

Who governs the Wikimedia Movement? (and why should you care)

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CEE Online Meeting 2021



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Movement Strategy Recommendation 4



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Ensure Equity in Decision Making

Recommendation #4

“We will establish a Global Council representative of the Movement in its role and composition. It will be composed of both elected and selected members, in a way designed to reflect the breadth and diversity of participation not only in the Movement at present but also in communities we wish to serve. This body will have authorities and responsibilities outlined in the Charter.”

[Link](#)



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Ensure Equity in Decision Making

Recommendation #4

“Regional and thematic [hubs](#) will empower existing and future communities to have the capacity and resources to make and implement their own decisions to meet their differing needs. This will ensure sustainability, [resilience](#), and growth for the whole Movement. Regional hubs will allow contextualizing activities, tools, and information. If appropriately resourced, they will empower groups of affiliates to collaborate on [capacity building](#), knowledge transfer, and coordination.”

[Link](#)



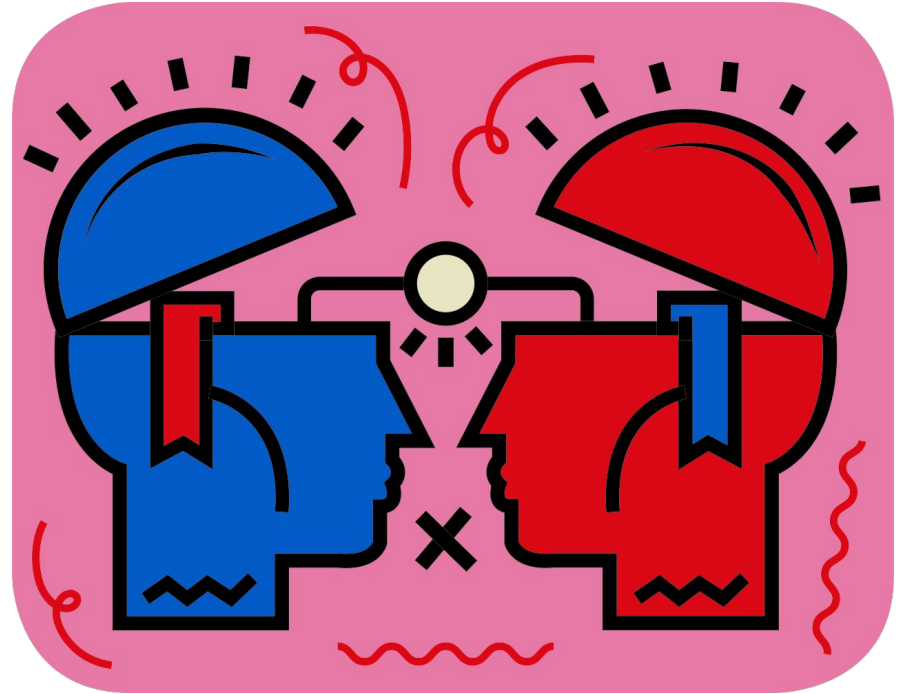
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Global Council & WMF Board of Trustees

“The Board of Trustees of the Wikimedia Foundation presently has legal and fiduciary responsibility for Movement resources and oversight. Initially, the Global Council will be established as an independent structure with a **mandate** from the Board. This means that when making decisions in outlined areas, the Global Council will work closely with the Board of Trustees. Both entities will cooperate for the overall good of our Movement. Considering its legitimate authority conferred by representing our Movement, **the Global Council may later develop further capacities and take on more responsibilities over time.**”

[Link](#)



We have talked about process for a year....

- IGC to drafting group
- Election / Selection
- Representation
- Diversity & Expertise
- Community “ratification”
- Structure and ToC of charter



**...but the main
questions are still to be
addressed**



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- Who governs what? Which body will have which powers?
- Are all the powers of the Global Council dependent on the WMF Board of Trustees?
- And if not, how can the transfer of powers be guaranteed in the long term? And is a transfer of decision-making even possible if the council is only added on to the current structure?
- What ‘further capacities’ would make sense?
- How do we create the decentralized movement we had envisioned, while ensuring core functions such as trademarks, platforms, software development and endowment?
- what is the role of hubs?

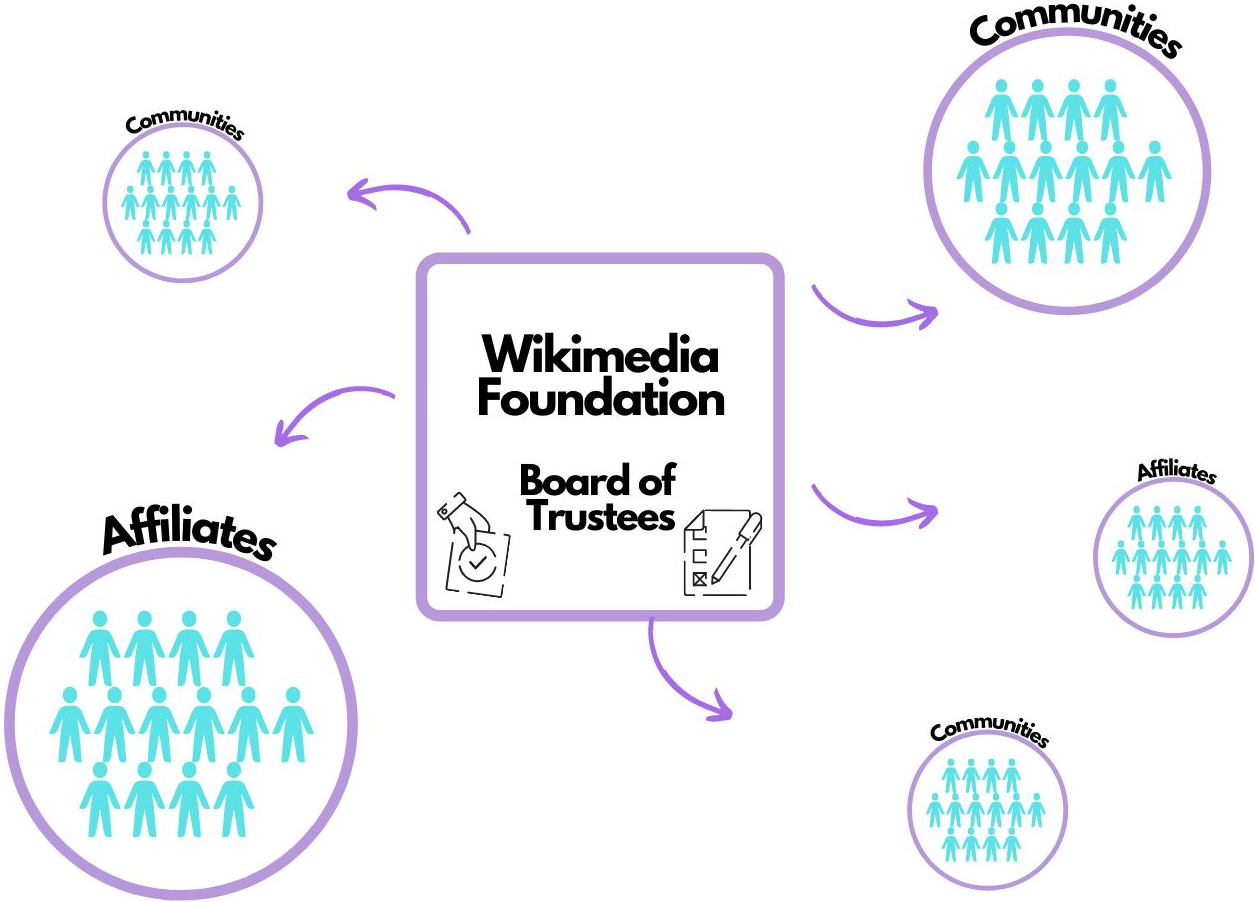
why do we care?

- what is in the charter will affect how we do our work as stakeholders for decades to come
- it will set up how decisions are made about tech, money, policy
- we have a unique window of opportunity to improve our movement.
- ...and set it up for the future, to be relevant, sustainable, open, equitable
-(enter your reason)

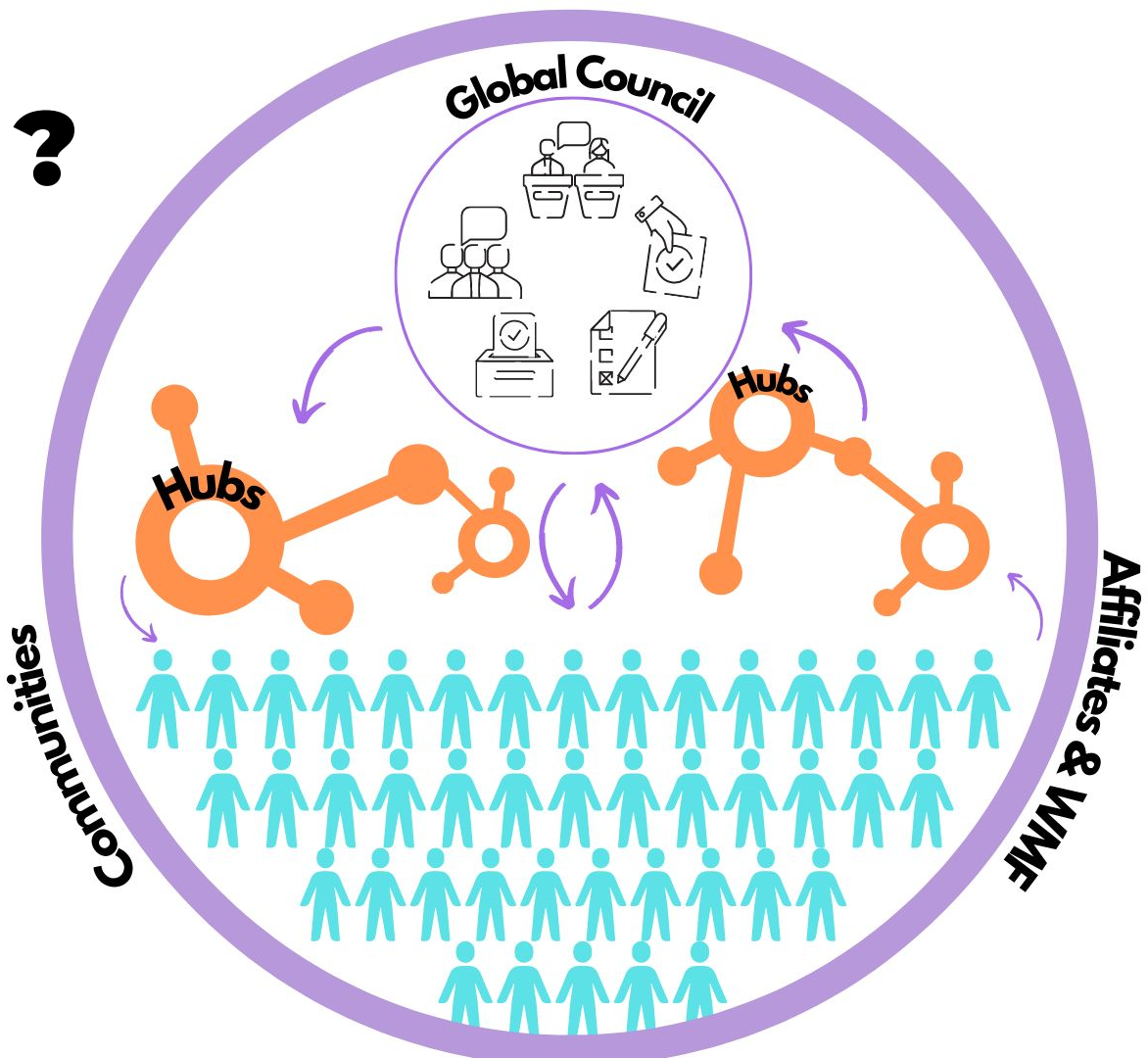


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Now



2030 ?



Subsidiarity through hubs

- there will be language on hubs in the charter
- they will have seats in the global body
- they will have important decision-making powers pursuant to the principle of subsidiarity, making **regional decisions**
- they complement a global governance model making **movement decisions**



Equity through global structure

Two Scenarios

1. The addition of a global **advisory** board to the current structure, with WMF continuing as the central organisation.

2. A global assembly (+ international membership organisation) as the highest body of the movement



(This aligns with standard governance practice of international NGOs.)

There may be more scenarios....

1

Wikimedia Foundation

WMF Board of Trustees

Global Council

governs

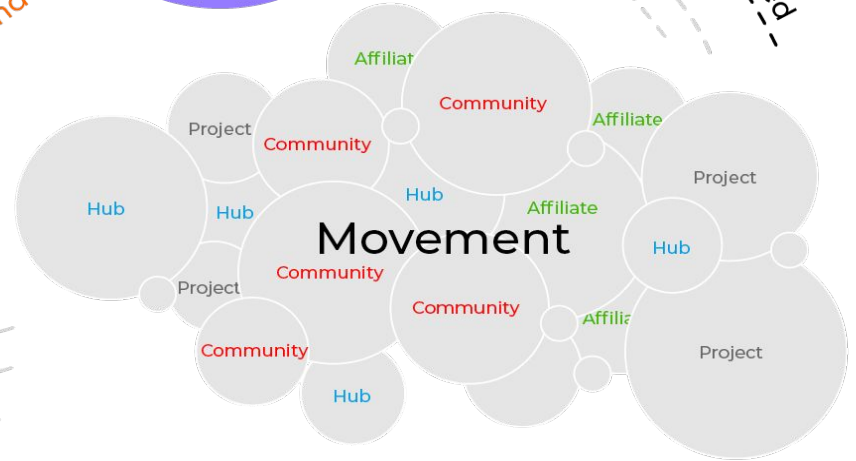
delegates decision-making areas and funds

advises on policy and resource allocation

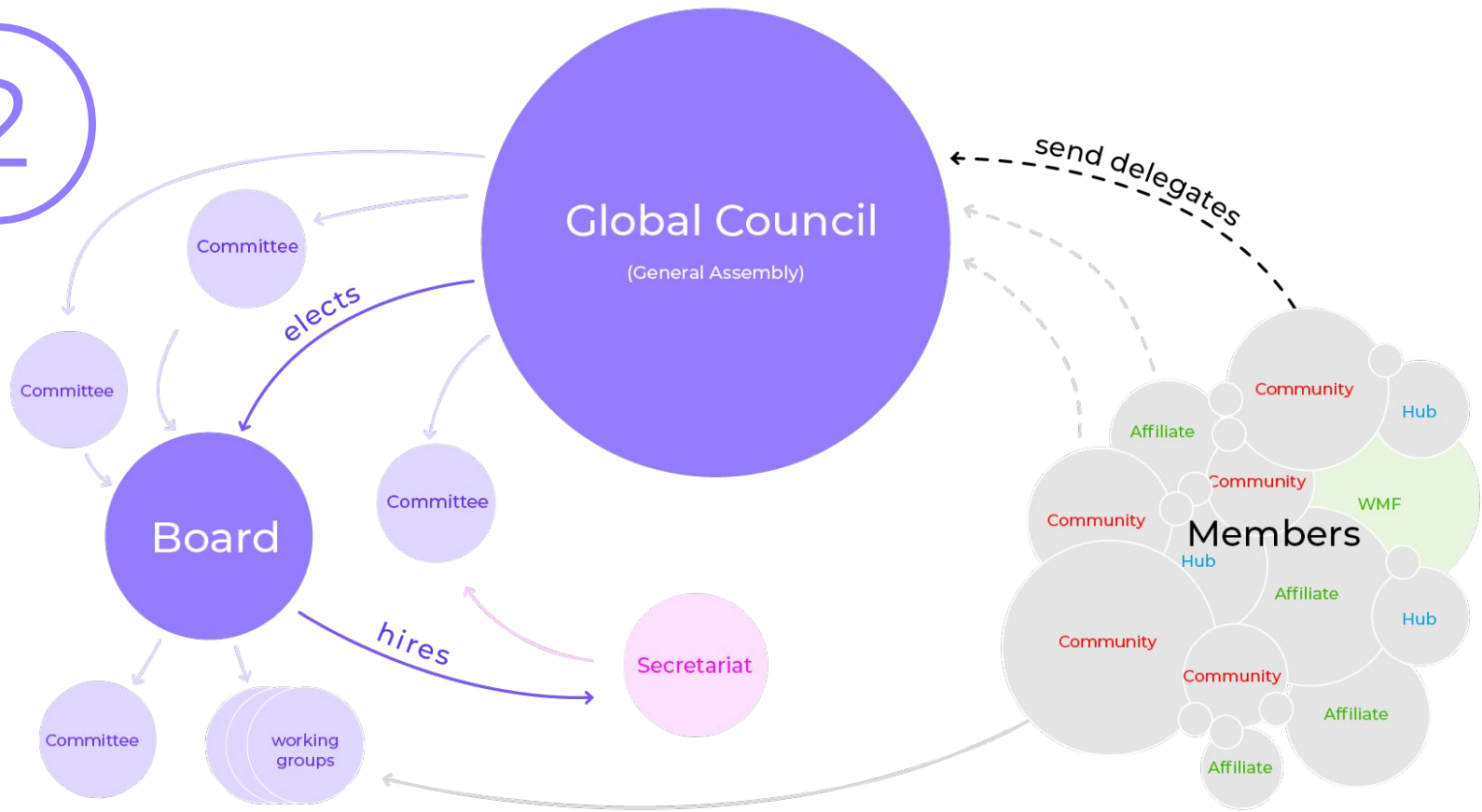
sends elected/appointed members

report and recommend

working groups and committees



2



How are other international movements governed?

Sample: 7 movement-based INGOs: Amnesty International, Greenpeace, MSF, CARE, Transparency International, Save the Children, WWF

Result: The most practiced governance model in our empirical sample is that of an international membership association. This aligns with Scenario 2 described above.



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The following characteristics are standard:

- Governance is described in a formative document such as a charter or a statute.
- The highest governance body is a general assembly, representing the members.
- This body elects a board of directors, which in turn appoints or hires a secretariat.



Comparing Scenarios in terms of Governance



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	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Highest governance body	WMF Board of Trustees (self-perpetuating, accountability to US tax code)	WMF Board of Trustees (self-perpetuating, accountability to US tax code)	Global Council as a General Assembly (comprised of members, representative of movement stakeholders such as, Affiliates, Communities, hubs, WMF)
Corporate Forms	private charitable US 501(c)(3) Organisation with a self-perpetuating Board (half of the directors are 'community-sourced') + independent Affiliates	Co-existence of private charitable US 501(c)(3) Organisation with a self-perpetuating Board and a globally representative advisory body, + independent affiliates, hubs	International membership organization with a nonprofit status dependent on the country where it is incorporated. + WMF with special functions (see below) + independent affiliates and hubs
Other decision making bodies	Board Committees, such as the community affairs committee, AffCom, etc.	Global Council, Working Groups, Committees	Global Board, Secretariat, Committees, Working Groups
Policy Ratification (Charter, Universal Code of Conduct, Fundraising, Affiliates, Hubs, Strategy)	currently unclear	Matters of movement importance go through GC and a set community engagement process. Matters of WMF importance go through WMF BoT.	WMI General Assembly or Board, after a set community engagement process

Comparing scenarios in terms of functions



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	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Trademark	WMF	WMF	WMF or WMI (Wikimedia International)
Fundraising	WMF; WMDE, WMCH via fundraising agreements	WMF, Affiliates, Hubs (tbd via fundraising agreements)	WMF, WMI, members, Affiliates, Hubs
Budget	WMF BoT	WMF Board of Trustees. Sections of budget possibly entrusted to regional HUBs and global council	WMI and WMF will have separate budgets
Resource Allocation	WMF, through grants	WMF, through grants, intermediary/hub contracted funds, stipends; GC for its funds assigned by WMF	Through a distribution formula decided on annually by GA, in addition to grants, stipends, etc.
Endowment	Endowment 501(c) (3)	Endowment 501(c) (3)	Endowment 501(c) (3)
Enterprise	LLC	LLC	LLC
Movement Infrastructure (software development, capacity building, conferences, knowledge base, evaluation, innovation)	WMF, WMDE	WMF, Affiliates, Hubs external actors via WMF grants and contracts	WMF, WMI, Affiliates, Hubs, contracts
Liability for Content in Projects	WMF, protected by section 230 US Law	WMF, protected by section 230 US Law	TBD
HQ	San Francisco	San Francisco	TBD (Amsterdam, Geneva, London, Singapur, Cape Town, other?)

**when we
write our
charter, there
will be choices
to make
around how...**



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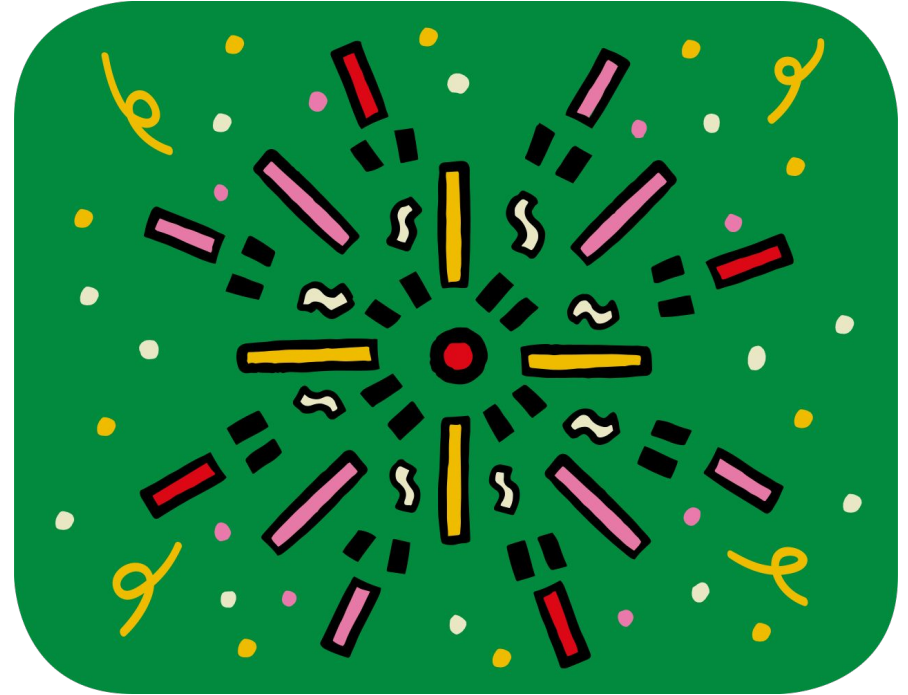
- Members of the general assembly are defined
- Policies are developed
- Communities and volunteers participate
- Operative functions are distributed among members and the international secretariat. (There are more distributed models and more centralized ones.)
- Resource allocation is structured. Some models involve a deliberate redistribution of funds from countries of the global north to the global south.
- what is the role of affiliates and hubs?
These choices are detailed in each respective Charter, and in some cases in related policies.

Alignment with Movement Strategy



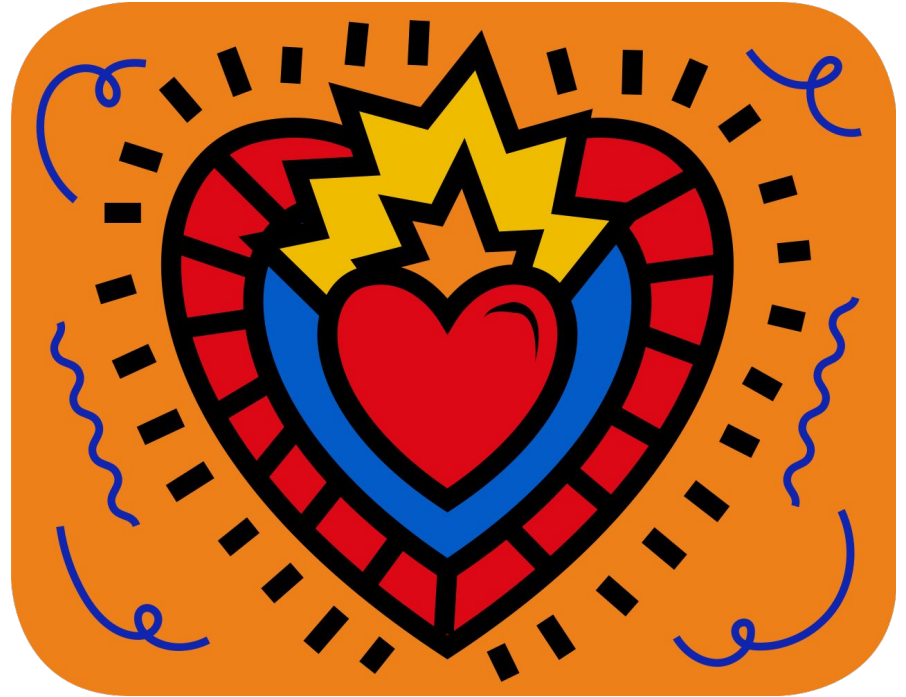
Subsidiarity & Self-Management

This will be important when defining which movement entity in a federative system will make decisions about which issues.



Inclusivity & participatory decision-making

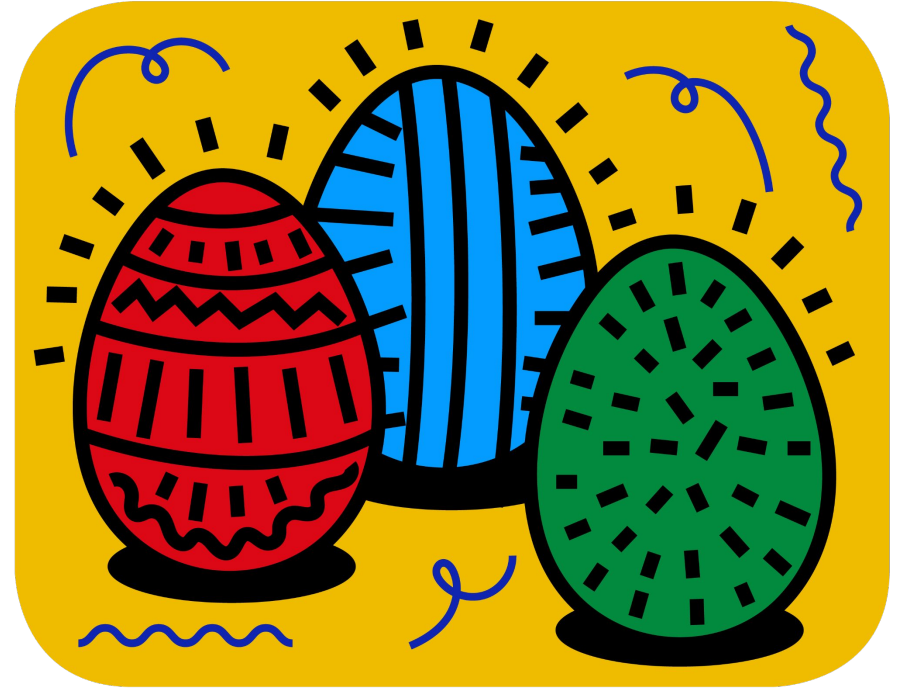
This will be important when defining how we are going to make access to community processes more equitable and how to assure representation of emerging and future communities, for example through a flexible membership and candidature policy for the general assembly.



Decentralization

As a common desire this was often mentioned during Phase II of the strategy process, but it never was defined nor included as a principle.

Designing a federated governance structure now provides new opportunities to think through how decentralization, together with subsidiarity, could manifest itself. For this, it might be helpful to think of the jobs in the movement as functions, and have rational conversations about where and with which entity those would be best located.



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The path forward



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What are possible milestones for the drafting committee?

Rather than collecting content items without a direction, milestones could be:

- Reviewing governance scenarios and questions
- Deciding which scenario the committee will base their work on
- Identifying what components go into the charter and what goes into other documents, such as policies and agreements
- Then drafting the document

How can we participate?

- Participate in deliberations, comment periods and movement conversations on the charter
- Create accountability of the process and the content of the charter
 - help assure that subsidiarity and equity are reflected in the language on hubs and global body
 - help assure that we focus on creating movement governance (not necessarily reforming WMF)

Questions



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What is your opinion?

- **Which scenario makes sense to you?**
- **Are there scenarios we have overlooked?**
- **How can we involve communities in this crucial phase?**

Thank you!



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