UNDERSTANDING OUR NETWORK

Wikimedia Europe April 2025

About us

Who we are as individuals in a community

Use the paper and pen to answer prompts / questions

You can keep these notes to yourself

We will go through 6 aspects of your individual, present reality

Describe your **environment**
from the point of where you are
in Wikipedia community

(in 3-5 expressions)

- people, infrastructure, resources?
- what supports you?
- what limits you?

Describe your **behaviours**
and actions that this environment enables

(in 1-3 expressions)

- What are you not able to do and wish you could?
- What are you able to do that brings you joy/satisfaction?

What are the beliefs you hold about the world and/or the community - things you believe are true and they influence your decisions and behavior

(in 1-3 expressions)

- What do you believe in (about the world, the community) that guides you in your presence in the movement?
- What do you believe in that motivates you to be here?

Your top 3-5 personal values that are important to you in the context of this community

Make a note

3 values important to you in the context of this community

70 responses

Most popular

collaboration 5

freedom 5

Also prominent

equity 4

knowledge 4

diversity 2

honesty 2

kindness 2

openness 2

resilience 2

Other responses

accountability

autonomy

cherish diversity

colaboration

community

curiosity

dedication

democracy

efficicency

efficiency

empathy

enthusiasm

equal opportunity

equality

fairness

flexible

foregiveness

free speech for knowledge

good faith

good fatih

honnesty

human centered

impact

inclusion

inclusivity

independance

information accessibility

innovation

integrity

open communication

open knowlage

playfulness

precision

respect

respect for all

sharing

supportiveness

trust

truth

unity

welcoming

without barriers

Describe your **identity** in this world and identity in this community without describing your formal role

(in 1-2 sentences)

- Who are you in this world?
- Who are you in this community?

Describe your ideal **vision** for your presence/role in this community, how do you ideally want it to look like

(in 1-3 sentences)

- I’m doing / I’m able to ……..
- I don’t need to ……
- I feel like / I enjoy…..

In small groups take 5 min to share & discuss any of the below:

- Your Values / Vision
- 1-2 things this activity taught you or reminded you about

About our organisations

Who we are as organisations in a community

Positionality statements

Description of yourself,
that makes it more transparent
how your identity relates to the topic
and to the identity of other stakeholders

Where I'm coming from

Example:

Why positioning identity matters in decolonising research and knowledge production: How to write a ‘positionality statement’. Sarah Homan

> As Scharp and Thomas (2019) argue, scholars engaged in critical social science research should assess how their own positions and experiences might contribute to their interpretations of people's lived experiences. With this in mind, none of the authors have experienced parental alienation from the perspective of either parent or child. Instead, the first author has been studying family distancing for over a decade and has consequently garnered the stories from parents, children, and immediate family members of distanced parents and children. The first author contends that being immersed in the context of family distancing allowed her to relate to the participants and develop trust even though she was not alienated herself. Furthermore, not identifying as an alienated parent allowed the research team to protect themselves from reliving the emotional trauma expressed by many of the parents in their narratives.

Example:
Scharp, K. M., Hasen, R., Kubler, K. F., & Wang, T. R. (in press). Making meaning of parenting from the perspective of alienated parents. Personal Relationships.

Sarah (she/her) is a White, Australian-born settler, descendant of Welsh and Irish immigrants, who received her PhD in Anthropology and Development Studies from the University of Adelaide, on the unceded lands of Kaurna Yerta, (the Country of the Kaurna People). She is the Senior Research Associate at The Equality Institute. As a trained anthropologist and scholar from a coloniser/settler background, Sarah understands that the disciplines in which she's trained (anthropology, International Development, and academia) have significant histories (continuing to the present) as tools of colonisation. She also acknowledges the systems and structures which afford her unearned privilege. As such, she is committed to improving her understanding and practice around decolonising research, guided by feminist, Indigenist and decolonising perspectives and by people with lived experiences different than her own.

Wikimedia Europe – Draft Positionality Statement

- Formally established two years ago, with over **10 years of roots and experience** within the Wikimedia movement.
- Our team consists of **five members** from Italy, Poland, and Bulgaria, each with university degrees and with international experience; one team member is a long-time Wikipedian.
- **Financially stable** organisation with a diverse range of funding sources.
- Positioned uniquely **between various stakeholders**, operating under multiple perspectives and scrutiny.
- **Limited direct experience with Wikipedia contributor** engagement and campaign activities.
- Currently undergoing team shifts, with future work focus dependent on the **definition of strategic directio**n.

In what ways might your organisation's cultural and social identities impact your perception and interpretation of this network and others around you in the movement?

- How could **professional background** either broaden or limit your viewpoint?
- What **biases** (conscious or unconscious) might stem from your beliefs and values, and how could they affect your work?
- How does your **geographic location** and the community you belong to influence your understanding of others in the network?
- In what ways do your organization's experiences inform your views?
- How might your **social environment** provide unique insights or potential blind spots?
- Can your **socioeconomic status** and language abilities influence your understanding of challenges and opportunities for the community?
- How do you think your **financial abilities** and **authority status** shape your empathy and understanding of other organisations in this network?
- What aspects of your identity have the most significant impact on your approach to others in this community?

Individually, take 5 min to write
your organisation's draft positionality statement

Once ready, you can discuss in a small group

- How does this allow you a broader perspective?
- What are your potential blind spots based on this, when it comes to understanding others in the community?
- What are the most relevant elements of your identity that you bring to this network?

Network Mapping: context

Why

- **Understand** members so that we can support and **represent** interests in more informed way
- WMEU preparation for potential **capacity building**
- There was a need & an opportunity

- ★ Where are you, what & who surrounds you **= your current position**
- ★ What is important for you **= your compass**
- ★ Who you want to become / what do you want to achieve / where do you want to go **= your goal/destination**
- ★ What do you have, what are you missing **= your backpack and skills**
- ★ What is standing in your way? Social-economic status, circumstances, limiting beliefs **= rivers and mountains**
- ★ How do you prepare & what are the steps you can take to overcome that using what you already have? **= strategy -> operational plan**

Positionality statement

- I have experience rooted **outside** of the movement
- I empathise with **underserved and underrepresented groups**, as immigrant and minority
- I’ve been working mainly in agile and swiftly **changing** environments
- I’ve built from scratch or scaled up: NGOs, small business
- Experience in culture, education, technology
- Vietnam-born, Polish, international travel and work
- **Limited time** dedicated to WMEU (20h/week)
- Safe financially

How

- **29 conversations** with members
- **Desk research** - information available online
- 5 conversations with other movement stakeholders
- 15h+ joining and **observing**
- Processing & **reflecting**
- AI generated summaries and analysis

Output

- Mapping **sheet** - will put draft on meta in May (focusing on publically available data)
- Connections and **context for fundraising** support
- Informing our fundraising efforts
- Reflections and **recommendations**

Personal why

- In the current world, every organisation should be or is in the process of **identity reflection** / looking for **new meanings and ways of working**.
- The journey to your **goals** and through **change**
- Company of someone who wishes you well, is equipped to ask right **questions** and point out your **blind spots**

Network discovery & spotlights

Structure

- Data
- Spotlight
- Reflections

Deck: look

In small groups take 15 min to look through the slides & discuss any of the below:

- 1-2 things that caught your attention
- 1-2 things that you are glad to see
- 1-2 things you are missing

What caught your attention?

A lot of affiliates are in Europe.

Huge number of board members compared to staff

We share basically the same challenges, but our degree of collaboration is very low compared to our potential for networking.

The region with the most high number of chapters

How much money is that?

Everyone is doing everything, everywhere, all at once

Volunteers team supporting theirs communities

Budgets

Because Northern Europe were early Wikipedia chapters we have a privileged position: chapter growth was stopped for several years after we started

What would you add?

- Budgets
- Insights into community-affiliate relations
- Insights about fundraising strategies
- Some boards are operational while others are strategic.
- Financial means
- Missing members : country without affiliates
- Activities: is doing "everything" always limiting or is it also experimental, agile and based of valuable opportunities?
- More funds to improve the staff members (All people could be staff)
- Staff-board relations
- How many first employees fail within the first year? (Hint a lot)
- How many volunteers vs staff members
- Distrubution on number of employees

The story of us

The story I hear from YOU

- So different, so many perspectives
- Everyone “will tell you a different story”
- Difficult to do anything in such complex environment

The story I hear from YOU

- Not enough money, time and people
- Too small

- Too much talking, too little action
- Too much action, too little strategy
- Burnout, lack of prioritization and boundaries

- Lack of leadership
- Lack of stability

The story YOU tell me

- We should work together more
- We don’t have time to work together

- Some of us are doing fine
- Some of us are struggling
- Some of us are doing great
- Everyone is DOING A LOT

- Community contributors are key and we need more
- Community contributors are pain and stand in the way

The story YOU tell me

- Things are hard to change
- Change needed
- Don’t want to change / gave up on change

- No proper communication structure
- Current way of communicating sucks
- Don’t want new ways of communicating

- No proper information / know-how sharing and access
- Don’t have time to engage in peer to peer learning

Almost everyone says: there is too much complaining :)

The story I SEE

- Enough to make a difference and more than most regions
- Many in walking distance to new milestones

- Many without a map or guidance
- A very mixed crowd

- You value this journey
- Shared galaxy you care about

The story I SEE

- Many of you tired, frustrated, run out of need/motivation to change

- Some stopped looking for better paths, happy where you are
- Some look so carefully you actually don’t step into any of them

- Many busy carrying your own bag, hard to take the opportunity where the weight can be shared

- A lot on your shoulders, hard to let go

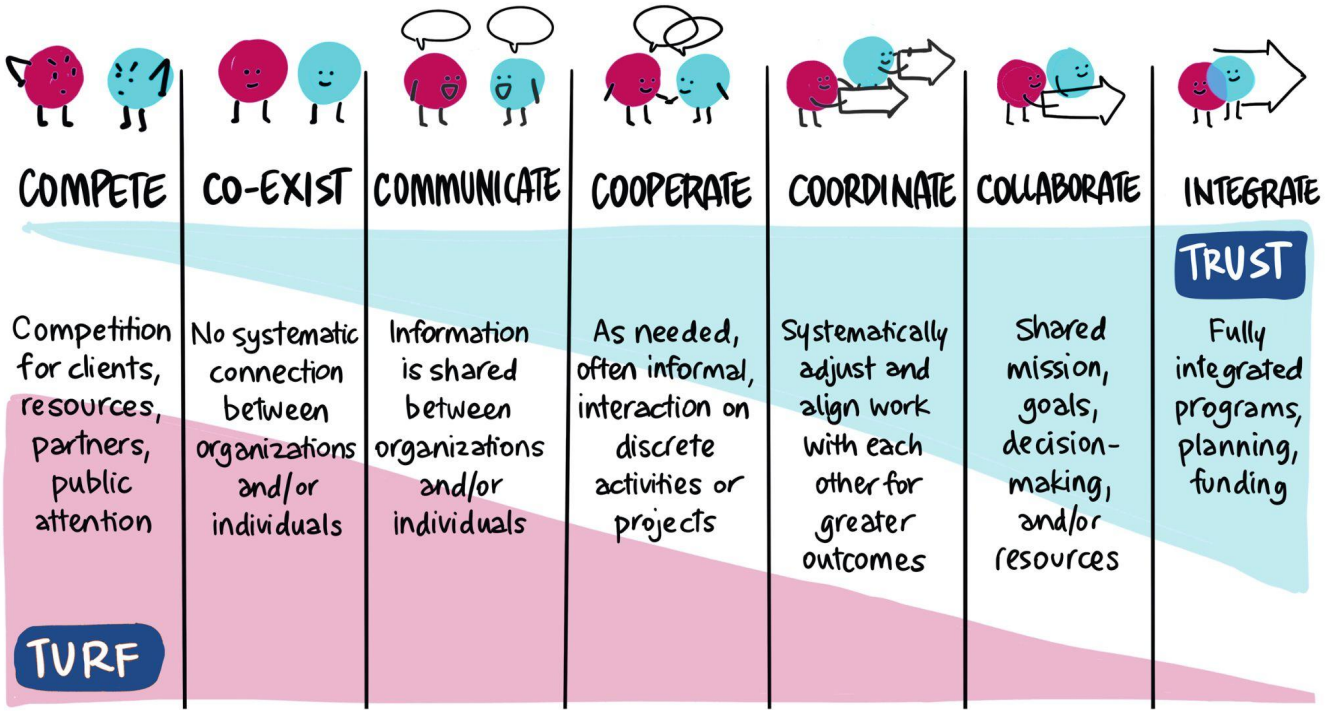
The story I SEE

- You wished you could do more together but you lack time
- Still, you chose to be here
- You know the value of going outside your main community

The story we want and need as the region….?

Collaboration framework

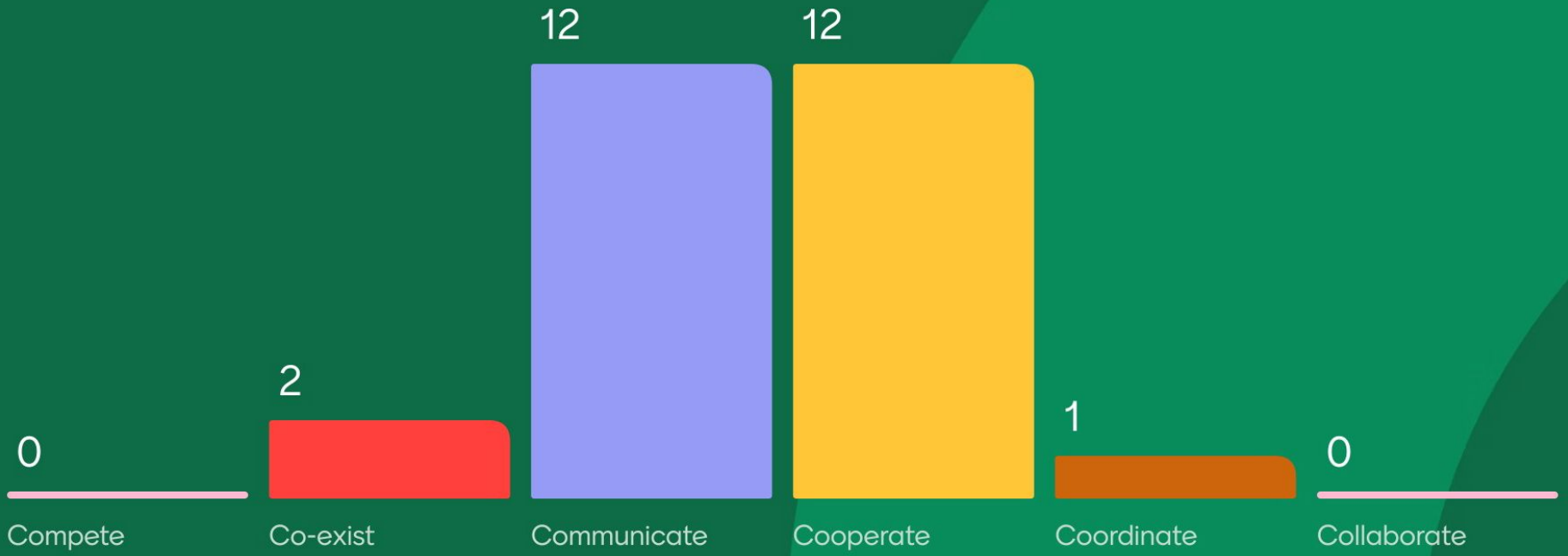
THE COLLABORATION SPECTRUM



Adapted from the Tamarack Institute

Frameworks Collection by finegood@sfu.ca | Illustrated by sam@drawingchange.com | © CC BY-NC-ND

Where are we on collaboration spectrum?



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Comment from on site discussion

- **If we look at the whole network, we are between coexisting and communicating**
- **If we look at some subgroups/bubbles within the network, they are between communicating and cooperating**

Advocacy & Policy

Collaboration & partnerships

Fundraising & Financial Sustainability

Know-how & Skills Management and Exchange

Leadership & governance upskilling

Strategic Planning & Execution

Volunteer Engagement & Retention

Which pillars to prioritise as part of network collaboration?

3 1 22

Prioritize development pillars on the wall

- Take a post it, write your organisation name and number 1
- Stick it under the most important topic for your organisation
- Repeat with numbers 2-7

Prioritize your collaboration form for each pillar

- Start with your number 1 priority pillar
- Look at the handout explaining more about how we could collaborate within the pillar
- Add to your existing post it your preferred form from collaboration spectrum
- Repeat with all pillars

Next steps

Next Steps For WMEU team

- Strategy process
- Network communication strategy
- Collaboration framework recommendations

Next Steps For MEMBERS

- **Member canvas & Play the bingo:**
  bring to VA before you leave

- **Engage further in mapping / recommendations:**
  Strategy working group / direct with VA / WMEU & Friends calls etc.

- **Engage in our projects / request:**
  interviews with researchers