. Shape a **membership offer** fitting for your target group(s) and their needs, highlighting the opportunities that being members brings.

2. Follow the membership strategy and the action plans also on different levels, knowing that sometimes a **local link** can open a door to your international/national/regional organisation.

3. Make sure the membership on-boarding **process** and the **communication flow** are clear, easy and smooth.

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Young potential members:

- Shape a specific strategy for this target > based on data, surveys and statistics

- Design specific activities and create a specific membership

- Make sure there is a youth friendly environment in your organisation and make space in your governance structure for youth > Youth Committee

- Talk to older members to include the young ones

- Help them understanding how the association works, its bodies and to connect with the network

- Provide advices and guidelines for the new young members

- Find places where your target is [schools, universities,...]

- Empower the first ones to be ambassadors and recruit more young members in their networks

- Inclusion!

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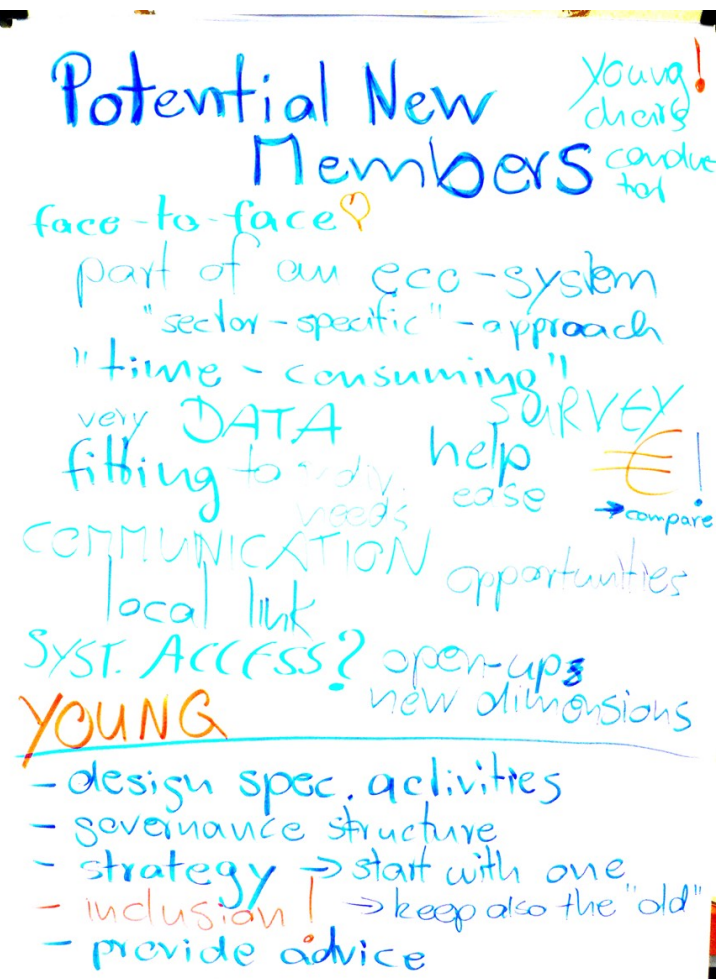
Non-members

How to convince non-members to join?

Make sure your organisation meets their expectations, if not evaluate the possibility to make some changes to walk towards these members needs or accept the fact that you are not interesting for them.

Incentives:

- Free events > special price for them

- Special memberhsip fee

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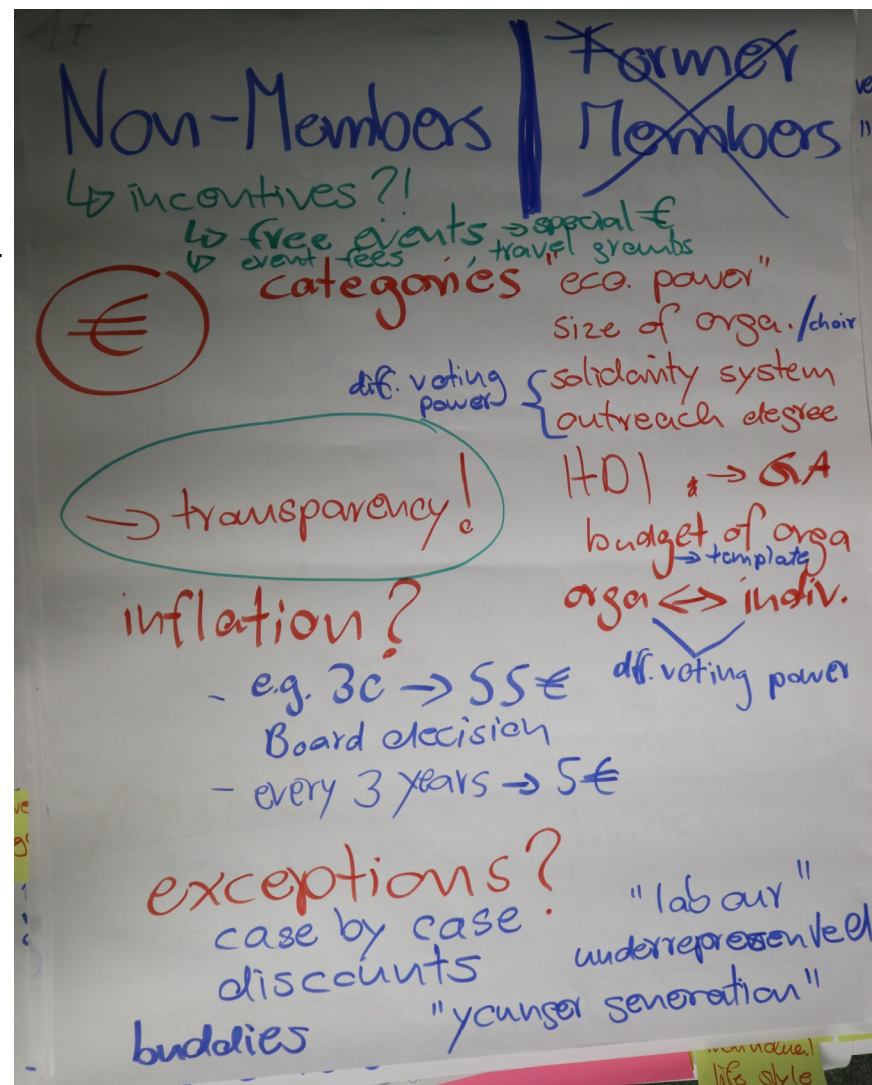
Former members

Why they left? Do/Did you ask them?

- We have no clue

- Question of choice and priorities

- Financial reason

- Age > too old to be able to participate actively

- No more interesting opportunities

- Not enough benefits

- Don't feel it is relevant to be part of an organisation/of that specific organisation

- Changing the staff > no more connection with the organisation

After leaving:

- Follow up

- Newsletter

- GPDR

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Strategies:

- Convince to stay/join again > How? Phone call

- Benefits/expectations/explanations

- Empathy/adapt the talk

- Offer another type of membership

- Offer them to stay connected with the network

- Help them translate

- Diversify "face"

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Fish bowl
on future approaches to membership management

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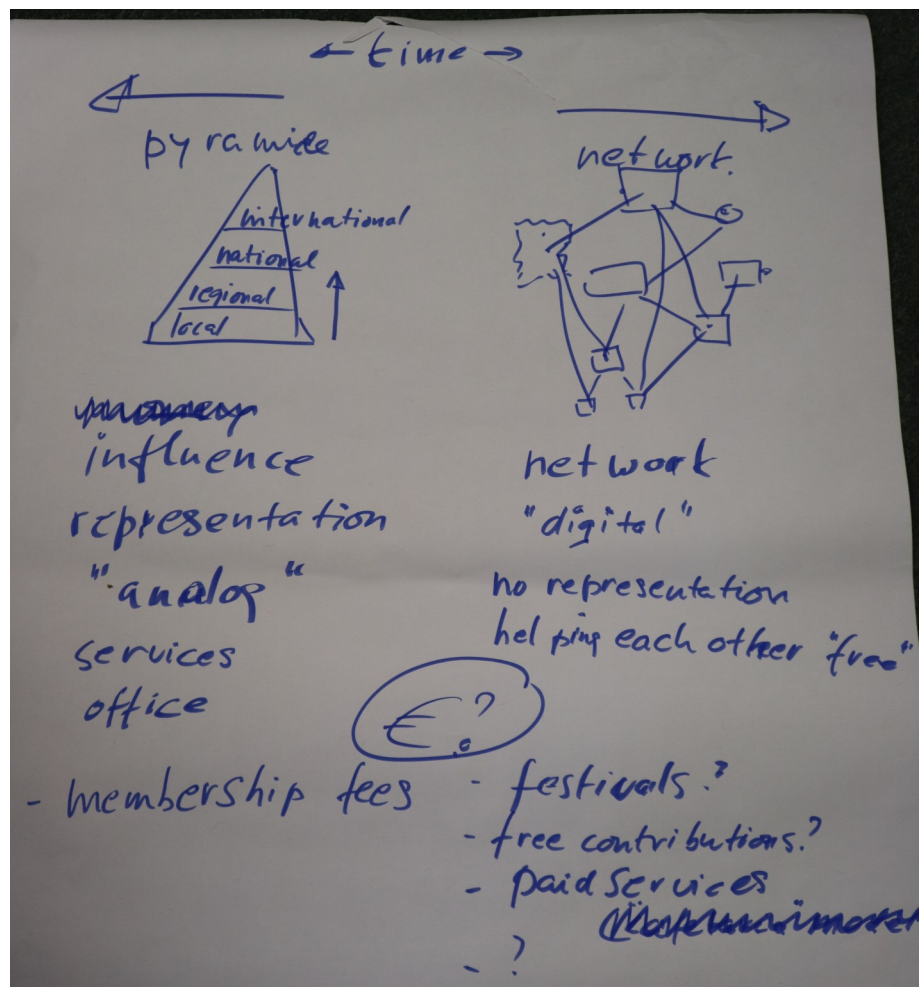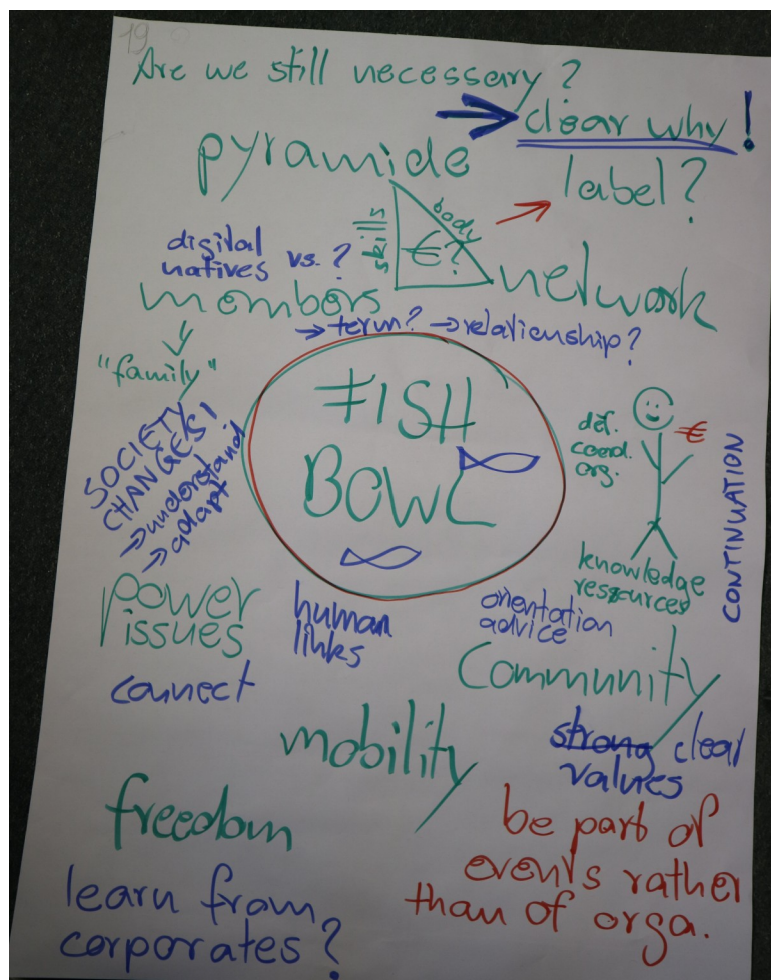
Your turn: refresh your membership strategy!

Step 0: Organisation's basics > WHY, WHO, WHAT, HOW

- Your **vision**: Foundation of the organisation [future focused] > Why we do what we do? Which is our purpose? Which are our values [stable core beliefs]?

- Your **mission**: Vision in practical terms [forward thinking + present goals] > Which are our objectives and goals? How we will accomplish the vision?

- Your **strategy**: Which are our short and long term goals? How will we achieve them?

Step 1: DATA

- Collect and analyse **data** about the sector, the competitors and about your members and their needs

- Evaluate **your starting point**: How engaged are your members? Where are they more engaged [live events, online, emails,...]? To which contents/advantages/opportunities they reacting the most?

- **Budget** and **personnel** for membership: How much can we invest on this? Who is responsible?

Step 2: MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY and ACTION PLAN

- **Membership vision:** Why do we have members? Which values do they share?

- **Membership mission**: How you imagine your members to be in 50 years? Who do you want to represent? How many? Which type [size, geography, et...]?

- **Membership strategy**: How can you involve and engage members more?

- **Action plan**: concrete actions aligned with the membership strategy that will help reach the goals.

Step 3: CONTENTS and COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Contents: type, tone, schedule, regularity

- Channels: through which channels/tools do you want to communicate with them?

Remember to diversify contents and channels accordingly to the target.

STEP 4: TEST, TRACK and REPEAT

Regularly evaluate the impact of your communication and actions, review, optimise and then change accordingly.

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Thanks to the organisations that participated in the workshop!

[À Coeur Joie France](#)
[Culture Action Europe](#)
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[European Music Council](#)
[Feniarco - Italian Federation of Choir Regional Associations](#)
[IETM - International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts](#)
[Koornetwerk](#)
[KÓTA - Hungarian Association of Choirs and Associations](#)
[Norsk sangerforum](#)
[Res Artis - Network of Artist Residencies](#)
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