

## Membership Report

### 1. Current situation

According to the WACC database, as of 26 June 2019, membership numbers stood as follows:

Region	Institutional	Individual	Total
Africa	11	12	23
Asia	23	12	35
Caribbean	8	22	30
Europe	14	28	42
Latin America	14	27	41
Middle East	1	2	3
North America	8	29	37
Pacific	2	1	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>214</b>

Status	Institutional	Individual	Total
Current paid (new)	6	11	17
Current Paid (renewals)	64	37	101
Grace 1	2	22	24
Grace 2	3	21	24
Grace 3	6	19	25
Current Honorary		23	23
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>214</b>

For reference, as reported in March 2018 (and the 2017 annual report), there were 201 institutional members and 273 individual members for a total of 474. In the 2016 annual report we reported 186 institutional members, 279 individual members, and “1170 “affiliates” – e.g. those who hadn’t paid their membership in over 3 years at that time.

Current Membership Subscription Rates:

INDIVIDUAL	USD 35.00	Euro 30.00	GBP 27.00	<b>* Proof of student status required with application</b>
INSTITUTION	USD 120.00	Euro 105.00 USD	GBP 92.00	
STUDENT*	USD 20.00	Euro 17.00	GBP 15.00	

The process of membership still officially requires a membership application submitted with payment to WACC Global. The application is then forwarded to the region, in which the region has up to three months to raise any objections. If there is

no objection or no response from the region, the member is accepted. This can be expedited (for example, applications accepted during a regional assembly).

## **2. Background on WACC membership**

WACC has not always been a membership organization. The concept of “corporate” members and then both “corporate” and “individual” members started about 30 years ago. There was an understanding that membership conferred benefits beyond publications – but there were a number of printed publications that members received. The large central committee (the former term for the Board of Directors) meant that a fair number of corporate members could be represented; personal members could be elected to regional committees. The regional bodies primarily helped to choose the projects that would be financially supported and were often able to direct funds to activities they were involved in. The WACC Congress helped bring people together for workshops, fellowship, and global governance. The membership in general galvanized everything that happened in WACC and was very engaged. At its peak, there were about 2000 members.

The nature of that relationship has altered over the years, particularly with changes in the way projects are funded, governance, the move from London to Toronto, staff transitions, and the legal context of WACC as a Canadian charity which placed limits on its ability to operate as an international charity.

With the restructuring of governance, membership now comes under the more flexible UK rules, which states that a member ceases to become a member:

if he, she or it fails to pay a subscription for two successive years or for any three years out of any five successive years and a written demand for such payment sent by the General Secretary has remained unpaid for four weeks.

## **3. Membership and the funding and functions of regional associations**

It is worthwhile to consider the funding and functions of regional associations in relation to membership.

All members are organised into (currently) eight regional associations.

Due to WACC’s overall financial situation, and the limitations placed on Canadian-based organisations to transfer funds to groups outside the country that are not legal entities, WACC ceased to pay regional grants, as well as, for several years, any portion of the membership fees. This has resulted, for instance, in limiting the ability of regional executive committees and regional associations to meet physically.

However, since 2015 most regional associations have submitted at least one application as a region for a project primarily supported through the Otto Per Mille Foundation of the Waldensian Church. This has enabled members in some regions to work collectively and strategically on an aspect of WACC’s vision of communication rights, which also has the opportunity to raise the regional association’s visibility and relevance.

However, regional projects also highlight challenges: the current need for regional associations to look for other funding opportunities beyond WACC itself; the project management and reporting requirements that need to be undertaken; the continuing

need for communication and networking within and between regions – all this when members of regional executive committees all serve as volunteers.

Following a decision by the previous Board of Directors, 100% of membership fees have been returned to the regions in 2017 and 2018 (50% in 2016). Since membership has declined, the amounts remitted to the regions have fallen below previous years and regional hopes. This distribution of membership fees needs to be again considered by the Board for 2019.

At its most basic level, an active regional association that is visible and carries out activities that meet identified interests and needs in the region will attract more members.

The opportunities for regional associations to play a more active role in fundraising (for themselves, for WACC as a whole) and in membership recruitment and engagement, need to be considered.

#### **4. Membership engagement and other WACC Networks**

The current membership list reflects, basically, the membership that is active (to some extent) and engaged, in that they have responded in the last three years.

There is sometimes comparison of member engagement with the GMMP network, a wide variety of grassroots, academic and advocacy organizations. This informal network is actively engaged in WACC's gender justice work – not only in the media monitoring project every five years but in engaging in programmatic and advocacy work, such as the End News Media Sexism Campaign. Our GMMP contacts, which may include some members, is 453. While they are invited from time to time to become WACC members, the vast majority are simply active volunteers in the network, working together on an issue about which they are passionate and proud of what they can accomplish together. Certainly during GMMP years, their financial contribution is in-kind in carrying out the monitoring and reporting activities.

Our recent DIP evaluators highlighted the potential of WACC as the unique organisation capable of building a communication rights "movement". "Movement" signifies common commitment, passion, and interest in being actively engaged.

#### **5. Questions for consideration**

- \* What is the value added of being a membership organization today?
- \* What are the obstacles to increasing the number and engagement of members?
- \* What have been the most effective ways – regionally and internationally – to gain new, active members?
- \* Is there a better way of organizing WACC?

#### **6. Recommendations for decision**

The Board of Directors agrees:

1. That WACC Global and the regional executive committees engage in a two year concerted membership campaign (2020-2021). Digital communication resources (e.g. adaptable brochures, Powerpoint, intro video, artwork for roll up banner) will be provided by WACC Global and may be adapted as

possible by regions. Our target by the end of the campaign is to have increased membership of each region by 20%.

2. That membership be more clearly about joining a movement of organizations and individuals committed to communication rights and that the process be simplified. This affirms the development of the “application” to be further modified as a “joining” form, with immediate acceptance. Regional officers will receive an updated list of members twice annually for outreach and to update contact details, within the requirements of data protection.
3. That WACC Global will continue to seek to improve the technical interface, e.g. allowing flexible payment of donations, online issuing of invoices for institutional transfers, access by members to their own data.
4. That from 2019 the membership income from each region will be returned to the respective region in support of the regional association’s work to fulfil WACC’s vision and mission.