

Notes from the Wikimedia Summit 2024 online engagement sessions (Etherpads & chat)

== Part 1 : What is governance in general? ==

This made sense:

- The Movement Charter must describe what the governance of the movement is and how it affects our ecosystem.
- The country example made sense, but does it work for all countries?
- What governance is was thoroughly digested and detailed.
- Governance points make sense from an NGO perspective.
- Technology as a tool to further the projects, lead by governance
- I am agreed that we are making a decision is not easy, several backgrounds, we need to make decisions, put a statement in a public media, having deadline, with this approach we can go forward.
- What , why , where and how part was explained in simple words
- Money plays a big role
- Overall hierarchy of governance and movement structure is clear
- A charter makes sense
- we need a charter
- Main objective of governance committee is to Establish strategic decision/direction and, by extension, define how the decision are made
- Being an affiliate and being able to comment and contribute to the discussion on the governance model makes me feel empowered and it helps us, as an organization, build our identity
- The three things that community often discusses are money, technology, and issues of affiliation
- The basic ideas of governance were clear but some cases were not
- The principles of governance were clear
- The different levels of governance made sense.
- The three categories: money, technology, affiliation make sense
- How to elevate the needs and interests of individuals who join our Movement and contribute their time. When we think of governance we need to make sure the time volunteers give is being respected.
- I don't know any large organizational structure that has a fully transparent and representative process in decision-making. I had not thought about this before in

this way, but what we are trying to do in the Movement is really outside the experience of many of us, so it is of little surprise it is so tough.

- Good description of the current structure between the movement
- Should think further on Hubs and Global council and how they work
- The Movement Charter must describe what the governance of the movement is and how it affects our ecosystem.
- The country example made sense, but does it work for all countries?
- Being an affiliate and being able to comment and contribute to the discussion on the governance model makes me feel empowered and it helps us, as an organization, build our identity.
- How does being a recognized affiliate make a difference? If it does - what are the implications? If it does not - why are there affiliates at all?
- The geographical impact of funds distribution - how can we make it more equitable? How can we change things in a way for make it possible for other organizations at their own pace?
- The amount of information is overwhelming. <<< and sometimes the amount of knowledge shared goes in the opposite way
- Why subsidiarity is one of the core principles?
- Who is responsible for the decisions made? For example: if the new design (aka Vector 2022) goes against the strategic direction (hiding the sister projects for everyone), who is responsible for that? Does the design team know that there is a strategic direction? Does the strategy team talk to the design team? Who is going to take the final decision?
- Are the values (transparency etc) already defined and outlined somewhere? Will they be part of the Movement Charter?
- MCDC draft feels like it is abandoning the original idea of decentralisation
- What structure do WE have? What is/are the structure(s) of the WMF? Who is in charge of what? What should be decided by others and not covered by the WMF? Is there collision?
- good governance is contextualised - Wikipedia & Co are websites :-). We've heard about two governance models, one for countries, one for organisations. The perspective in the presentation was primarily centered around the "how do we make decisions/work together as a movement" aspect, and focused on process/setup questions. Questions of tech governance are different ones - i.e. what are the risks we face? how do we mitigate these, how do we ensure we can protect our users, have high performance, etc.? - Would standard governance models from organisations that are not tech organisations help us achieve our goals/support our specific needs the best way?
- What are the legal implications for the Wikimedia projects and our movement if responsibilities that are now placed with the WMF and the Board of Trustees are transferred to other entities? Particularly if we were to set up an international membership organisation governed by the global council
- The three things that community often discusses are money, technology, and issues of affiliation.
- ...We run good global platforms with uniquely good reference material. Our consensus processes often work; they achieve consensus on good content

- ...Self-governance of on wiki communities
- Nomination system for positions is fairly open and developed

This needs clarifying:

- The presentation stated "No venue for decisions concerning all movements", but these decisions do take place (UCoC policy, UCoC application guidelines) and are enforced.
- The Wikimedia Summit is a gathering of affiliates, and participants are mandated to represent their affiliates. The Strategy and the Charter of the Movement concern the governance of the whole movement, not just its affiliates. How do we balance this?
- Why do we only focus on technology, money and affiliates?
- What are the differences in decision-making between affiliates
 - All affiliates have different problems to solve and thus strategies to how to resolve.
 - Bigger groups vs smaller, and how allocations are made
 - Where do the groups diverge?
- Salaried vs volunteer groups
 - Difference in amount of resources and the focus / professionalism for better decision-making
 - on-wiki (rarely 'affiliates') vs off-wiki (always affiliates) groups
- Legal challenges (government restrictions) to receiving grants
- How does the NGO/government perspective apply to us, where does it differ
- This needs to be necessarily considered for the newly developed affiliates. How to navigate the local bureaucracy.
- Language-specific issues relating to content generation
- How affiliates and groups representing different editor groups can participate in decisionmaking about WMF strategy, including product strategy and what the WMF decides to do with donations -- staff time devoted to developing certain technology, who the WMF decides to partner with, and who not to partner with, etc.
- Do we need to adopt a unique governance system for all affiliates or should we keep the liberty for each affiliate to choose their system of governance?
- How do governance structures and regulations generate legitimacy?
- External accountabilities through administrative or executive functions.
- Are affiliates groups going to be treated individually based on their location globally as different affiliates have different challenges.
- Where would the hubs and thematic groups be placed on the hierarchy in the decision making process
- governance is a dynamic, not something fluid and has to include a flexibility
 - being flexible to allow for a variation in any context that works for that group / process
 - There may be no universal approach to governance that works in all contexts. "even two UGs can work in totally different ways"

- representation and representativity (quotas ?) are important questions and were not evoked in the presentation
 - attention to what representation should mean in context, to underrepresented groups + projects, and to one-time and recurring causes of underrepresentation, are all part of governance
- We have experience in dynamic, contextual governance around focused goals; asking such a community to fit into a static model of governance may not play to existing strengths
 - related: easy to spend most of a group's time on what it is worst/slowest at, if not intentionally investing time in areas it is good/fast at
 - How differentiate governance for a fully remote user group differ from user groups that meet in person?
- Arbitration beyond the obvious, which is truly independent. (judicial body?)
- What resources we can rely on the WMF to provide to help with with governance, for instance, when we need help or mediation to enforce the Universal Code of Conduct and decide on when a violation has occurred and what to do about it
- How do we explain what predictability means concretely for our communities?
- how to do things globally, when there are issues/limits in different countries (like india)
- No clarity on how the larger group of volunteers are being represented in the current hierarchy in the movement - how does governance work top down?
- How will the affiliation process be in the future, there are many bureaucratic steps to become a chapter (local and WMF), but being a user group is much easier and both groups have access to the same monetary resources and the resources are limited. how do we involve people to pay attention to the charter drafting while everyone is so busy
- The diagram that was shown (in the slides) to illustrate how the levels of a governance structure interoperate was helpful (charter, policies, etc. within a triangle). Is there a wikimedia page that shows a diagram like this, to link these levels/governance components to actual wikimedia documentation pages that users can access? It would help to have a visual like this, to be able to connect the abstract ideas with the concrete documents.
- Now, looking at it from separate points. It is true that there is a need for a better way of distributing funds and ensuring that they are for the betterment of the movement
- Technology must be improved and not created for the sake of creating. If we want the new generation to join the movement
- Members who are not part of a chapter/user groups feel not represented in the discussion, how can we manage to get them around the table?
- How will the charter be flexible enough to apply to both larger and smaller affiliates, but still specific enough to be meaningful?
- Chapters currently dominate affiliation. They are the ones who can make decisions that affect other affiliates (likely TO and UG), even if they are unfair. On the other hand, emerging groups affect the affiliation process.
- Its intimidating for some groups to implement it because its a big thing to do

- Some small communities might be unheard because they don't have the capacities to govern
- The process of building the Movement Charter takes a lot of (elapsed) time and effort; small user groups and volunteers might not see the immediate importance, but it is the fundament for a stable organization with transparency.
- Governance must see the three points as aligned: How can we enable new Wikimedia affiliates if the current infrastructure is not improved and there is no money for it?
- Is there any graph/image which shows based on geographic, engagement of User Group, community in MCDC or movement charter discussions?
- Why this strong need for governance now?
- ... how to implement.
- ... How can an affiliate get support if they are not able to receive a grant? Maybe through a contract?
- ... The chronology .
- the question regarding impact on Money, Technology and Affiliation was unclear ; many people who are not part of affiliates cannot express how they are affected by this (+1)
- differences between size and maturity of affiliates is a big factor to take into account when we think about these questions - and makes analysis hard to understand
- We should discuss 'governmentability' = what needs-gets to be governed and what doesn't and how much? How to make sure onWiki-only contributors are aware of this (not just individual pages and wiki tasks) and involve them gradually at least in terminology and bigger+slower processes around strategic development?
- It seems that the Movement Charter covers both affiliates (organizations) and the online platforms, it seems. And our modes of communication and meetings. I guess this should be made clear. The Summit is focused on affiliates and organizations, I believe.
- Below I ask about the "principle of subsidiarity" ; please define it in our context and give some example
- Democracy is not applicable to every country or every community. Democracy is about the majority, in democracy minorities are being ignored. Minorities are not heard in democracy. Democracy should not be a standard in the Movement because not all of us will be heard. ...How can this model recognise minorities?
- Have we considered other models which do take into account the ignoring the minorities?
- How do we make sure the individual volunteers that contribute to our movement are not forgotten in our governance conversations?
- Not sure if this hold up, but is it true that the lower you get in the movement (to the level of the individual), the less affected you are by the governance aspects (for example: only really the UCOC, whereas the affiliates are affected on every level)
- How do we ensure that the governance is working on the affiliate level (democratic, well represented etc.), as this is the foundational aspect of the

movement governance (since the affiliates are formally represented in the other levels of governance)?

- Challenge of balancing time we need to invest in governance conversations and fear to loose support for individuals in their work on the projects.
- Whose job is it to fund affiliates -- the WMF or the affiliates themselves?
- Is our movement unique and so looking at INGOs may be not be best match.
- Governance is (our could be) a resource sink. A layer of bureaucracy makes it hard for small groups to fulfill their missions.
- How do we ensure governance in a movement that includes people are active only in the digital group and some that are not? How do we ensure that both are represented in a good way?
- how are affiliates supposed to learn how to do this work better? we want to improve but do not know how to do this on our own
- Technology: how can decisions or governance around technology be ensured?
- The relationship between governance and resource allocation: How do governance structures directly affect how resources are distributed? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that this is done equitably?
- How does NGO governance mesh with User-group (less formal) governance
 - Memberships with personal data and elections for legal recognition vs informal grouping
 - For simplicity, attempt to emulate legal procedures in a Wikimedia context
 - User group _and_ NGO, and requiring further adaptation, means further complication
- Where do WikiProjects and on-wiki groups & governance fall in this model of the world?
 - Individual on-wiki projects or technical work get direct support (through devs) or grants (to individuals) and have governance (on-wiki) and transparency (100% on-wiki), but don't appear in these discussions unless they choose to also declare themselves a user group.
 - but how are on-wiki users represented? (they are'nt)
- We are far from the NGO/INGO model. If we want to go to this model, we are far from it. How can we align to this? and what are the pros/cons of doing so?
- How would we navigate the radical transition to an international governance model?
- How do we resolve the fundamental conflict of control between where the money is raised and where it is needed? the NGO model alone doesn't do that
- How close are affiliates really to the community? — some are definitely closer than others (Wikimedia United Kingdom is a good example here, but pluricentric languages and strongly multilingual nations mean that this can be quite difficult)
- We have chapters, user groups, communities, mission aligned groups, hubs, is there a hierarchy?
- For groups that have a hard time receiving [funds + aid] due to local and international law, how are we imagining support (financial, technical, other)? how do we govern + think about decisions that affect [sanctioned, censored] regions?
- Criticism to decentralization (from criticisms of feminist movement decentralization in the 1970s): <https://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm>

- Is a country, with all its bureaucracy, the best model for Wikimedia?
- What does it mean when you talk about "Wikimedia Projects"?
- There are promises or assurances that Wikimedia affiliates should be able to access money. However, when they attempt this, many questions and confusions arise.
- The idea is spreading that Wikimedia affiliates should be able to raise their own funds but there is not a clear recommendation for how to do this, or what success stories are a model for this.
- The Wikimedia Governance can not replicate what other INGOs are doing. How is the governance model of INGO relevant to the Governance of the Wikimedia movement?
- Why does anyone compare the Wikimedia Foundation and Wikimedia Movement with international NGOs?
- unblock temporary financing for affiliates...
- ...scaling up to gain from more specialization and standardization and individuals skills and interest (economies of scale and scope)
- "structural grants" idea to support development of the affiliate
- there is a lot of fear in asking for money
- there is bad governance going on in communities
- Mistrust between WMF and volunteers: WMF staff have very limited roles and limited ability to do their work. This mistrust prevents us from moving faster and better.
- Governance should be about people being able to express themselves if they want to and to make decisions
- Want to help people NOT be forgotten and left out ; and perhaps represented
- Better information around the path to become an affiliate, who can we talk to? Support for small affiliates.
- Lack of representation could be a risk, some issues might become invisible
- Smaller groups could have issues defining a strategy. How do we support smaller groups that don't have the capacity to develop this kind of governance structure?
- Hubs and their role and definition are a key area
- Small groups of users don't know who to contact in the Movement to get guidance around how to grow as affiliate
- How do we make sure the individual volunteers that contribute to our movement are not forgotten in our governance conversations.