

SCENARIO 2

Turmoil in Antarctica

For the sake of this role-playing exercise, please accept the text and prompts as they are stated here. The assumptions are that the Movement Charter has been ratified and that the Universal Code of Conduct is fully implemented.

Wikimedia Antarctica Chapter is a legal organisation placed on the coldest continent. With a small group of volunteers and 3 staffers, it provides volunteer support, cool educational activities, and a global Wiki Loves Penguins competition, and has celebrated its 10th anniversary recently. Funded by the WMF and local grants for Antarctica activities, it is also a founding member of the WM Cool Places Hub.

Its activities are well-known from reports; unfortunately seldom one has the opportunity for a site visit to this beautiful continent. Very recently, during the latest grant evaluation by the funding committee composed of volunteers and supported by staff, several questions were raised and disturbing rumours from WM Antarctica popped up: conflict among both volunteers and staffers and split among members, violating own bylaws, wrongdoing during their latest General Assembly, misuse of funds and trademark, mistreatment of volunteers and penguins.

Funding committee entered into a further dialogue with Wikimedia Antarctica, also shortly AffCom, WM CP Hub and the Global Council were informed about various accusations from many sources. After a short preliminary research, the AffCom noticed the situation seems to be very serious, and numerous violations of Universal Code of Conduct, agreements and local law are highly probable and could lead to various sanctions, including derecognition.

ROLE 1:

Wikimedia Antarctica Members

- You are an ordinary member of Wikimedia Antarctica (WMARC), troubled by the recent developments in the affiliate.
- You have witnessed the conflict between the new top leadership and a big part of the members and staff. You believe that the members and staffers were treated unfairly on several occasions.
- Also some good programmatic activities were dropped in favour of a costly pet project of the new chairperson of the Board: *New Emperor Penguins' Clothes*. The project is focused on dressing these birds and while it increases the visibility of the chairperson and her friends, you fail to see a positive impact on Wikimedia. On top of that, it increases discrimination against other stakeholders.
- You have tried to raise these issues in the latest General Assembly and make some changes, unfortunately you did not succeed due to a formal trick, in your opinion somewhat violating your bylaws. Since then you are seeking help and allies in the larger Wikimedia ecosystem.

ROLE 2:

Affiliations Committee

- You are a volunteer committee checking on affiliates (and candidates to become one), giving them guidance and advising the Global Council. You are working upon the Movement Charter, guidelines issued by the Global Council, and internal procedures. You present your findings and recommendations firstly to the Global Council.
- Recently, you have received a number of complaints on Wikimedia Antarctica, including a red flag during their assessment by the relevant funds committee. The complaints include e.g. a wrong treatment of some volunteers, members and staff by the affiliate's top leadership, violating Universal Code of Conduct, troubling programmatic choices and unreasonable spending on a pet project, discrimination and using resources for clearly non-Wikimedia activities.
- Your fast research seems to confirm the key accusations, and the issue becomes pressing as the conflict increases.
- You know that in the past serious problems could have been solved using different tools (from a mediation by trusted Wikimedians to the WMF staff intervention) and have very different consequences: from a minimal guidance, through funding cuts and larger personal and systemic changes, loss of all funding and staff by the affiliate and starting anew, to a long-term derecognition.

- Unfortunately, this is not the only serious complaint you are dealing with now, and your time is limited. Considering this, more detailed policies could be beneficial but creating them is difficult and time consuming.

ROLE 3:

Wikimedia Cool Places Hub

- You are a regional hub, interested in developing Wiki activities in Cool and Cold Places. Lion's share of your funds has come from the WMF, based on the decision of a proper funds dissemination committee and the Global Council.
- Wikimedia Antarctica is your founding member, so the recent news about a conflict between their top leadership and a big part of their community, troubling programmatic choices and unreasonable spending made you concerned. Also activities run together with Wikimedia Antarctica are endangered.
- Your purpose was described as “to create a mutual support structure for its members and others within the Wikimedia movement”. Hubs are expected to create a learning space to share knowledge, develop best practices, and provide guidance and assistance to less experienced hub members. Conflicts like these directly hurt both your activities and your members. For years you have been working with both affiliates and individuals: volunteers not engaged actively with any country or thematic affiliate due to a lack of a relevant local group or a conflict - all of them are important for you and part of your decision making.
- On the other hand, the Movement Charter did not make hubs directly responsible for policing its members. This authority is mostly with the Global Council (even as the trademarks as well as much relevant staff are still with the WMF). Also the hub members did not assume strict rules and control by the hub.
- This is the first crisis of this sort you are facing, you have never experienced a split of this scale.

ROLE 4:

Global Council

- Global Council is the central governing body of the Wikimedia Movement. It was created as a result of the Wikimedia strategic process and is composed of 100+ volunteers from across the Wikimedia Movement.
- You are serving in the Global Council as a member of the GC Board, supported by the GC committees and the support staff. Among your many responsibilities there is also certain oversight over grant distribution, as well as hubs and affiliates recognition and derecognition, and the committee that is responsible for that.

- Considering your role and composition, you have a mandate to guard Movement principles, set standards and impose sanctions like derecognition. Nevertheless, you are 100+ volunteers scattered globally. Your time for sessions is limited, and you are focused on giving general guidelines and delegating much operational work to the committees of the Global Council.