TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF WMAT

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Raimund Liebert (WMAT) (Own work) [CC BY-SA 4.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0)]

Profile:

- Founded in 2008
- Employees and offices since 2012
- ~150 members
- 2,75 FTE
- 10 board members
- Budget ~325,000 EUR

Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.
Leo Tolstoi - *Anna Karenina*

Not so true for organizations!
=> Patterns of unhappiness?
=> What can we learn from them?

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Organizational Evolution

| Pioneer phase | Differentiation phase | Integration phase | Association phase |

Source: Glasl, Lievegoed: "Dynamische Unternehmensentwicklung", Haupt Verlag 2011

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Pioneer Phase

2008-2012

- Charismatic leader(s)
- Little planning, more improvisation
- Organisation is agile, efficient and flexible
- "We do what our clients want"

- Lack of transparency
- Power struggles
- Chaos

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Pioneer Phase

2008-2012

What did we do?
* Start of a strategy process within the organisation
* Move the base of WMAT from Graz to Vienna
* Including both sides of the conflict in some kind of role within WMAT

Problems
* Basic problem of distrust was not solved
* Conflicts alienated many community members

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Differen-tiation Phase

2012-2013

- Building a controllable apparat
- Transparency
- Coordination and controlling
- Division of tasks
- Formalisation

- Enstrangement / alienation
- Overengineering of (planning) processes

Differen-tiation Phase

2012-2013

What did we do?
* Establishing office as a neutral stakeholder, transparent financial processes and decision making structures (for projects, volunteer support, mini grants etc.)
* Good Governance Codex to set up division of tasks between Board and ED

Problems
* Fear of alienation & overengineering of processes left grey areas and potential for conflict
* Dependency on certain people in certain roles

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Integration & Association Phase

2014-2017

- The organization becomes a wholisitc organism
- Interconnectedness of organisation and context
- Intensified relationships to partners / other orgs

- Challenging human relations
- Challenging context

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Integration & Association Phase

2014-2017

What did we do?
* Intensified cooperation with partners inside and outside the movement
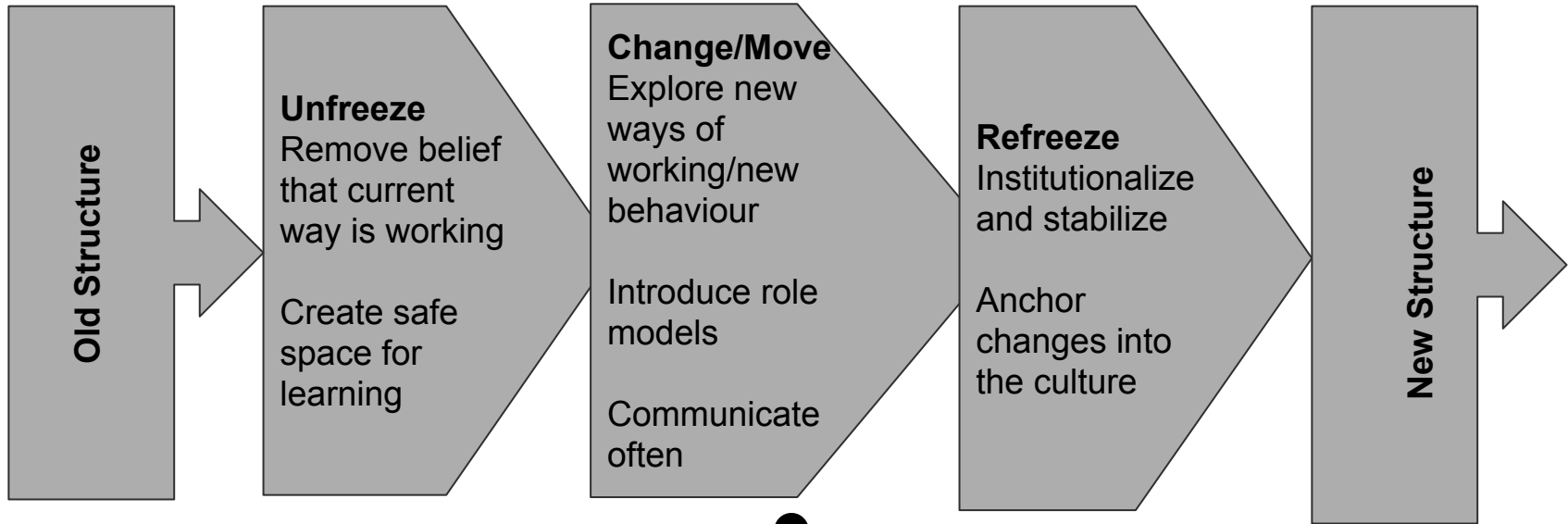* Joint projects, programs, and funding opportunities

Problems
* Building trust between core Wikimedia community and "external" partners and the wider open movement
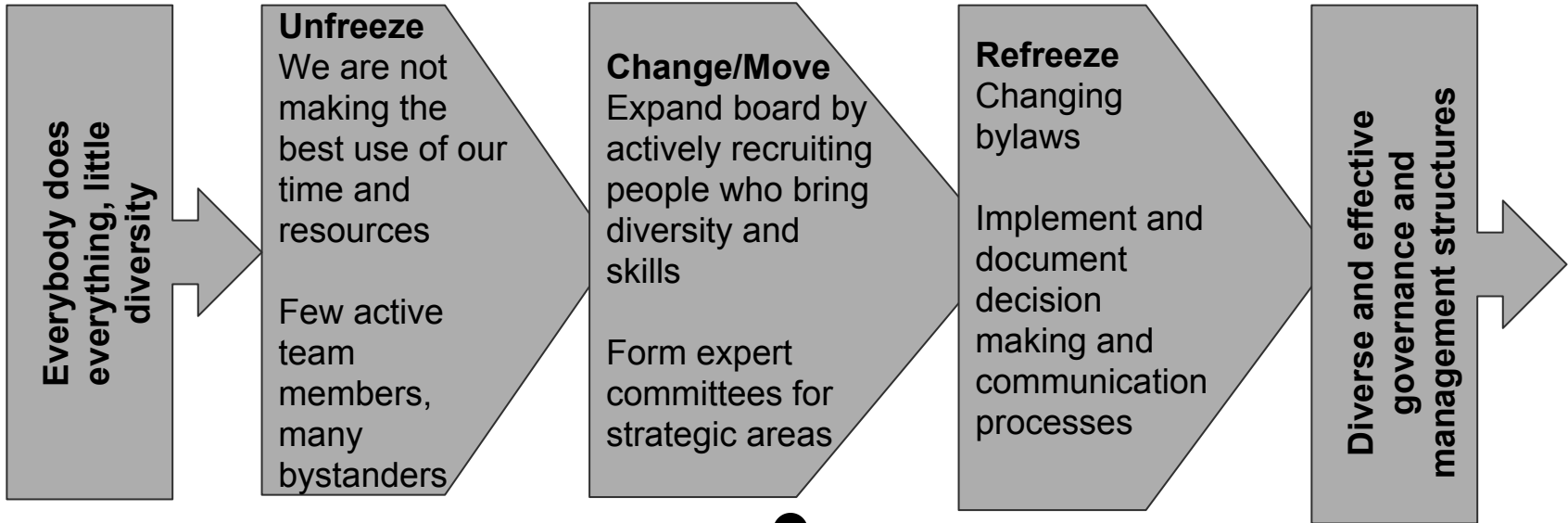* Tension between inclusionist and exclusionist groups in the chapter

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Lewin's Change Model

Old Structure

Unfreeze
Remove belief that current way is working

Create safe space for learning

Change/Move
Explore new ways of working/new behaviour

Introduce role models

Communicate often

Refreeze
Institutionalize and stabilize
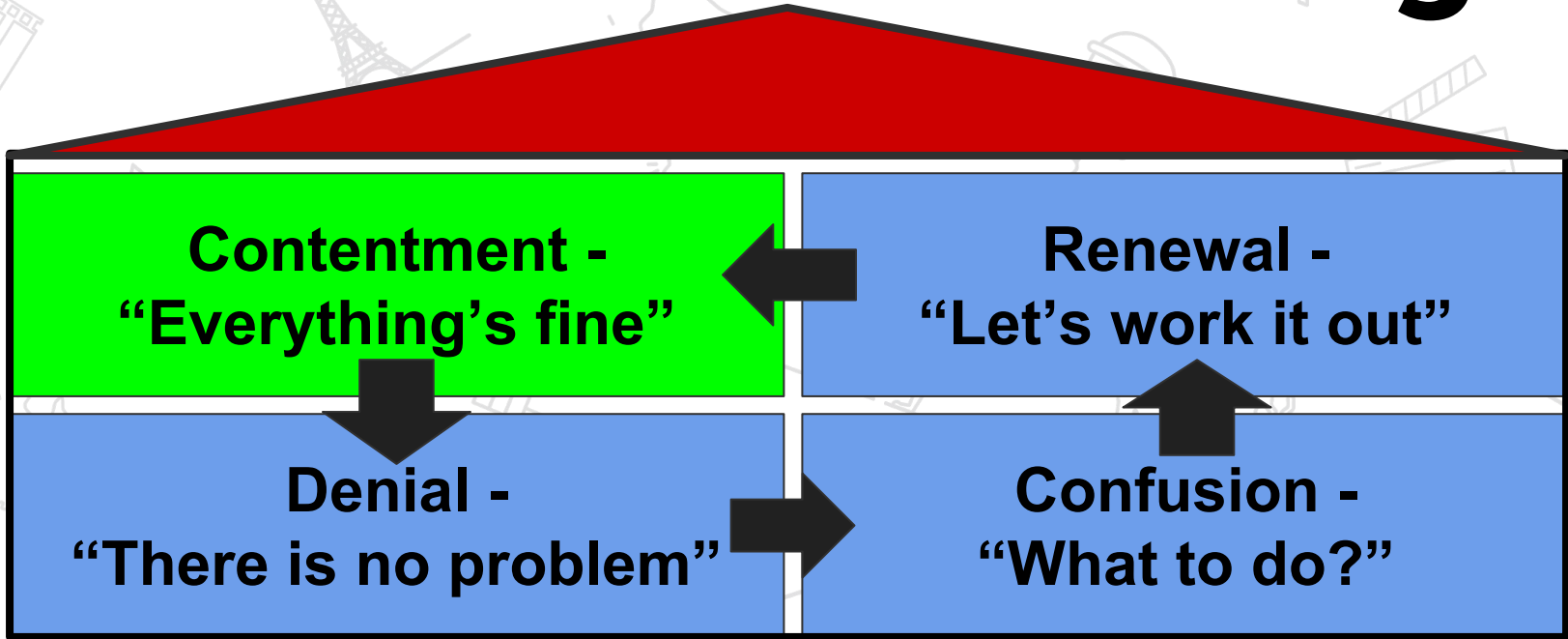
Anchor changes into the culture

New Structure

Kurt Lewin: *Frontiers in group dynamics. Concept, method and reality in social science. Social equilibria and social change.* In: *Human Relations.* Bd. 1, Nr. 1, 1947

WIKIMEDIA ÖSTERREICH

Changes @ WMAT

Everybody does everything, little diversity

Unfreeze
We are not making the best use of our time and resources

Few active team members, many bystanders

Change/Move
Expand board by actively recruiting people who bring diversity and skills

Form expert committees for strategic areas

Refreeze
Changing bylaws

Implement and document decision making and communication processes

Diverse and effective governance and management structures

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH

Four Rooms of Change

Contentment -
"Everything's fine"

Renewal -
"Let's work it out"

Denial -
"There is no problem"

Confusion -
"What to do?"

Source: Claess Janssen, *Four Rooms of Change*,
Wahlström&Widstrand, 1996
http://www.claesjanssen.com/four-rooms/matrix/index.shtml

WIKIMEDIA
ÖSTERREICH